

McKenzie River Guides Assn. (MRGA)/Representative Peter DeFazio Meeting

Federal Building
June 3, 2014; 9:00 AM
Eugene, OR

Participants: Congressman De Fazio, Staff Nick Batz; MRGA: Steve Mealey, Doug Caven, Tom Hoyt

Topics: McKenzie River Salmon; Proposed McKenzie River Interpretive Center; Northwest Forest Plan

McKenzie River Salmon

1. 12/2/13 Lawsuit (McKenzie Fly fishers and Steam boaters vs. ODFW and COE): Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief (Violation of ESA). Suit targets McKenzie Fish (salmon) Hatchery at Leaburg and seeks to alter (reduce) operations to a level that would jeopardize the sport fishery of hatchery reared salmon.
2. 4/29/14 MRGA first declaration in support of motion for Amicus Curiae status in 12/2/13 lawsuit. If granted Amicus status, MRGA's second declaration will focus on economic harm to MRGA members resulting from a significant reduction or curtailment of the McKenzie Hatchery spring Chinook program.
3. Increase in wild fish production in the McKenzie is the single most important thing we can do to increase the compatibility of hatchery fish and wild fish without reducing the hatchery program and reducing sport fishing opportunity. Such increase would have a certain positive influence on salmon recovery.
4. Curtailment of hatchery operations would have an uncertain influence on salmon recovery but certain adverse effects on sport fishing, a major objective of Willamette Basin dam mitigation programs, and river nutrients resulting from loss of decaying hatchery salmon carcasses.
5. Effective downstream smolt passage facilities at Cougar Dam on the South Fork McKenzie could double the McKenzie wild salmon run (2,000-4000) and help reduce pHOS (% hatchery fish on spawning grounds) to the 10% target. This would be the last of 3 key construction projects needed to restore wild salmon production above Cougar dam. The other 2 are the temperature control project (to get adults to enter the South Fork) and the upstream passage (trap and haul) project that have been completed.
6. Effective facilities (involving cooling tower modifications) could cost \$100,000,000, but we understand that amount is available to COE in the BPA ESA fisheries restoration /mitigation fund.

7. A Congressional hearing or workshop in the near future on this topic could benefit salmon recovery efforts as well as sport fishermen. A clear focus on the Cougar Dam fish passage issue would avoid interference with the 12/2/13 lawsuit.

8. MRGA would be a willing partner in planning and participation.

McKenzie River Interpretive Center

Since 2007, MRGA has been working with Lane County Parks and Recreation and many other key partners to develop and implement a plan for a “world class” McKenzie River Interpretive Center (IC) at the Old McKenzie Hatchery across from Leaburg Lake featuring the river and it’s fish, the boats and guides, and the unique geology and watershed that holds and sustains the magical McKenzie. The IC plan is nearly complete and we are approaching the feasibility study stage. We envision an IC that equals the High Desert Museum near Bend in quality.

Northwest Forest Plan

7/1/13 a letter was submitted to the Oregon Congressional Delegation signed by 8 Oregon organizations representing hunting, forestry, and county interests seeking a congressionally directed review and reform of the Northwest Forest Plan. To date there has been no response. The letter is hereby resubmitted.