

I support HB 2844

I have been volunteering on projects to restore streams and rivers in Central Oregon. Most of what can be seen are channelized streams running through very dry cattle grazing areas. In order to restore the rivers to green, shady, peaceful areas teeming with wildlife, we plant willow and cottonwood trees and work very hard to duplicate beaver dams by building Beaver dam analogues (BDA). The idea is to slow down the water flow to allow it to soak into the soil and spread over a larger area. This helps to cool the water down and create a diverse habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife.

I've also had a chance to see how the beavers do stream restoration. The photo below shows a stream in a canyon, that we visited in August 2020. We trudged through grazing land that was dust and rocks with almost no vegetation, pretty typical in central Oregon at that time of year. A little stream ran below at the base of a canyon. At one point the stream abruptly became wide, winding and very green. We went down to investigate and found a true gem! It was cool and teeming with life. The stream was crisscrossed with leafy branches and there were large pools of water created by beaver dams. There was lots of evidence of freshly chewed off branches. We were in total awe of what the beavers had created!



None of their awesomeness was lost on us, having labored at the task of building BDAs in the hopes that a beaver may someday find our BDA and consider it a good “fixer upper” home. Beavers are our best hope for cooling rivers, decreasing CO2, creating new wildlife habitat, tackling global warming and repairing some of the damage done to our rivers and streams.