

Board of Forestry Testimony

Dale A. Cuyler

April 14, 2014

Good Morning. Chair Imeson, State Forester Decker, and members of the Board of Forestry, my name is Dale Cuyler. I am the president of OSWA's Douglas County Chapter and have been a member of the SW Regional Forest Practices Committee since 2003. I have also been a small woodland owner in Oregon for 36 years.

I am holding up a copy of OFRI's 2014-2015 edition of the publication "Family Forests". My picture is on the front cover along with my wife Brenda and my dog. The reason that I bring this to your attention is that I want to put a human face on the issue of small and medium stream protection rules. In your rulemaking process, the effects on both resources and people need to be evaluated.

My wife and I live on 165 acres of forestland in northern Douglas County. We bought this property in 1990 and it has been a wonderful place to live. There are about 2000 lineal feet of medium fish bearing stream that runs through the property which, using existing stream protection buffer sizes, encompasses about 6.3 acres or 3.9% of our property. We, along with most small woodland owners, are interested in creating and maintaining productive habitat for fish in this stream. For instance, in 2007 we worked with the local watershed council to improve fish passage by removing several degraded culverts and installing a bridge. We also installed 9 rock weirs to create pools, riffles and spawning habitat. Also, much of the timber along the creek was planted by us just after we bought the property since the previous owners had grazed sheep to the edge of the creek and had retained very little riparian shade. I estimate that the current value of my existing timber along the stream is around \$35,000.

OSWA has been collecting information about streams on OSWA members' forests. At this time, data has been collected for 25 members with 9600 feet of fish bearing streams. The estimated value of the timber in the existing riparian buffers for these 25 members is 1.9 Million dollars. The buffers represent about 5% of the members' property. As you can see, any increase in riparian protection boundaries could be very costly to family forestland owners.

I support keeping the existing stream buffers. They are suitable for maintaining viable fish populations. A minor and temporary increase in stream temperature as measured by RipStream does not create an emergency. Please take the time to deliberate before you engage in any rulemaking process relating to stream buffers. I believe the cold water standard needs to be reviewed and revised to take in to account all the scientific information that is coming out of the paired watershed studies. I know you will continue to collaborate with the EQC on this issue to arrive at a sensible solution.

In your required economic analysis of new proposed rules, please ensure that the costs do not outweigh the benefits. And then, please ensure that those who benefit help bear the costs.

Please make sure you evaluate the influence of riparian hardwoods on stream temperature. On the 9600 feet of forest streams that OSWA examined in their survey, 44% of the riparian area vegetation is hardwoods. This is common in forest streams in the lower reaches where many family forest owners have their property. My riparian area contains about 30% hardwoods.

Finally I encourage you to use your Regional Forest Practices Committees that are made up of practicing foresters and landowners to give you advice and evaluate practical ways to attain desired conditions.

You have a very difficult task regarding this rulemaking process. I am confident that you will be successful in arriving at a fair and reasonable solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Dale A. Cuyler

Forester/Small Woodland Owner