

Darla Ripchensky, Chief Clerk, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife appreciates the opportunity to lend its voice to the discussion of SB 1448, designating the Frank Moore Wild Steelhead Sanctuary in Oregon. Frank Moore, Steamboat Creek and wild summer steelhead are all iconic and interrelated, and certainly deserving of special tribute and recognition.

Frank Moore is a hero. Frank's humble and soft-spoken demeanor belies a lifetime of passionate and effective stewardship of Oregon's wild steelhead and their habitats. His legendary prowess as a fly fisherman has mentored generations into the sustainable use and enjoyment of this great resource. SB 1448 would recognize and protect the Steamboat Creek watershed in honor of this war veteran and conservation hero.

The proposed sanctuary in the North Umpqua River contains some of most important and unique steelhead habitat in western Oregon. The North Umpqua sub-basin supports one of only two summer steelhead populations within the planning domain of Oregon's recently adopted coastal multispecies conservation and management plan. The Steamboat Creek watershed contains over 80 miles of prime spawning habitat for summer steelhead, representing about 30% of the known spawning habitat for summer steelhead in the coastal planning domain.

The Steamboat Creek watershed also supports some of the coolest summer waters in western Oregon, providing an essential cold-water refuge for steelhead, salmon and other aquatic life. As such, the watershed is, and will continue to be, an important asset to help mitigate the effects of increasing water temperature and diminishing snowpack. Enhanced protection and restoration of cool-water assets is a priority for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, so the proposed supporting activities under SB 1448 would help ensure continued ecological function of this important ecosystem.

Thank you again for considering this important recognition and providing the opportunity for comment.

Ed Bowles
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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife