



POLK COUNTY

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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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For the record, I am Polk County Commissioner Craig Pope, Immediate Past President of the Association of Oregon Counties. Polk County is also one of the Forest Trust Land Counties. Well-paying and fully benefitted jobs in the woods, the mills, and trucking bring a measure of economic and social stability that is important to Polk County.

I am here today to ask that you deny the petition to initiate rulemaking to identify and develop protection requirements for Coho salmon resource sites.

Since the late 1990's, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds has set the guideposts for salmon recovery. The Oregon Plan is built around coordination of effort by all parties, development of action plans with relevance and ownership at the local level, monitoring progress, and making appropriate corrective changes based on sound science.

For almost 30 years, land-based state agencies have worked together to design programs that recognize the three legs of the sustainability stool – that sustainability is about protecting and enhancing environmental, social and economic values. Over those years, OWEB has developed an active network of watershed councils, where local citizens come together to develop and put projects on the ground that benefit habitat and water quality, and the operation of farm and forestry businesses. The Oregon Plan is continuously evaluated and updated based on scientific research and findings.

There has been a tremendous amount of habitat improvement and many valuable collaborations developed over those years. By its design, the Oregon Plan incentivizes behaviors that get the desired results.

Salmonid management is a wider issue than ODF's jurisdiction. ODF should not step out in front of this successful collaborative process and independently turn the dials. I urge the Board to continue to collaborate with ODFW, to review the Coho monitoring data, and with OWEB to review the valuable work that is being done on the ground.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,
Craig Pope
Commissioner, Polk County