

April 9, 2017

Dear Members of the Oregon House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources;

I recommend that you pass HB 2027 with the amendment prohibiting any bridges across the Deschutes River in Oregon's Scenic Waterway as defined in section 1 (1) and (2) of the amendment.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) and Bend Parks and Recreation District (BPRD) set up a committee to review the rules set forth in the Upper Deschutes Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway management plan. That committee, Upper Deschutes Advisory Group (UDAG) will make a recommendation, whether to open the rules or not, to the director of OPRD. I am on that committee and think the process is flawed because there has not been any scientific evidence presented to the group about the condition of the area involved or even what values as listed in the management plan exist in that area. Also many steps in the process have been confusing, inept and unprofessional. This process was precipitated by BPRD's request for bridge in the Oregon Scenic Waterway where bridges are prohibited. Opening the waterway rules could set a huge precedent for the other rivers of Oregon. To my way of thinking it isn't right that one local agency should be able to throw its weight around putting other Oregon Rivers in jeopardy.

The exclusion of bridges was put in the management plan for very specific reasons and approved legislatively by Oregon voters. However the no bridge protection in OAR 736-040-0073 appears not to be strong enough to protect an area that serves as habitat for bald and golden eagles, osprey, blue heron rookery, elk and deer migration routes plus more, the very species and values the management is supposed to protect. BPRD and OPRD devised a way to circumvent those rules by opening them up to review pending a report from Central Oregon Community Solutions to OPRD director. Central Oregon Community Solutions ran the UDAG meetings and will gather the UDAG comments and the "crowdsourcing" survey comments turning them into a report for the OPRD director who will make a decision whether to open the rules or not.

This is an assault on Oregon's Scenic Waterway protections. In addition to this BPRD is willing to condemn private property which includes a private wildlife sanctuary to get their trail and bridge which would go through spotted frog habitat. This is why HB2027 needs to be passed to prevent the over reach of a local agency and protect the river values as stated in the management plan. I encourage you to protect the Oregon Scenic Waterway by passing HB 2027 and amendment.

Thank you for your consideration,

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