



Spring Newsletter

It's time to bid winter goodbye and welcome spring!

Much has happened with the Oregon Anglers Alliance since our last newsletter from December. So much so, that I've realized that we'd better begin sending monthly updates instead of quarterly because there is too much to write, and too much to read!

I'd like to begin by welcoming and mentioning some of our new cooperative partnerships. The Oregon Outdoor council, Oregon Bass Nation, Hatchery/Wild coexist, Douglas Timber Operators, and especially the NorCal Guides Association to name just a few. These organizations and many others, have brought the OAA a larger, more united voice and a wealth of knowledge and experience that will help to expedite our efforts to attain our goals. Thanks to our core group of Officers, Board Members and Advisors, we now have a membership that combined with our cooperative partnership base, represents around 60,000 outdoor professionals and recreationalists. The OAA Board has spent countless hours and much of their own money for the greater good.

We have begun quarterly meetings with ODFW Executive Staff and look forward to having many more candid, but respectful discussions as cooperative partners, so that we may better serve the resource, the angling public, and our communities and the businesses that depend on them.

To bring everyone up to date on some of our activities, I'd like to begin by speaking about The Oregon Hatchery Research Center. The OHRC was created to define the differences between hatchery and wild fish, to better understand how to propagate fish that are as close to identical to wild fish as possible, and to better define the risk/reward of integrating and maintaining hatchery origin fish with fish of natural origin.

There is a list of goals that were written and approved by the Oregon legislature along with the expense of just over a million dollars a year just for annual operating expenditures. Common opinion of the public is that the OHRC has failed to help Oregon provide a greater abundance of wild/ hatchery fish on Oregon streams. Some might say that it was not their intent for fish abundance, but rather to just find differences and mitigate risk. We have actually witnessed our abundance numbers slipping away along with our hatchery releases.

Did you know the Native Fish Conservation Plan definition? **“Native Fish: means indigenous to Oregon, not introduced. This includes both naturally produced and hatchery produced fish.”**

There is opinion by some that the OHRC has done more harm than good when it comes to advocating for our fish and the anglers and businesses that depend on them.

The OAA does have some strong advocates as OHRC Board members. However, the advisory board is just that, in the end, the final decisions are made by ODFW and OSU Staff.

At the last OHRC meeting there was a vote by the BoD's, to edit the mission statement to establish ways to craft some metrics and to identify how to best help to provide a maximum sustainable harvest. The vote was carried by a slim margin with some contentious objections even after the vote was passed. The **OHRC meetings** are quarterly, but surprisingly after only a couple of weeks, there is one already scheduled for **March 29th, 9-11 AM**. I would encourage anyone that can, to join the meeting as an observer and to provide written comment. ODFW has a new interim OHRC Liaison, Mr. Shaun Clements. He has also recently been appointed as the new Deputy Fish Division Administrator. He will be discussing the goals of the OHRC. This may be a pivotal meeting.

We need your voice! Let them know that you are an OAA supporter. Together we can effect change.

The agenda for the March 29th OHRC Board meeting is attached and includes information on how to attend the virtual meeting (also noted below). This meeting is open for public observation, however given that it is virtual and shortened, public comments will not be taken during the meeting.

Instead, public comments will be taken March 29th -April 5th by emailing kerrie.j.tarkinton@state.or.us.

**Meeting Information
OHRC Board Meeting
Monday, March 29, 2021
9:00am-11:05am**

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://oregonstate.zoom.us/j/96738316076?pwd=enV3ZHQ1bm14MzNSMWZnRVpRc0x-3Zz09>

Password: 653622

Phone Dial-In Information

+1 971 247 1195 US (Portland)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Marc A. Johnson, Ph.D.

Fish Conservation Research Biologist

Oregon Fish Conservation and Recovery

Acting Director to Oregon Hatchery Research Center

Liaison to State Fisheries Geneticist

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE

Salem, OR 97302

O H R C Online and Teleconference

AGENDA

Schedule	Topic	Presenter(s)
9:00 AM	• Call to Order and Opening Statement	Brad Halverson, OHRC Board Chair
9:10	• The goals of research and the OHRC	Shaun Clements, ODFW
9:20	• Hatchery Domestication Project Update	Michael Blouin, OSU
9:40	• Questions and Discussion	Board Action
9:55	• Mate Choice Project Update	Michael Banks, OSU
10:15	• Questions and Discussion	Board Action
10:30	• Olfactory Imprinting Project Update	Marc Johnson, ODFW Andrew Dittman, NOAA
10:50	• Questions and Discussion	Board Action
11:05	• Adjourn	Brad Halverson, OHRC Board Chair

After more than a year, The Rogue and South Coast Conservation Plan is being finalized by ODFW Staff and it will be available for public comment. There is no set date for the release of this final draft, but they are crafting it as you read this letter.

