



Blueback Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited Chapter #196

bluebacksTU@gmail.com

<http://www.bluebackstu.org>

February 4, 2025

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire

**Re: Opposition to Senate Bill 512 (Rock Creek Hatchery Summer Steelhead)**

Dear Chair Golden, Vice-Chair Nash, and Members of the Committee,

Trout Unlimited (TU) is a national organization dedicated to caring for rivers and streams so our children can experience the joy of wild and native trout and salmon. Our chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Bluebacks, has members in the Mid-Willamette Valley from Salem to Eugene, and from the Cascades to the ocean. Our volunteers conduct anadromous fish surveys on the North Santiam and the Luckiamute Rivers, monitor water chemistry in Corvallis area streams, annually clean trash from the South Santiam River, and participate in youth education about salmonids (i.e., Linn-Benton Salmon Watch, Clackamas Chapter Youth Flyfishing Camps).

**The Blueback Chapter of Trout Unlimited opposes Senate Bill 512.**

We support the decision made in April 2022 by the ODFW Commission to end the hatchery program that had been run out of Rock Creek Hatchery. We are opposed to any action overruling this decision through legislation. Restarting the addition of hatchery steelhead smolts to this system would be costly and would interfere with the survival of a valued wild summer steelhead population that exists in the North Umpqua.<sup>1</sup> Abiding by the ODFW Commission decision to end this hatchery program is a step towards protecting these iconic, wild fish.

Our chapter members are composed of fishers for steelhead and we are dedicated to sustaining the biological diversity of the watersheds where we live. Our membership recognizes the importance of this species as an essential part of our ecosystem. Furthermore, these fish are emblematic of the Pacific Northwest, and have been so for millennia. Rebuilding the abundance of wild summer steelhead in Oregon's watersheds is a high priority for our chapter.

Thank you for considering our input. Please contact me if I can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Frederick Colwell, current President

Blueback Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Chapter #196

[rickcolwell@gmail.com](mailto:rickcolwell@gmail.com)

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<sup>1</sup> The vast majority of hatchery programs have adverse effects on wild populations of salmonids including reducing the genetic vigor and decreasing the productivity and abundance of the wild fish (McMillan et al., 2023. Fisheries Management Ecol.) (available at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/fme.12643> ).