

In response to a text from Representative Helm, I have prepared the following statement related to House Bill 3228 that can be read into the record:

Representative Helm, you asked that I comment on House Bill 3228. For the benefit of your colleagues, my name is Michael Finley, I was born in Medford, Oregon and have been an active outdoorsman my whole life. I both hunt and fish but more important to the effect of this bill, I just enjoy being outdoors in and amongst Oregon's scenic beauty and wildlife resources. In that regard, I am not different than most of my fellow Oregonians. I have spent a life long career managing and protecting natural resources. I joined the U.S. national Park Service as a protection ranger in 1971 and spent 32 years managing and protecting the Nation's parklands from Big Bend National park in Texas to Associate Regional Director managing operations for 40 million acres of land in 15 park units in Alaska. I was superintendent of Yosemite National Park, Superintendent of Everglades National Park and retired from the position of Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. During my career I managed our nation's parklands for both non-consumptive use and enjoyment ( photography, hiking, camping, horseback riding, education, etc.) and hunting, fishing and trapping where authorized by Congress. I understand public expectation and enjoyment of wildlife resources.

I currently serve as Chairman of the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. I was appointed to the commission on May 24, 2011, and confirmed by the Oregon State Senate on June 7, 2011. In June of this year, I will soon have served 6 years on the commission. During that time I have had the opportunity to understand and appreciate the numerous challenges and opportunities that we face in Oregon to preserve our wildlife heritage. I have listened to hundreds hours of testimony, received hundreds of letters and calls from Oregonians regarding everything from crossbows to wolf management and Columbia River fisheries. As a part of my duty as a commissioner I have read and reread the various wildlife statutes that govern how the legislature intends that the commission conduct its business, particularly the wildlife policy section. I will address the bill below:

1. In general, I find that the proposed amendments are not duplicative and add beneficial legislative intent as to the value of wildlife resources to present and future generations of Oregonians. This is particularly important for the commission and other parties that seek to balance the various coequal goals.
2. The term "intrinsic" which in general "means inherent or pertaining the essential nature of something" is important because it underscores the recent Oregon public opinion survey conducted by the HB 2402 legislative task force. Oregon residents were asked to rank fish and wildlife values. The highest ranking value was "That healthy fish and wildlife populations exist in Oregon" (9.5 out of 10). This was closely followed by "That fish and wildlife populations are properly managed and conserved in Oregon" (9.1 out of 10) and "That people have the opportunity to view wildlife in Oregon" (9.1 out of 10)
3. The term "aesthetic" which in general means of or pertaining to beauty or beautiful. In this context it should be interpreted that " people enjoy wildlife for the sake of seeing and watching wildlife" This is supported by the same public opinion poll cited above.
4. The new coequal goal (7) lists the elements "protect" which means "to shield from harm" is a totally appropriate legislative instruction. The term "Maintain" means "to preserve or retain or keep in existence" Again, a totally appropriate legislative instruction. The term "Restore" means

“to bring back to a previous condition or existence”. This is an extremely important legislative instruction given the accelerating loss or derogation of habitat for fish and wildlife. The term “Intrinsic values” was discussed above and is important as document by the recent public opinion poll. The term “Long Term Benefits” is an extremely import legislative instruction. It is a stewardship statement that requires a long term view of programs and activities of the department to insure healthy and abundant fish and wildlife populations for future generations.

5. The term “Ecosystem Function” is an extremely import legislative instruction. It requires a thorough analysis and understandings of the actions and programs of the department. It not found in any other legislative instruction to the department and should be. When I received my B.S. in Biology from Southern Oregon College in 1970, the term ecosystem was understood and being taught. Today at Oregon State University, in the school of life sciences, ecology and understanding ecosystems is taught as a major principal of understanding life science. The University of Oregon also has programs where ecology is a major element of the biology program. It is time to integrate this direction into statute and not leave this principle to the vagaries of day to day operations or personal perspectives.

In summary, for the reasons stated above, I believe House bill 3228 should be considered for passage.

Michael V. Finley