The OAA submitted a well thought out and thoughtful comment paper to ODFW on behalf of not just south coast anglers, businesses and public agencies, but on behalf of the vast majority of outdoor user groups statewide. Some say that this plan is an example of the fight to “reimagine fish and wildlife governance in Oregon”. The OAA endorses part of the plan, but is critical of others. Namely, the Harvest metrics for the south coast streams and the proposal to designate 90% of the South Coast area as a wild fish quarantine, or as technically termed, a Wild Fish Emphasis Area.

These issues had no consensus from Stakeholders and these concepts were crafted by Staff as a “meet in the middle compromise” between anti-hatchery/harvest and pro-hatchery/harvest Stakeholders.

OAA’s opinion is that the added angler opportunity provided to lower Rogue fishermen by opening winter steelhead season on Dec. 1, instead of the traditional Jan. 1 opener, is of small consequence compared to the reduction of opportunity that is proposed by implementing additional catch and release streams. The plan eliminates two more of our harvest streams by converting them to catch and release. This decision was based on “social issues” on two streams that have some of the highest winter steelhead densities in Oregon, with some of the lowest rates of angler participation. This will result in having only four winter steelhead harvest streams remaining in this district. They say that this is an interim measure that will be reviewed after 5 years, and that pending environmental and social issues, harvest MAY be reinstated. History shows us that Interim regulations have no been proven to benefit anglers. When we tell anglers that there will be an additional endorsement and harvest tag, with additional fees for steelhead attached to this reduction of harvest proposal, it make it a non-starter for citizens of the south coast.

The harvest framework combined with the “Wild Fish Emphasis Area” make this plan difficult for our south coast citizens to swallow. With only one small winter steelhead hatchery release program on the south coast streams (excluding the Rogue which is a unique and complex river to be addressed separately by a separate Stakeholder group), the plan armor plates the language to make it very difficult for any future winter steelhead hatchery programs, and almost no added Chinook propagation. We feel that with the 20 some pages of climate change writings that were incorporated by ODFW into the plan, that it is more important than ever, to keep our options open for additional hatchery programs. We did not ask to implement additional hatchery releases with one exception. There was consensus, that upon a 5-year review, the Chetco MAY be able to add 10,000 winter steelhead smolt to its releases IF pHOS goals are not exceeded. We view this as more ambiguous language that will lead to ongoing debates 5 years from now. This is considered a fair compromise by forfeiting any possibility of additional future hatchery privileges?

Please be prepared to let ODFW know that you support the OAA in their opinions of providing a maximum sustainable harvest of both wild and hatchery fish.

Additionally, tell them that you don't want to make the south coast district into a Wild Fish Museum. Let them know that you are in favor of responsibly run, wild fish enhancement propagation programs.

And finally, there are no examples to back up the assumption that by eliminating the sport harvest of wild fish, or eliminating hatchery fish introgression, that the result was higher numbers of wild fish, just examples of less fish. ODFW has not provided analysis's of wild fish counts after harvest and/or hatchery presence were removed. They have not provided a forecast of the likelihood of species management unit persistence in the near and long terms. They have not provided an economic impact statement to demonstrate what these cuts may do to the economy.

As a final wrap-up, I'd like to mention that at this time, there are a myriad of legislative bills and actions that have been launched at our sporting heritage and outdoor user groups. Thanks to our own Stan Steele of the Oregon Outdoor Council and the OAA, along with our State Representatives for their dogged determination. We are winning the battle, but it's a big war!

A special thanks and shout out to our Coastal Caucus and David Brock Smith for sponsoring SB 3150 which provides for the development of a hatchbox program on coastal streams.

The radical-preservationist groups are hard at work. The March 19th ODFW Commission meeting again had three Public Forum Testimonies, pleading against hatchery fish and to discontinue the plan of rebuilding the Umpqua's Rock creek hatchery. There are no hatchery advocates getting on board to testify. We can fix that and we will. These are some of the same people that are responsible for banning fishing from a floating device in WA, and now they are here!

Thankfully the OAA has been put into place to offer some resistance to these extremist groups. Never before has there been an organization to push back on their attacks. We are striving to be proactive in our mission to restore our fisheries while supporting all outdoor groups and related businesses. Thank you for being apart of this exciting new movement. We welcome anyone who would like to know how to get more involved in helping us to achieve our goals of keeping our existing privileges, and restoring lost opportunity. We have also recently received our official IRS 501-C-3 status. All donations are welcome and will be used responsibly with great attention to maintaining detailed records. Attend a monthly meeting or contact us at the email address below to learn how you may help. Contact us at; oregonanglersalliance@outlook.com See us on FB and check out our upcoming online auctions! We have almost 100 items to auction! Visit our website at www.oregonanglersalliance.org

Thank you all again for helping to restore and enhance Habitat, Hatcheries, and a sustainable harvest.

Leonard Krug
President, Oregon Anglers Alliance