

Readers' Letters

WATERSHED COUNCILS WORK

In addition to the legitimate concerns about the efficacy of Oregon's Coastal Salmon Restoration Initiative raised by Professor Lemelson (*Oregon's Future*, Winter 1997), there are also some significant grounds for optimism.

For the Sake of the Salmon is a regional organization dedicated to developing consensus on salmon management issues. It has been rapidly recruiting members from local, state, federal, and tribal governments, the forest products industry, the fishing industry, utilities, and environmental groups, all of whom recognize the need for everyone to play a role in salmon recovery.

A key point of consensus among our diverse membership is an endorsement of watershed councils, the centerpiece of the Initiative, and their multi-stakeholder, watershed-wide approach to restore salmon habitat.

Professor Lemelson questioned whether these watershed councils will have the funding, expertise, and commitment to real change necessary to live up to their potential.

To ensure that they are able to do so, *For the Sake of the Salmon* has secured funding for 33 watershed coordinators in the Pacific region, including 12 in Oregon, and we are pushing for federal funding for twice that many next year. *For the Sake of the Salmon* is developing a regional salmon fund to ensure that watershed councils will no longer be hampered by a lack of stable funding. Watershed coordinators help develop partnerships with landowners and find funding sources.

Several watershed coordinators have contacted *For the Sake of the Salmon* seeking standardized assessment protocols. We also provide watershed councils with support services such as workshops, a web site (www.4sos.org) containing numerous sources of information, and an electronic means for watershed councils to share tips and ideas.

Success of the Coastal Salmon Restoration Initiative would prevent a listing under the Endangered Species Act. While the ESA can be effective on federal lands, it is less clear that it can effect large-scale changes across private land, including farm land, timber land, and urban areas, as well as federal and state land, all of which must be addressed for effective salmon recovery.

Bill Bradbury,
Executive Director
For the Sake of the Salmon

CATTLE RANCHERS CARE, TOO

In recent years, cattle ranchers have been the target of activists who vowed to run them out of business—the intent behind Measure 38, the “Livestock and Polluted Water” initiative from the November '96 general election. Defending their livelihood and lifestyle has cost ranch families hundreds of thousands of dollars. In spite of this, the cattle ranchers are looking to the future, seeking to find common ground with all organizations interested in cooperation instead of confrontation.

Cattle ranchers believe that public lands, owned by all the people of this country, should not lie idle, but rather be managed responsibly for their best uses, including public recreation and sustainable husbandry and forestry.

Besides the health of stream habitat, salmon runs are affected by many factors: ocean conditions, over-fishing, dams, urban development, road building and logging. The leading expert in the West, John Elmore with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), has proven that cattle grazing and healthy streams can co-exist to the benefit of both.

Cattle ranchers want clean streams and healthy riparian zones. They understand that every stream is different and that each mile of any stream may present different management problems. Cattle ranchers support the study and improvement of entire watersheds, but feel that local people working together can best handle these matters. No one plan should be imposed on all of them, handed down as an edict from a distant state or federal government.

The *Oregon Cattlemen's Association* coordinates the WEST program, which has created watershed studies throughout the state. The WEST program brings land managers, watershed specialists, and agency representatives together to work toward a common goal.

Association members have also cooperated in developing better management programs with the BLM, the US Forest Service, Oregon State University, and the Department of Environmental Quality. Some members participated on the Governor's Healthy Streams Partnership Committee; others are currently active on the Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board.

Cattle ranchers are among the leading environmentalists. They are close to the land, live on it, love it, make their living on it, and are dedicated to taking care of it.

Lin Bowman
Chairman, Urban/Rural Education Committee
Oregon Cattlemen's Association