

Blaine Ackley – ODFW Commission Public Forum Comments
March 6, 2015

Chair Finley, Members of the Commission, and Director Melcher, my name is Blaine Ackley and I reside in Hillsboro, Oregon. My wife and I are licensed sport fisherman and we hold salmon, steelhead, and halibut tags, the Columbia River endorsements and shellfish permits.

Thank you for affording me the time to talk to you about my ideas to increase revenue and participation of fee holders.

First, I want to congratulate Director Melcher on your appointment to the position of director

Let us move on to the reason for my visit.

Before going into details in the limited time that I have available to me, I want to use a metaphor to draw a picture of the participation problem we have with the number of people purchasing hunting and fishing licenses and Habitat Conservations Stamps.

Let us say that the owners of a business that sells goods and services to the public is losing money and market share. They come to us as business consultants for advice about their new business plan. The owners want to raise prices on their products, offer new products that their customers must purchase, and keep everything else the same except they will reduce the number of staff in the store.

Naturally we business consultants would tell them that raising prices and offering new required products that customers must purchase while reducing staff will not increase their customer market share or their profitability.

Yet, somehow when it comes to the ODFW budget, this is exactly what we are doing. It does not make sense because we know that when we raise fees, the participation will decrease. We know that requiring new licenses and fees will have the same effect. So why do we expect our financial picture to change if we keep doing what we always have done?

Here are some suggestions from an unpaid outside observer looking in. If we have lagging revenue from license fees and the sales of the Habitat Conservation Stamps, then provide everyone with an incentive to help improve sales. Here are my suggestions.

1) Use market incentives

- A) Allow a tiered commission structure for retail establishments selling licenses and Habitat Conservation Stamps. The more licenses and stamps you sell, the greater the reimbursement you will receive for doing so. I bet the difference in customer service will be quite noticeable and you, the customer, will be directed to someone who really knows something about and wants to sell you a license or a Habitat Conservation Stamp.
- B) Allow a reimbursement structure to allow fishing and hunting guides to sell annual licenses to clients.
- C) Allow a reimbursement structure for organizations and individuals to sell licenses and Habitat Conservation Stamps to their members and the public.
- D) Allow state park pay stations to sell licenses and Habitat Conservation Stamps.

2) Reduce license fees a little to see how the market responds. The state of New York has reduced the price of fishing licenses and found an increased number of participants as a result.

3) Provide incentives for sportsman to buy licenses by

- A) Expanding fishing and hunting opportunities for license holders. Examples might include elimination of the Youngs Bay salmon fishing control zone at Astoria.
- B) Creating a sales raffle for goods and services donated by businesses and guides available to license holders who purchased their licenses by a certain date.

I know you don't want to base the whole budget on an untried idea or concept, but at least have the courage to give something a try.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing a more promising budget forecast and license sales report in the future.