Your Action Needed to Protect Oregon’s Forested Streams

It’s time for Oregon to protect water quality, fish, and wildlife.

On June 3, the Board of Forestry will decide how to update the logging rules that are supposed to protect streams on Oregon’s approximately 10.6 million acres of private timberland.

Scientific research proves current rules aren’t adequate to protect streams from harmful warming. The industry-influenced Board of Forestry and Governor Kate Brown need to hear from you!

Over-logging of streamside trees causes dangerous temperature impacts to fish and wildlife

Many of Oregon’s streams and rivers are too warm for cold-water salmon and steelhead because shade trees are cut down. Stream warming can stress or kill native fish and stream-dwelling wildlife and help spread diseases.

Oregon’s own science team concluded that our stream protection rules are inadequate in 1999. In January of 2015, two federal agencies agreed: Oregon’s logging practices fail to protect stream temperatures. Even so, the Board of Forestry has made no improvements to the size of the required stream-side buffers since 1994—20 years ago!

What’s missing? Several proposals under consideration would only apply larger buffers to the small set of stream reaches that bear salmon and steelhead -- about a third of all fish streams in western Oregon -- leaving streams supporting other native fish under-protected. Streams lacking any type of fish but which are rich with frogs and salamanders are unprotected now and seem likely to remain so. The Board already has decided to exclude all of Eastern Oregon from the updated logging rules, and is still considering whether to apply its new rules to all or only parts of western Oregon.

It’s important for stream buffers to be large enough to effectively protect streams from the impacts of intensive clearcut logging elsewhere on the landscape. This skinny buffer is larger than those left on most of Oregon’s private forest streams, but still isn’t big enough to do the job.

This stream isn’t adequately protected from temperature increases that are harmful to fish and other species, and the few trees left along the stream won’t be enough to create healthy stream habitats and help trap sediment from upland...
On June 3, the Board should:

- Propose mandatory buffers in all of western Oregon that extend 100 feet on either side of all small and medium fish streams;
- Update rules for small “non-fish” streams in western Oregon within 12 months;
- Update rules for all streams in Eastern Oregon within 12 months.

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