



Oregon
Stream
Protection
Coalition

2 October 2018

Governor Kate Brown
Oregon State Capitol
2600 State Street
Salem, Oregon

Association of
Northwest
Steelheaders

Audubon Society of
Portland

Cascadia Wildlands

Center for Biological
Diversity

Coast Range
Association

Defenders of Wildlife

Greater Hells Canyon
Council

Institute for Fisheries
Resources

KS Wild

McKenzie Flyfishers

Native Fish Society

Northwest
Environmental
Advocates

Northwest Guides and
Anglers

Northwest Sportfishing
Industry Association

Oregon Wild

Pacific Coast
Federation of
Fishermen's
Associations

Pacific Rivers

Rogue Riverkeeper

Sierra Club

The Conservation
Angler

Trout Unlimited

Umpqua Watersheds

Washington Forest Law
Center

WaterWatch of Oregon

The Wetlands
Conservancy

Wild Earth Guardians

Wild Salmon Center

Re: FY2017-19 Stream Protection Budget Priorities for DEQ and ODF

Dear Governor Brown:

The mission of the Oregon Stream Protection Coalition, comprised of twenty-six conservation, fishing, and recreational public interest organizations, is adequate stream protection to attain water quality standards and conserve native aquatic species on Oregon's private forestlands. We urge you to craft a 2019-21 biennial budget for the Departments of Environmental Quality and Forestry that reflects your commitment to meeting water quality and species protection goals on the 10.3 million acres of private forestlands governed by the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

The priorities you set are a powerful influence on the success of water quality standards attainment efforts at DEQ, and on the integrity of forest practices rule implementation, monitoring and adaptive management efforts at ODF.

Historically, underfunding has impeded DEQ from fulfilling its oversight duties as chief water quality steward and lead implementer of the federal Clean Water Act, particularly with respect to water quality assessment and control of nonpoint sources of pollution such as forestry. Ironically, this shortfall has been further exacerbated by the persistent federal disapproval of the coastal water pollution program and the associated loss of federal funds. Likewise, underfunding for some functions within ODF's Private Forests Division, including foresters to work with smaller landowners, resource specialists and monitoring staff, has impeded stream protection efforts and helped stifle the bold adaptive policy changes needed to ensure that logging rules actually meet the water quality mandates under the Oregon Forest Practices Act.

The result is an urgent need to prioritize funding for water quality improvement efforts on farm and forest lands to prepare our watersheds for the stressors of climate change.

Department of Environmental Quality Priorities: POPs 129, 128 and 122

Policy Option Package 129: "Developing & Implementing Clean Water Plans" is our top priority in the DEQ budget. \$1.3 million in General Funds and 5 positions will bring DEQ capacity closer to the real need for more and better information, enabling faster progress toward meeting water quality goals. These resources will help ensure appropriate allocation of pollution reduction responsibilities among land uses, complete litigation-compelled revision of water quality restoration targets, and address the backlog of impaired streams that lack the legally-required "clean water plans" (TMDLs). (After 30 years, only half the waters we know need these plans actually have them).

On-the-ground implementation of clean water plans to address landscape-level nonpoint sources of water quality impairment from forestry and other land uses is essential to protecting the millions invested every year by OWEB in site-specific voluntary restoration actions.

Policy Option Package 128 – “Coordinated Streamside Management” is closely related to POP 129, and includes \$1.9 million in General Funds and 7 positions that will support the technical analysis needed to effectively identify and prioritize watershed restoration needs, including implementation of clean water plans. Especially critical is restoration of a *Nonpoint Source Program Coordinator*.

Policy Option Package 122 - “Updating & Implementing Water Quality Standards & Developing Compliance Options” with 3 positions and \$625,000 in new fee-generated revenues and General Funds. This investment will support progress toward updating water quality standards to meet court-mandated legal requirements and to work effectively with partner agencies, including the Department of Forestry, on water quality restoration plans.

Department of Forestry Priorities: Private Forests Division Component of POP 100

The Department of Forestry’s POP 100 - “Protecting Oregon’s Forests and Communities” is a large package that primarily funds the increased workload of fire programs. Increased fire staff capacity in the Private Forests Division would reduce competition for resources with other core agency programs that relate to water quality and stream protection including the monitoring program. (As ODF’s request budget notes, even with recent new staff ODF Private Forests Monitoring at “its current capacity is not sufficient to keep pace with the Department’s overall monitoring needs or to support broader environmental strategies”). But of the 14.75 new Private Forests Division positions requested, we urge you to prioritize two: *the Geo-Technical Specialist and the Roads Specialist*, and to add resources adequate to accelerate work on wood recruitment and stream temperature.

The Geotechnical and Roads Specialists have been requested repeatedly by ODF in the past, but these vital positions have not been funded despite the clear need for capacity to address landslide and road-related impacts on water quality and sensitive aquatic species. These specialists are more than justified given Oregon’s continuing legal vulnerability related to increased mass wasting from logging on unstable slopes and road-related stream sedimentation. These issues are central both to Oregon’s continuing failure to secure NOAA and EPA approval of its coastal water pollution program under federal coastal zone and water quality statutes and to the recent Endangered Species Act citizen suit alleging illegal take of protected Oregon Coast Coho salmon from harmful logging roads on state forestlands.

In conclusion, public concern over climate change and water resources is deepening for good reason: the effects of extreme drought, precipitation and other climate-change-induced weather events on stream health and native species are being exacerbated by land use impacts that are eminently feasible to avoid or reduce. In our view, Oregon is failing to adequately control private logging impacts on water quality, thereby also failing to meet the public trust obligation owed to her citizens and future generations. Additional funding is needed to credibly address these impacts under current statutory mandates.

With appreciation for your consideration of these recommendations,



Mary Scurlock, Coordinator, Oregon Stream Protection Coalition

cc: Jason Miner, Natural Resources Policy Manager, Governor Kate Brown