



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Town Hall Meeting Notes

2017-19 Budget Preparation Public Input

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Clackamas Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting
Monarch Hotel
Clackamas, Oregon
April 27, 2016**

(Meeting started 7:01)

ODFW Staff: Linda Lytle, Jeff Boechler, Bill Herber, Steve Marx, Rick Swart, Tom Murtagh, Curt Melcher, Don VandeBergh

Oregon State Police: Cpt. Jeff Samuels, Sgt. Chris Allori,

Public Participants: 23

Welcome - Melcher

Agenda Review: Melcher

Agenda:

- Staff & Public Introductions
- Ground Rules
- ODFW Overview & Recap
- How Your Investment is Working for You
- ODFW Budget Primer
- 2015-2017 Budget Snapshot
- Building the 2017-2019 Budget
- Next Step

How Your Money is Working For You Questions (Q) & Answers (A):

Wildlife Related Initiatives

Q: In reducing highway mortality and ODFW not owning a lot of land what agencies is ODFW working with on wildlife corridors?

A: ODFW is working across a spectrum of agencies. ODOT installed the wildlife underpasses under Highway 97 south of Bend to direct animals away from crossing the highway and funnel to the underpasses. This resulted in reducing deer and vehicle collisions by 90%.

Q: Economics of similar project in one of the eastern states ended up saving more in safety related costs. What money savings have happened here?

A: Would need to contact ODOT for that information.

Q: In monitoring the 90% reduction in accidents has predation increased with the funneling of prey animals into these corridors?

A: There are game cameras at the crossing sites that have shown predators using underpasses but not any evidence of predation at these sites.

Q: Is there any predator work being done in Black Tail Deer habitat?

A: One the west side there is some occurring in the Indigo unit.

Fish Related Initiatives

Q: How has the public reaction been to the simplified angling regulations?

A: Positive comments far outweigh the negative comments.

Conservation Related Initiatives

Q: Are there any predation controls in the area of the kit foxes?

A: Mainly private landowner control, not sure if any by ODFW in the kit fox area. Sure that Wildlife division would know.

Q: It seems like most of data collected is on T&E listed species. Is there data being collected on non T&E and non-hunted species?

A: Federal grants fund most of the on the ground studies and surveys. There is no designated fund so the date collected is while conducting studies/surveys on listed species. ODFW doesn't generally fund non hunted programs with hunting dollars.

NWWD Local Priorities

Fish Management overview

Q: What is the current status of valley cut-throat trout?

A: Widespread but still on federal watch list.

Q: Does ODFW do any surveying for valley cut-throat trout?

A: No dedicated program, conducted while doing other species work.

Q: How is bull trout population recovery going?

A: Population is doing well and continuing to grow. Reached first 7 year goal and reproducing on their own.

Wildlife Management overview

Q: What has ODFW seen regarding Deer Hair Loss Syndrome?

A: The evidence of DHLS has been static. Percentages don't change from year to year, however independent concentrations still see a significant amount.

Q: Any hoof problems in elk like in WA?

A: Yes, in the Scappoose unit and some in Clatsop area. Not sure of exact mechanism for transference but veterinary staff not surprised.

OSP Program Update

Q: Does OSP work with ODF during fire season and look for poaching?

A: Do fly and look for fire and other things like push up dams.

Q: is OPS/ODF looking at using drones for looking for fires?

A: Won't see drones used for law enforcement.

ODFW Budget Primer

Q: What is ODFWD doing to improve water quality in the Willamette and Columbia rivers?

A: ODW has a small water quality / quantity program in the Fish Division that is mainly GF some OF. District biologists spend time on water quality/quantity issues that are not in their funding stream.

2015-17 Budget Snapshot

Q: Most of the money is spent on conservation for big game and fisheries. What is being spent on non-hunted species?

A: Federal, general and lottery funds and conservation dollars are being spent but it's not adequate.

Hunting and Fishing License Trends

Building 17-19 Budget

Q: ODFW encourages public testimony and ideas, should the public be going to task force meetings instead of town hall meetings?

A: The taskforce work has nothing to do with the town hall meetings. The task force is looking at alternative funding models, town halls are about budget.

Next Steps

Comments, Q & A

Non-consumptive users are encouraged by the town hall process, however of the eight Town Hall meetings there are not any in the heart of downtown urban center which is where a lot of the non-consumptive users reside.

Big takeaway from the comments and presentation is that the hunting and fishing community has been funding ODFW for too long and non-consumptive users need to be more engaged (**Oregon Wild** representative).

ODFW needs to bring all the stake holders to the table.

Resources need to be enhanced by all Oregonians to form that bridge between the non-consumptive and consumptive users.

ODFW needs to expand its footprint.

Oregon resident for just a couple of years. Spends time outdoors, but not as an angler anymore. Expressed the importance of conservation and the people in the urban centers appreciate wildlife.

The extent of obligated funds seems to be spent mostly on winter range, lost habitat, and pressures. Do not think the public appreciates the biologists addressing these issues.

One of the groups that isn't represented here are the private landowners. USDA Wildlife Services appreciates being able to be funded and to work with ODFW folks on those private lands. With a focus on the conflict management the wildlife populations are doing very well in Oregon.

Encourages ODFW to continue to build the hunting and fishing population in Oregon and continue to develop the numbers of hunters and fishers while working to engage the non-consumptive community.

Doesn't seem that enough is being done to clean the rivers. It's not safe to eat the fish and would like to see more than 1 cent being dedicated.

Q: Appreciate the opportunity to engage and submit comments. What is an example on how the conservation stamp money might be used?

A: Revenues so small, just letting account accrue. Used to implement Oregon Conservation Strategy.

Q: Where are we in the status of the hatchery upgrades and smolt releases?

A: Status quo on hatcheries. Not closing and not building any new. One project in this budget regarding hatcheries is the significant improvement in the water system at Clackamas hatchery. Working with PGE for a gravity feed system and micro hydro.

Q: Sales are orientated to hunting and fishing. Are we looking at funding for other programs not revolving around hunting and fishing?

A: This is what the alternative funding taskforce is about.

Q Hearing questions about the engagement of groups around Oregon. How do people within urban areas suggest they engage more with ODFW program and services? HB2402 is an exciting process. How is the agency going to start engaging more with everyone? Any thought on how engaging now or how to engage more with nontraditional users?

A: ODFW has a wildlife area on the fringes of the metro area with 1 million visitor days that are not associated with hunting/fishing and ODFW wants expand the uses of the other wildlife areas.

Q: Is there support for more marketing toward non-consumptive users?

A: ODFW has tried to soften the approach with the wildlife area plans. New conservation strategy biologists and the Willamette Wildlife Mitigation Program. Will have 25k acres available for non-consumptive users.

Q: How is ODFW demonstrating to the public where/how the money is being spent?

A: Number of people in the non-consumptive community need a vehicle to support ODFW. ODFW is communicating to public on ODFW website and own media channels.

Q: Has ODFW ever looked at the population of the prey species and the predator species? Have seen 2 predator species increase with impact to livestock.

A: ODFW doesn't have the resources to do huge prey/predator landscape studies.

Meeting ended 9:01.

Tillamook Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting
April 28, 2016
Tillamook County Library Conference Room
Tillamook, Oregon**

(Meeting started 7:00)

ODFW Staff: Curt Melcher, Bill Herber, Steven Marx, Chris Knutsen, Robert Bradley

Oregon State Police: Cpt. Jeff Samuels, Sgt. Todd Hoodenpyl

Public Participants: ~9, including Tillamook County Commissioner Mark Labhart

Welcome—Marx

Agenda Review: Melcher

Agenda:

- Staff and Public Introductions
- Ground Rules
- Mission Statement
- 2015-2017 Biennium Recap
- How License Sales Dollars are Spent & Wildlife, Fishing, and Conservation Focus
- Local Updates from Chris Knutsen
- Mission Objectives, Regions, and Overview of OSP Budget Expenditures from Cpt. Samuels
- Budget Primer, Budget Orientation, Fund Sources and Allotment
- Budget Revenues as Compared to Expenditures—Pie Charts, Budget Timeline
- AFTF and HB 2402, Overview and Focus

Budget Presentation Questions (Q) & Answers (A):

ODFW

Q: How are federal dollars acquired and allocated?

A: Contracts, Excise Tax (PR/DJ), other

Q: OHA - Can Pioneer License cost be offset by reducing another Pioneer sales item by an equal amount?

A: This can be taken into consideration. Currently, there is no plan to do this, as the Pioneer license fee is nominal when considering the value of the license.

Q: Were there many Clackamas Town Hall Meeting public participants, and what were their concerns?

A: Clackamas had approximately 20 public participants, and their concerns were the same as Tillamook. There were many participants from the organization Oregon Wild; it was an educational experience for them, and ODFW is pleased that they are taking an interest in our operations.

Comment from Oregon Hunter's Association: The OHA supported the most recent fee increases and remain supportive of ODFW at this time.

Q: OHA - As the fee increases have cleared the budget shortfall, will a third stage of fee increases be necessary in 2020?

A: It was clarified that the budget shortfall was decreased due to management of expenditures and a small increase in sales prior to the fee increases. ODFW is working toward maintaining cash flow to reflect sound fiscal management. There is currently not enough revenue to sustain operations for a full month in the event of a federal government shutdown, or other unforeseen event.

Comment from OHA: OHA is concerned for the consumer value of the licenses, tags, and validations in regard to their opportunity to use said items.

Q: OHA - What is the source of revenue to support non-game species (for example, The Fisher Plan)? What is the priority structure for game vs. non-game revenue for consumptive uses?

A: Fisher and non game support are mostly paid for with policy packages and federal dollars; they are not solely supported by hunting and fishing fees.

Q: OHA - In regard to wolf implementation, Phase 2 of the Wolf Plan expects a 25% increase in positions and revenue needed to observe and manage wolves in the 17-19 budget. Why is such a large increase projected?

A: Western Oregon wolf management of the Cascades will present more challenges than Eastern Oregon, as the wolves will be harder to track and locate. Currently, District Staff are responding to depredation reports. However, as the wolf population grows, more positions and funding will be needed to meet these challenges.

OSP—Cpt. Jeff Samuels

Q: OHA - Is overtime pay warranted for OSP; are there any alternatives as opposed to overtime pay for troopers? Member of public asked if OSP could use volunteers and/or cameras to avoid having to pay overtime.

A: Cameras are in use in some areas. Assistance from volunteers, tip lines, and retirees are always encouraged and appreciated. Retiree volunteer program cannot be expanded due to union regulations. The few troopers available are covering a large area, and overtime is necessary and unavoidable.

Comment from OHA: OHA has been supportive of the OSP operations, and will continue to be supportive.

(Meeting ended at 8:30)

Roseburg Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting
May 3, 2016
ODFW Conference Room
Roseburg, OR**

Meeting 7 p.m. – 8: p.m.

ODFW Staff: Curt Melcher, Bill Herber, Steve Marx, Tim Walters, Greg Huchko, Meghan Dugan, Tod Lum, DeWaine Jackson

OSP Staff: Jeff Samuels, Curt Ashenfelter

Public Participants: 16

Welcome: Steve Marx

Agenda Review/Presentation: Curt Melcher

OSP Presentation: Jeff Samuels

Q: Did you advocate for other funds?

A: We advocated for General Fund (GF) support for field biologists. Our GF was at 2 percent; we started advocating 3 years ago to restore some GF support because we know some of our staff is providing benefits to Oregonians not directly related to hunting and fishing. Now we have 8 percent GF.

Q: Curt challenged us to find a public service not being done now that was done 18 months ago (position cuts). The fish counts at Winchester Dam is a concern for Steamboaters and others.

A: We cut the fish counter position to 1/3 time and went to statistical model for counts.

Q: How will you recoup the cost of ODFW assistance to other agencies? It's sometimes hard to get interagency funding.

A: HB 3315 lets us recoup costs of ODFW assistance. Different ways, such as Water Resources raise application fee to recover ODFW cost; ODOT pays ODFW staff to work on their projects. In interim, we started to track and prepare statements showing ODFW hours and rate and can start showing them invoices as of July 2017 so they know in advance how to plan. Start billing in 2019.

Q: Has the wolf come into predator management?

A: We removed 4 wolves because they were killing livestock. We may have ungulate issues related to predators/increased wolf population.

Q: Can ODFW partner w/tribes to use sea lions for subsistence?

A: I can't speak for the tribes but they are interested in seeing sea lion populations controlled. They are supporting us (our efforts). You wouldn't want to eat these animals – we've done a lot of testing.

Q: How did ODFW's investment lead to improved returns on the Columbia? Did you invest more in hatchery production?

That production is all federally funded. Big factor in higher returns is improved out-migration survival. Hatchery fish go back to the hatchery, but wild fish returns improved due to better habitat. 160K run currently is 85 percent hatchery.

Q: How are you balancing hatcheries w/conservation when only 2 percent of your budget goes to conservation?

A: Much of our funding goes to conservation work. The 2 percent of our budget reflects a dedicated conservation recovery program that focuses solely on conserving native stocks.

Q: Is ODFW partnering to get past gridlock in allowing timber harvest? Are there any dollars allocated to get more timber cut to help deer and elk?

A: We met w/federal agencies; they asked for hard data that says exactly what the deer and elk need. The Black-tailed Deer Study is providing that information.

Q: Is there an increase in elk populations from the Forest Service partnership to improve forage (Umpqua National Forest)

A: There is a lot of elk sign in those areas. Our work is limited to federal lands and is limited by what the feds can do themselves. They've been a very good partner.

Q: ODFW is competing with other states, not just other activities (hunter recruitment/retention). As we get hunting articles, we always see "don't apply to Oregon." The opportunity is down, it's harder to get tags. We can go to other states and have better opportunity.

A: There's two things going on – non-resident fees are very high. To apply for preference points, you need to get a license. Also, we have statutory cap – only 5 percent of tags can go to non-residents. We did lower non-resident fee in last budget cycle.

Q: How much hunter money is going out of state?

A: We don't know the answer; it would take a serious survey.

Q: Non-resident hunting – you'd expect a drop based on higher fees.

A: New fees in 2010; there was a decline but there was also a downturn in the general economy that may have influenced the number of purchases along w/the increase in tag fees. After that, numbers have remained stable.

Q: How many hunting licenses were sold in the 1980s-1990s?

A: We sold 300,000 to 400,000 in the 1970s.

Q: This (previous answer) tells a lot about the opportunity. We're not getting to give our kids the same opportunity we had. We need to recognize the opportunity is not there. I don't see where, in 5-10 years, we can get deer back in to areas where wildfires and habitat restoration projects are helping them. The environmentalists are suing you. Do we as hunters have to sue you to get more deer and elk?

A: ODFW is not subjected to NEPA so it's more difficult for them to sue us.

C: I have 6 kids, none hunt, very little fishing. When I was a kid in Winchester, kids were lined on the banks for opening day trout.

C: We have one of the most beautiful rivers in the U.S., but we can't keep trout. Don't give me excuse that hatchery trout compete w/native trout. We can't have a fishery for our kids.

Q: Do you work w/timber for land access, etc.?

A: We generally have good relationships; staff are in discussions w/them on fee access.

Q: Is there any budget for a citizen's advisory group of general anglers with ODFW and OSP to work together before your angling regulation meetings? Blame goes to OSP and ODFW to not involve us.

A: Our angling simplification started with trout; next step will look more at salmon and steelhead.

Q: What is edible portion? Waste of wildlife wording is a problem. Other states have addressed it.

A: ODFW can't change statutes.

C: In Douglas County, we went as a group (forestry, ranching, hunting) to the Legislature regarding predator management. We appreciate the increase in the budget. As landowners, we're going to self-tax to help bridge gap in predator management.

Q: Does ODFW have any remorse for wolves? Every county should take care of wolves themselves.

A: ODFW didn't introduce them to Oregon; they swam across the Snake River from Idaho.

Q: We should be able to go through private land to get to public lands – too many private gates that exclude access.

A: Encourage you to talk to your local reps. ODFW doesn't have administrative role in trespass.

C: As a rancher, we are appreciative of what you've done. Predator control is a real problem.

C: When you look at the broad population, used to be 40-50 percent that hunted, now it's under 10 percent.

Q: Bass prey on lamprey – what are you doing about them?

A: ODFW took bass limits off for the Umpqua to provide opportunity and emphasize native fish management. However, now there's a health advisory for consumption.

C: I'd like to see more law enforcement emphasis on stopping guides from holding fish out of water.

Q: Any plan to eradicate smallmouth bass on the Coquille River system?

A: It's very hard to eliminate a non-native.

C: Fish counting at Winchester Dam is critical for the Coastal Multispecies Management Plan. This should be a priority in funding allocation. Also, there was past success in stocking steelhead and salmon smolts in various places on the North Umpqua which spread out angling opportunity when the adults returned.

Q: Where do funds collected for citations and restitutions go?

A: Restitution funds go to ODFW and citations go to General Funds (Jeff Samuels).

Local Highlights: Tim Walters

Wildlife/Hunting:

- Initiated pilot study on Indigo and Dixon units to collar more than 30 deer in each unit. These deer are selectively picking more open areas. More bucks than we thought.
- Cooperative agreement w/the Forest Service primarily w/Diamond Lake Ranger District to improve forage areas for deer and elk by opening these areas up.
- Use tetracycline laced baits to give us bear population estimates to provide as much hunting opportunity as possible.
- We are managing the new 590-acre Coquille Valley Wildlife Area to balance agriculture and fish and wildlife needs.

Fish/Angling:

- Excellent protected fly water on the North Umpqua. ODFW balances needs and habitat concerns of wild fish with opportunities. We put in fish ladder at Rock Creek Hatchery – able to remove hatchery fish. Hatchery fish provide harvest opportunity up to Rock Creek on the North Umpqua.
- Restricted North Umpqua steelhead fishery to balance conservation and opportunity.
- Work with PacifiCorp to do habitat restoration in Rock Creek. We have a biologist dedicated to habitat restoration in the Umpqua Basin, primarily focused on Coho.
- Diamond Lake fishery restoration 2006; one tui chub found fall 2015 – staff formed stakeholder committee, will stock with tiger trout to prey on chub. Hiring seasonals to do more monitoring.
- Ford's Pond will reopen; warm water fishery.
- Lamprey ramp at Winchester Dam.
- Surveys for Umpqua Chub.

Coos Bay Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting Notes
May 4, 2016
North Bend, OR
North Bend Public Library**

(Meeting started at 7:00pm)

ODFW: Curt Melcher, Bill Herber, Steve Marx, Tim Walters, Russ Stauff, Mike Gray, Stuart Love, John McLaughlin

OSP: Capt. Jeff Samuels, Sr. Trooper Ryan Keeler

Public Participants: ~ 12

Participants of Note: Bob Main, Coos Co. Commissioner; F&W Commissioner Bob Webber

Welcome/Agenda: Steve Marx

Presentation: Curt Melcher, Tim Walters, Russ Stauff, Capt. Jeff Samuels

TWO-ROD ANGLING LICENSE

Q: Is there any effort to expand the 2-rod endorsement to Ocean fishing?

A: Not at this time. Ocean seasons & seasons on the Columbia R. are set w/the involvement of other agencies/states. Party fishing is allowed in the ocean and lower Col. R., which essentially allows for multiple rods per angler.

Q: If the Two-Rod Angling License were allowed for salmon fishing in Coos Bay, and you landed a fish with one of your rods, and immediately the other rod had a bite on, would it be a violation if you did not immediately tag the first fish, so that you could land the second one?

A: You must tag the first fish before you deal with the second one. The Two-Rod Angling License has met with very positive response in the Willamette system; most of the participants are Anglers fishing alone or with one other person.

HATCHERY

Q: It was mentioned that Cole Rivers Hatchery will increase the number of Spring Chinook smolts to 1.75 million (from 1.62 million) – where will they be released?

A: They are released at the Hatchery, where they will also return. The fishery for these fish is all the way from the lower Rogue to the Hatchery.

BUDGET

Q: There's a \$10 fee for fishing on any tributary of the Columbia R; does the Agency benefit from these funds?

A: The Columbia River Basin Endorsement is an Other Fund- Dedicated fund type and can only be used for a specific purpose, which is Col. R. fishery management; it cannot be used as part of our General Fund.

ENFORCEMENT

Q: Is there a portion of the proceeds from citations going back to ODFW? How often does the State seek restitution for violations? Troopers write citations for a certain dollar amount; I think there should be some discussion about including restitution as part of the judgment for the violation to reimburse the efforts of the Agency. Education should be offered to the public about the cost of enforcement. (Questioner is a Judge. He indicated that there is an upcoming Judicial Conference, and they could be “reminded” about seeking restitution in wildlife violations/criminal cases.)

A: Whether or not restitution is imposed is determined through the court process. Usually fines are consistent with the amount for which the Trooper wrote the citation. There is a House Bill that addresses restitution; specifically, to increase restitution in the illegal take of big horn sheep.

PIONEER LICENSE

Comment: I think the new fee for the Pioneer License is a good thing, because it allows ODFW to pick up Federal funding that it was not getting previously.

Q: If a person has lived in Oregon for 50 years and has turned 65, for example in May, why can't he purchase a Pioneer Combo for the following year?

A: Licenses, including Pioneer Combos, are issued for the calendar year. One change implemented this year allows a person who is turning 65 at any point in that calendar year, to purchase a Pioneer Combo without having to wait for their birthday. Licenses for the following year can be purchased in December.

Comment: I purchased an Angling License earlier in the year, and when I turned 65 I wanted to get a Pioneer Combo, but couldn't because I had already purchased an Angling License. There should be better education to the public about their eligibility to purchase a Pioneer Combo in December for the following year, when they will be turning 65 in that following year.

Q: Where do the matching Federal funds for the Pioneer Combo come from? Wasn't ODFW already getting those funds?

A: The matching funds come from the Federal excise tax on the purchase of ammunition and fishing tackle. Because the Pioneer Combo was previously being issued as a free license, we were missing out on the Federal dollars for those licenses; those dollars are only matched for licenses that are actually purchased.

LICENSE SALES

Comment: In 1980, ODFW was selling 600,000 Angling Licenses vs. only 500,000 Angling Licenses today. Even though the population in the state has increased significantly, ODFW has lost 100,000 license sales. I see a huge demographic issue with declining sales that are relied upon so heavily for funding.

Response: On a per capita basis, participation is declining. We're exploring new market strategies to resolve this issue.

Comment: There has to be a decline in Hunting License sales also due to the fact that private timber companies are increasing the amount for permits to hunt those lands, and Federal agencies closing roads which limits access to hunting areas.

Response: This certainly seems to be a contributing factor.

HUNTING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

Comment: The Game Commission has contended that game animals belong to the state; and yet hunters have to pay a permit fee to hunt that state resource on private timber company lands; therefore, I think the state should charge a fee to the timber companies when a game animal is taken on their land.

Response: Historically, private property owners have charged fees for the use of their lands, and this is within their rights.

Comment: Timber companies are corporations and should be treated differently than other private property owners; I think that's wrong.

Response: We appreciate that.

ANGLING OPPORTUNITIES

Comment: Non-Resident Anglers come to Oregon for the fishing opportunities, but if there are no fish, they won't come. Oregon should have Terminal Hatcheries in every port. There was a bill to plant Spring Chinook in the Coos R. system and Yaquina Bay, but it's gained no traction; this has implications for license sales. The Great Lakes has created multi-million dollar salmon fisheries, as an example.

Response: The Commission has adopted the plan to add more fish into these waters, but the money to make it happen isn't there; Sen. Roblin is currently working on this issue.

Comment: The state demographics show that 50% of the population lives in the Portland Metro area, and 75% of the population resides in the northern part of the state (from Eugene north). There is excellent education available for beginning anglers, but it's too generalized. I taught a class in our area that was more localized. If the classes were focused more locally and we could provide more mentorship, I think beginning anglers would be more excited about fishing and turn into license buyers.

Response: This kind of education (locally focused and mentor style) would depend a lot on local club involvement.

Comment: Students should also be able to fish for free as part of the class.

Response: We're offering that now – there is an education exemption.

Q: How does the public hear about Angling education opportunities? How can I find information on the ODFW website?

A: We do advertise the classes. As far as where to find it on the website, we'll get with you after the meeting.

ENFORCEMENT PRESENCE

Comment: There are only 2, maybe 3 troopers covering our area; poaching and spotlighting is a big problem; we would like to see the trooper numbers increased to 5 troopers. License fees are high and therefore, many are opting to hunt illegally.

Response: (Captain Samuels) Adequate staffing is a high priority for OSP.

SPORT REGULATIONS

Comment: I recently bought an Angling License and I'm new to fishing; the regulations are very daunting for a beginner like me. I'm afraid that I could easily violate the regulations accidentally.

Response: We know that regulations in general are a barrier to the public because of their complexity, especially for someone with little or no experience, and no mentor. Concerted efforts to simplify regulations began a year and a half ago, beginning with trout and warm water fishing. We have received positive feedback from anglers on the simplification and new format, but this has also met with some controversy from certain members of the public. (Anglers who have their favorite fishery and specific regulations.)

LOCAL STAFF

Comment: I've had very positive interactions with Stuart and other staff in the Charleston Field Office; they're excellent to deal with. Also, I recently got to attend a birthday party at the Morgan Creek Fish Hatchery. Tom Rumreich is phenomenal, and it turned out to be a good educational experience and the facility was laid out well, too.

HABITAT

Comment: Juniper trees are important habitat for deer and shouldn't be removed. They provide shade in the Summer and cover in the Winter.

Response: Juniper encroachment is clearly a problem and research shows that removing them is a benefit; they draw significant amounts of water from the ground. Shade can be a benefit, but Junipers can also deplete important forage for deer.

Comment: Environmentalists want to take out all the Juniper, but Fir trees draw 80 gallons of water a day, and clear cutting them has caused streams to dry up or become brackish; trees actually hold water in the ground.

Response: There is evidence of stream flow improvement after removing Junipers.

(Meeting ended at 8:45pm)

Newport Town Hall Meeting

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Town Hall Budget Meeting Notes Newport – May 5, 2016

Attendance:

About 10 public members along with several local ODFW staff, OSP and Lincoln County Commissioner Terry Thompson (visiting as a fisherman) and State Representative David Gomberg were present.

Agenda:

- Introductions
- Recap of last biennium
- How Wildlife dollars are spent
- How Fish dollars are spent
- Conservation
- Marine Update
- OSP – What they do and where funds come from
- Budget Overview – Expenditures and Revenues
- Governor’s Focus Areas
- Alternative Task Force – HB2402

General Comments and Questions:

- Q: Is anything begin done about sea lions in the ocean?
 A: Our focus is currently on the Columbia. Curt Melcher explained the process in order to add the coast to our watch.
- Q: Public would like to know when they might see management from information collected in the Oregon Stock Assessment?
 A: Marine is continuing to collect data to work on the stock assessment.
- Q: Why not increase the fees all at once instead of over 6 years?
 A: After a public survey was conducted, the public preferred the incremental option. The budget was adopted July 1, 2015 for fees to begin January 1, 2016 in the next year.
- Q: Can any revenues come from the Marijuana taxes to help fund OSP enforcement?
 A: Marijuana distribution businesses just began this year, so there is currently no history to verify possible percentages. However, some of those taxes might be a possible revenue. It’s already being looked into. More knowledge and info will be available after this first year.
- Q: Dollars from fish licenses – Where does fish monitoring come from?
 A: As part of Management/Conservation plans. Always conditional on funding (e.g. counts @ Winchester).

Q: Concerned with County Trappers funding?

A: Currently it is stable and is the same will be offered the same as 2015 – 2017.

Q: Is the third fee increase set in stone or needed?

A: If alternative funding is found, we do not have to use the third increase. It will be the first item set aside.

Q: Is there a way to track daily license buyer's resident/non-resident status?

A: Currently, that is not a requirement as it is the same price for both resident and non-resident. Social security numbers are not required either because they are not entered into the point of sale system. They are hand-written licenses.

Comment: (Terry Thompson) ODFW is a complete failure in fishing management when it comes to the Deacon Rock fish. Throw out data from past fisheries on the blue/black/Deacon fish due to so many misidentifications. Look into putting a cap on vessels for rock fish period, no matter what color or species – just a rockfish cap.

(Public) Can we ask for more emphasis on education of identifying the blue/black/Deacon rockfish?

(Maggie – Marine) Shared that ODFW is starting to collect data now on the Deacon.

(Public) Can we look into stretching the timeframe for fishing for rockfish and specifically the Deacons? The fishery seems to be better now – but more would be welcomed.

(Public) Would like to see a prepaid youth daily fishing license offered since the youth prices have decreased. Why not discount a daily for youth?

(Public) What about offering an additional youth program opportunity in the summertime closer to July 4th that would be “kids only” free fishing day? The current free fishing is in the spring during school time and sometimes hard to take time off for parents.

(Public) Just participated in a youth educational event and found out that ODFW offers free youth licenses for educational events. They spoke very highly of ODFW kids' educational opportunities and hope ODFW continues.

(Public) Is there more dollars available to obtain more cormorant hazers? Cormorant flocks are increasing in some areas, particularly near the Alsea and need more assistance with hazing to help protect smolts.

(Public) Would like to see more opportunities like investing in rockfish monitoring and stock assessment funding.

(Public) Feels that fishing licenses are inexpensive for his 40 – 60 trips a year for entertainment and enjoyment. If you go often, it's a bargain.

(Public) Feels that the One Day Licenses are too high at \$19 each.

Compliment:

(Terry Thompson) Public complimented ODFW for going above and beyond with the sage grouse plan. They appreciate the efforts and looking forward to the continuation of sage grouse.

Wildlife Viewing:

- Q: Is there a way to manage any revenues from wildlife viewing around the facilities that ODFW owns and maintains?
- A: Yes, the Wildlife Parking Permit is already in place. The funds from the permit help with maintenance on the bathrooms, garbage, and parking areas.

Klamath Falls Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting
Proposed 2017-2019 Budget
May 10, 2016
Mount Bailey Room, Oregon Institute of Technology
Klamath Falls, Oregon**

(Meeting started 7:00pm)

ODFW Staff: Curt Melcher, Bruce Eddy, Alan Dale, Bill Herber

Oregon State Police: Captain Jeff Daniels

Public Participants: ~15

Welcome – Eddy

Agenda Review: Eddy

Agenda:

- Staff & Public Introductions
- Ground Rules
- Review of Handouts
- Oregon Hunting, Fishing & Conservation Highlights
- Budget Overview

Budget Presentation Questions (Q) & Answers (A):

Q: How have the percentages of the budget funding changed over time/have they changed substantially?

A: Lottery funding has always been small and about the same percent of the budget. General funds have changed much more over time, with a high of 15-20% and a low of 2%. Fishing and hunting revenues have stayed steady at around 50%.

OSP

Q: You (OSP) have funding from the Marine Board for patrol on waters, and some counties also get Marine Board funding. Is there overlap there, or is it divided up?

A: There are a few counties that do not get funding from the Marine Board, although most of them do. We work closely with the Marine Deputies to make sure we are not stepping on each other's' toes and not duplicating work. One of the biggest differences in the work that OSP Fish & Wildlife Troopers do and the work that the Marine Deputies do is that OSP Troopers incorporate a lot of their marine board work into checking anglers and other activities involving fishing and hunting activities. We also get involved in Marine Board work around water fowl and other places where water craft are utilized. The counties that are working with the Marine board work for the most part do not do enforcement.

Q: I own a canoe that has never been on the water. Would it be legal to take it down to a boat ramp to see if it floats?

A: To set it in the lake, no. If you wanted to get out and row around in it, you would need the proper number of life jackets for the number of people on board, some sort of sound-producing device like a whistle or air-horn, and if it is 10 feet or longer you would need an Aquatic Invasive Species permit.

ODFW

Q: There are habitat implications in what the Oregon Department of Forestry has done in the Siskiyou Region (SW Oregon part) with different riparian guidelines than other Westside Forests, and they are somehow equating it with Eastern Region. What steps, if any, the commission is taking to try to interface with the Department of Forestry to let them know that the Salmon are important money producer and recreation producer?

A: We do engage with the Department of Forestry collaboratively on a whole host of. We have ODFW District staff that engage at a local level. We also have one Forest Practices Acquisition staff at ODFW, and his sole role is to work with the Department of Forestry, the Board of Forestry, and BLM on issues just like the one you are mentioning. We can get you his contact information after the meeting.

Q: Do you put any money into the predator control programs?

A: Yes, we have a number of different predator-related activities that we fund. A general fund appropriation that comes to ODFW, about \$500k per biennium, that is distributed to wildlife services for implementing their statewide programs for any county that has a program. They use the funds to supplement their local and federal money.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture also gets the same general funds appropriation that they distribute. We also use \$200k or \$300k of licensing funds to wildlife services for bear and cougar work, primarily as it relates to human safety issues. We have the ability to fund them specifically for wolf issues, but they have had some issues with having the proper coverage to do that work. We are working with the Federal Agency closely on wolf issues, however, including a meeting this week in Pendleton about non-lethal control methods.

We do a number of mule deer initiatives, including coyote control work that is happening in these areas. We also have cougar control in the target areas, using paid agents, wildlife services, or volunteers to go out and remove cougars. For example, in the Umpqua area, we were just able to remove 30 cougars.

Q: Do the advertisements in the new regulations generate much revenue? Plans to continue and enhance the advertising?

A: Advertising revenue is a big component for us. We did it to change and improve our image as well as to increase advertising sales. We have a maximum number of ads we can have, and we are not close to that number yet. We are contracting with a third-party agency for Ad sales, and their revenue is based on advertising sales. The goal of the new regulations and advertising sales is to have zero cost, not to gain revenue. We are already expecting an increase in advertisements for the next regulations because of expressed interest.

Q: For the High Cascade elk hunt, it was put in so that the hunters could get to the high country. Why does it go clear down to I-5 and South of Eugene? Why can't you hunt both deer and elk during elk season there anymore?

A: One reason is that the Cascade elk hunt goes farther North and there is no clear demarcation of where to stop. It was meant to open up the Cascade Range to Bull Elk hunting, but we had to close it for deer season. We closed it for deer season because of enforcement issues as well as the number of hunters. Elk hunters hunting the east side did not necessarily want a deer tag also. Additionally, issues around party tags needed to be addressed and cleaned up.

Q: In the new regulations, the Wood River has specified types of trout that are acceptable, but other streams (offshoots) it does not specify the type of trout, but only the quantity and size. Why is that?

A: During the last set of public meetings, we heard loud and clear that everyone wanted the regulations to be simpler. In order to do that, we had to start consolidating somewhere. If you go north of here and

you get to the Cascade tributaries, there is a significant amount of fishing pressure. In order to simplify the regulations across the state, we needed to put down a conservative regulation that fit in with conservation efforts and to create uniformity in the regulations. There is opportunity to harvest fish, including Brown Trout and warm water fish.

Comments

Comment: The fishing pressure for salmon on the Rogue River has been increasing up to the point that it seems impossible to compete and get fish. It would be nice if there was a limit on hatchery fish so that there is a more equal opportunity to catch salmon.

Response: We have found that those people with the most fish tend to find a way around the rules and catch more fish than allowed. We would like to have more accurate reporting and a higher limit over incorrect information and people choosing to not follow the regulations, but it is a trade-off.

Meeting ended at 8:30pm

Bend Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Budget Town Hall Meeting
May 11, 2016
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm
COCC Campus: Bend, Oregon**

Attendance

ODFW Bend & Prineville (5):

Bob Hooton, Chip Dale, Brett Hodgson, Randy Lewis, Katie Passarelli

ODFW Headquarters and Region (3): Curt Melcher, Bill Herber, Bruce Eddy

Oregon State Police (3):

Captain Jeff Samuels, Sergeant Lowell Lea, **Lieutenant** Carl Rhodes

Public: 20 Attendees

Presentations

Bruce Eddy

- Welcome
- Agenda Review
- Grounds Rules/ Expectations

Curt Melcher

- Welcome
- ODFW Mission Refresher
- Overview of Workforce
- Oregon Hunting and Fishing and Conservation Highlights
- Budget and Funding Overview
- Last Biennium Recap
- Current and Projected Budget
- How License Dollars are Being Spent

Bob Hooton

- Deschutes Watershed Overview
- Fish and Wildlife Highlights, Projects and Accomplishments

Captain Samuels

- OSP Wildlife Division Overview
- Budget and Funding Overview

Discussion

OSP Q & A:

Q: There are 119 Wildlife Troopers in the state, is that lower than the historical number?

A: (*Capt. Samuels*) Yes, but the number of Wildlife Troopers has been relatively stable in recent years.

Q: Is there any intent to increase the number of Wildlife Troopers?

A: (*Capt. Samuels*) Yes, but we are more focused on increasing overtime hours instead of increasing the number of troopers.

A: (*Curt Melcher*) The budget taskforce asked us what an ideal agency budget looks like. Adding more Wildlife Troopers was on the list under an ideal budget situation.

Comment: (*Trent Smith- Durgan Ranch*)

Commends OSP Wildlife Troopers for their presence in very remote areas of the state. Their ranch is 70 miles East of Prineville and he sees the Wildlife Troopers often (especially during times of high hunter activity).

Q: There is a high number of deer fatalities in the area, is it related to speed? Do you work with other agencies and counties to reduce instances of wildlife fatalities caused by vehicles?

A: (*Capt. Samuels*) It is not usually a result of speed. But we do work with other law enforcement to make an impact on an area, especially with impaired motorists.

ODFW Q & A:

Q: Do any of the dollars go to cougar removal in MDI areas?

A: Yes, in the past we've had cougar removal in the Steens, and in the Warner and Heppner units. We are expanding.

Q: Is the *C. Shasta* parasite a problem?

A: Local fish are resistant to the parasite, but private ponds with privately run hatchery trout are not resistant.

Q: Do you have to submit grant proposals for lottery funds?

A: No, the lottery fund is a direct appropriation. The agency doesn't have to apply for grants to get lottery funds.

Q: How does the current \$94 million figure compare to the last biennium?

A: It is similar, not a huge difference.

Q: How can conservationists go about advocating for more general funding when they are not hunters or anglers contributing to license dollars?

A: Appreciate their support of the agency. Suggest contacting local representatives to get them involved to support the agency and funding decisions. Additionally support Alternative Funding Task Force recommendations to legislature.

Q: Are troopers doing more in the scope of their job than what is covered in the budget?

A: Yes, ODFW and OSP do a lot more than what is outlined in the budget. There should be an obligation for the public for funding the agency. ODFW and OSP often help the public with things that are not related to hunting and fishing (like getting cougars out of trees in residential areas).

Q: Are you concerned about the increase of Pioneers and the effect it will have on the budget? Why is ODFW offering essentially free licenses and half price elk tags when ODFW needs funding?

A: It is a concern, which is why our agency began charging \$6.00 for Pioneer licenses. We did this so the agency could still receive the federal match dollars for those hunters and anglers. The Pioneer license was made free of charge by the legislature 15 years ago, they like being able to offer this license.

Q: Are you concerned with the negative trend (-2%) of resident anglers in the state reported in the first quarter?

A: There is annual variability, which is most likely responsible for this figure. Expect it to change.

Q: Do you budget for the amount of time biologists spend on land use applications for counties? It seems like they are spending more and more time working on this.

A: We don't, we don't have the authority to bill other entities like counties right now. We are launching an online tool for field staff to track their time so we can get a real representation of the time being spent on this.

Q: Is there a possibility for an excise tax on other outdoor recreation equipment like bikes, climbing & hiking gear? These user groups also enjoy deer and elk.

A: There are ideas like that on the budget taskforce list of potential funding options.

Q: What happened to the idea of taxing bird seed?

A: That was not an ODFW proposal, it was Kitzhaber, but that idea is on the taskforce list. It would be about 5 cents per pound of bird seed, which equates to \$2 million dollars of revenue.

Q: Is there a risk of losing general funds if the agency finds other funding alternatives?

A: Sure that is a risk, but we would rather try and seek more funding options than not trying at all.

Q: What is ODFW's role in the upper Deschutes restoration?

A: (*Bob Hooton*) We are working together with USFWS and irrigation districts. There will be some mediation for trying to come up with conservation measures.

Q: Is there any funding for restoration work?

A: Restoration work is mostly done by Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), which comes from lottery funds.

Comment: (*private fish producer*)

Has seen a very large increase of fish orders from California after marketing campaigns.

Comment: (*public attendee*)

If the agency's budget gets drastically cut in the future, please don't cut the field biologists, they are an integral part of the agency.

Q: How has the public participation been at the other budget town hall meetings you've already had? How does the number of people compare to this meeting?

A: We have 20 people at this meeting, and it is almost tied for the largest turnout. The largest meeting was Clackamas, which had 22 people attend. The meeting with the lowest participation had 7 people attend.

Comment: (*public attendee*)

Feels that there would be more public participation if we posted meeting information at agent IPOS stations.

La Grande Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting
May 12, 2016
Island City Hall
Island City, Oregon**

(Meeting started 7:00)

ODFW Staff: Curt Melcher, Bill Herber, Bruce Eddy, Mike Harrington, Elizabeth Moats, Jeff Yanke, Tim Bailey, Leonard Erickson, Adrienne Averett

Oregon State Police: Cpt. Jeff Samuels

Commissioners and Dignitaries: Mark Davidson (Union County Commissioner), Jim Nash (Alternative Funding Task Force), Richard Haines (EBAC).

Public Participants: ~20

Welcome: Bruce Eddy

Agenda Review: Bruce Eddy

- Staff & Public Introductions
- Ground Rules
- Review of handouts-
- Oregon Hunting, Fishing & Conservation Highlights
- Budget Overview

Budget PowerPoint Presentation: Director Melcher

Questions (Q) & Answers (A)

Q: Is there talk about a Sports Pac for seniors?

A (Director Melcher): Our license criteria is described in statute, but we will note the recommendation for a Senior Citizen Sports Pac.

Q: We are seeing fee increases, but what are we getting for it? We are seeing more predators and less big game.

A (Director Melcher): We allow cougar removal year round and hunters can buy multiple tags, which is everything we can do statutorily. We acknowledge the effect of cougars on wildlife and we currently have four cougar target areas throughout the state. Director Melcher described results of the East Umpqua target area.

Q (Kent Beebe): The greatest predator of doe's is the cougar, but bears are also an issue. Why aren't we increasing bear tags?

A (Director Melcher): Our bear numbers are higher. We would need to talk to the local biologist to get specific details.

Comment (Union County Commissioner Davidson): Counties would appreciate an increased level of support to the Wildlife Control District.

A (Director Melcher): We provide close to \$500,000 to Wildlife Services per biennium. If Legislature allocated additional funds to Wildlife Service's we would be happy to pass that along.

Comment: We would like more support of Wildlife Services.

Q: Is ODFW staffing stable?

A (Director Melcher): Under current budget, we expect staffing to remain stable.

Q: Are hatchery fish harming wild fish.

A (Director Melcher): Research shows that there are negative effects in some situations.

Q: How much of Wildlife Service's time is used managing the state's wildlife? We want increased support of Wildlife Services.

A (Director Melcher): The Department would have to increase fees to dedicate more funds to predator management.

A (Dave Williams, Wildlife Services): The Department allocates approximately \$100,000/biennium specifically for bear, cougar, and wolf management.

Q (Todd Nash): Would ODFW consider turning over wolf depredation investigations to Wildlife Services?

A (Director Melcher): It is open to discussion.

A (Bruce Eddy): The current requirement for ODFW to do wolf depredation investigations is part of the Wolf Plan adopted by the Commission. The Commission is currently reviewing the Plan and would like to hear suggestions.

Comment: It is frustrating that Wildlife Services is not making the call on depredation.

Comment (Bill Tsiatsos): Private landowners are feeding all of the elk and MO's are too high.

Q: Is there a model to handle deer populations in Union City?

A (Director Melcher): This is a common issue and the easy solution is to hunt them. However, hunting in town is problematic and there is no easy solution.

Q: Does deer feces have bacteria in it?

A (Director Melcher): Not sure what bacteria's are in wildlife feces, probably an e. coli bacteria of some kind.

A (Bruce Eddy): Can't recall a report of disease being transmitted from bacteria in deer or elk feces to humans in Oregon.

Meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

Portland Town Hall Meeting

**Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
Town Hall Budget Meeting
Doubletree Inn
Portland, Oregon
May 26, 2016**

(Meeting started 7:01)

ODFW Staff: Jeff Boechler, Bill Herber, Steve Marx, Rick Swart, Curt Melcher, Rick Hargrave

Oregon State Police: Cpt. Jeff Samuels

Public Participants: 57

Welcome - Melcher

Agenda Review: Melcher

Agenda:

- Staff & Public Introductions
- Ground Rules
- ODFW Overview & Recap
- How Your Investment is Working for You
- ODFW Budget Primer
- 2015-2017 Budget Snapshot
- Building the 2017-2019 Budget
- Next Step

Steve Marx – housekeeping items; thanked people for coming; welcome and introductions, ground rules, ODFW overview and recap, how your investment is working, ODFW budget primer, 2015-17 budget snapshot, hunting and fishing license trends, and building the 2017-19 budget.

Ground rules – End on time (8:30); raise hand to make a comment or ask a question; stay on point with comments & questions; be respectful of others; turn off cell phones.

Curt Melcher – welcomed people; said we want this to be informal; introduced commissioner Greg Wooley; talked about the mission, the workforce, 33 hatcheries, 16 wildlife areas, 93 offices, we own in excess of 500 buildings; 1,200 employees; have merged regions from seven to two regions (east & west), and nine watersheds.

Recapped last biennium’s budget – it was challenging; there was a “gap”; addressed budget gap through a number of strategies; a significant portion of our budget is federal funds; we don’t get reimbursed for federal work until we do the work; the federal repayments can happen slowly or quickly; we had months when our balance was effectively “zero”; due to a number of things we put in place about two years ago, including force reductions (50 positions), program reductions, fund shifts, fee restructuring, and took a rigorous look at our operations to see how we could operate more efficiently.

Operational efficiencies – a continuous process

As the result of those actions, our cash flow situation is now much better; our ending balance is solidly in the 20 million balance; we'd like to have at least three months of operating reserves (\$39 million); we don't have to lay awake at night wondering if we're going to make payroll.

We came out of the legislative session with what we consider a very strong budget package (thanks to the support of many constituents and the legislature).

Melcher mentioned how general fund support had fallen from as high as 20% of the ODFW budget, down to 2% or 3%. This year it is now back up to 8%. Our fish biologists are now 25 percent general fund supported.

Talked about the legislature and the directive to find alternative funding, and HB2402 and HB3315, with the goal of putting ODFW on a solid footing for the next 5 years. He talked about staff work that is currently not funded, which will change in 2019 when ODFW will be able to bill other agencies, i.e., staff time for processing water permits.

How your hunting dollar is spent – out of every dollar: 44c is game management, 27c is enforcement, 15c is administration, 7c is habitat restoration, and 6c is regional staff.

Wildlife – Continuing mule deer initiative, i.e., juniper removal, predator management, and reducing highway mortality; focus on black-tailed deer and new technology for popular monitoring. We are spending a lot of dollars on wetlands and habitat restoration, and purchased a 10,000-acre ranch on the lower Deschutes (and we have several others in the works, i.e., Hayden Island, which will be our newest state wildlife area.

Fish – a lot of emphasis on increased opportunities and access; simplified fishing regulations, and implemented a larger trout program; beside the fact that anglers like trophy trout better, it may be a better return on investment with more fish showing up in the creel. Regulations – for people who are new to fishing, it is a barrier, and we need to lower those barriers by simplifying regulations; we also need to make the regulations user-friendly, i.e., by going to the mobile platform; a lot of focus on the Columbia River fisheries management, spill, and predation, i.e., sea lions and cormorants.

Conservation – just completed an update to the Oregon Conservation Strategy, proposed delisting of three desert fish species; talked about the Oregon chub, which is the first fish in the nation delisted due to recovery, and we're all real proud of that; sage grouse – we've worked hard on a conservation plan that will protect sage grouse and prevent federal listing; desert kit fox; we continue to work on improving wildlife viewing, bats (now recording "bat chatter" at night, which will improve population estimates)

Question – How do you fund non-game work?

Melcher's Answer – Some state lottery dollars, some state general fund, federal state wildlife grants through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Question—How are sturgeon being impacted by sea lions?

Melcher's Answer – We have two types of sea lions, Stellars and California. The Stellars prey almost exclusively on sturgeon; as their numbers have rebounded we have seen Stellars preying on sturgeon brood stock;

Question – Water rights? Nestle?

Melcher's Answer – We evaluate for effects on fish. Water is very complicated. Talked about municipal water rights and “proving up.” ODFW has to evaluate, and there is some funding.

Question -- What is in the conservation strategy, and if you had another \$20 million what would you like to do.

Melcher's Answer – Conservation Strategy was approved in 2005, which was required to get state wildlife grants from the federal government; it is not a regulatory document it is a blueprint for voluntary conservation actions. The new plan has to be approved by our commission, then the federal government

Jeff Boechler – local projects/accomplishments; reintroduced bull trout to the upper Clackamas basin. We expect to develop a sustaining population. There is a strong emphasis on creating angling opportunity, which is a big challenge while recovering listed species. We are seeing positive trajectory on some of our wild populations. Clackamas steelhead fishery recently has been “phenomenal.” We have also worked with the federal government to raise steelhead and chinook at Eagle Creek National Fish Hatchery. We continue to place a strong emphasis to introduce families, especially those with young children, to fishing and the outdoors as a healthy activity. We have 10 family fishing events in the Portland area and they are very popular. Wildlife side – working with Washington Fish and Wildlife and Cowlitz Tribe to restore Columbia whitetail deer, which have been gradually increasing. That population continues to build, and there is a proposal to down-list them from endangered to threatened, and ultimately, delisting, which reduces some of the burden on landowners. Talked about blacktail deer management and improvement population estimates. Talked about an elk GPS collaring project, which is going to shed light on summer habitat around Mount Hood. Ski areas are expanding their uses to year-around, and we’re studying the impact of that on elk summer range. Also talked about restoration of Sturgeon Lake so it will continue to provide maximum wildlife benefits.

Audience Comment/Question – Kudos on what you’ve don’t with the bull trout on the Clackamas. Are you planning to do anything like that on the Sandy River?

Jeff Boechler's Answer – We’re hoping that what we learn on the Clackamas will be transferable to bull trout across America.

Question -- Are you looking at the impact on other species?

Jeff Boechler's Answer -- Yes. ODFW’s plan had to provide for protection of Coho, spring Chinook, and winter steelhead, all of which are listed? Feds had to sign off on that aspect.

Question -- Do you have any wildlife viewing activities?

Jeff Boechler's Answer -- We are involved with Audubon and have some activities, like the Raptor Road Show on Sauvie Island, but this is not as organized or formalized as, say, the family fishing events.

OSP Presentation/Jeff Samuels – provided an overview of OSP’s Fish and Wildlife Division; regional structure; mission, staffing (119 fish and wildlife troopers);

Question – Are Oregon’s judges taking fish and wildlife crimes seriously?

Samuels Answer – There are judges who are, and some counties where it is less. Overall, I think judges do take fish and wildlife crimes seriously. **Melcher Additional Answer** – It’s not just the judges, it’s also the DA’s; ODFW gives an award to the best wildlife DA as an incentive for prosecutors to take these crimes seriously.

Question – How do you schedule (limited) staff for best efficiency?

Answer – It is a problem; we try to move our troopers around from time to time where we can, from a slower area to a busier area; we work with an itinerary, so they're not working a schedule; they might work a split shift, take the midday off and come back in the evening; it allows them the flexibility to be out when they think they need to be more effective.

Melcher – Did a “budget primer” outlining budget strategy and described funding sources, i.e., general funds comprised of general state tax revenues, lottery funds (which can only be used for specific purposes, federal funds, license funds, “other” funds – dedicated & obligated. He also went over a budget snapshot showing where ODFW funding comes from and where it is spent.

Question – With 500 buildings do you have a crisis in keeping them up?

Melcher's Answer – We have deferred maintenance issues. Our goal is to have considerably more funding for facilities maintenance.

Trooper Samuels gave an overview of OSP Fish and Wildlife Division's funding.

Question -- What does the program dealing with intoxicating drivers consist of?

Samuels' Answer -- A two-day training session to help troopers better detect marijuana-impaired drivers.

Melcher talked about trends in hunting and fishing – participating has been flat, with some modest improvement the past five years (240,000 hunters/500,000 anglers).

Question – What are your projections? What are the trends telling you so far?

Melcher – We raised fees, about 10 percent, starting in January of this year. We changed the way we increase fees. The old model was to increase every six years (with a 30-40% increase); our constituents told us they would rather have smaller increases over time. SportsPac sales are up 5%; youth licenses are up 36%, combination license sales down 10%, pioneer licenses up 17%, resident anglers are down 2%, resident hunters up 3%, non-resident anglers up 12%, non-resident hunter up 5%. He talked about the importance of pioneer licenses and collecting \$\$\$ instead of giving them away for the federal match. So the trend is a bit of a mixed bag but it's “a good mixed bag.”

Talked about efforts to recruit more hunters and fishers by portraying a better image – a new website that will launch later this year; a glossy regulations booklet; talked about improved marketing tools/data that allow ODFW to track who's participating, who's dropping out, and gives us the ability to do some target marketing.

Comment – I'm hoping the alternative funding task force is going to come up with ways for people who are not hunters or fishers to support non-game programs.

Comment – People who live in dense urban areas need that – the ability to get out and use the outdoors.

Melcher – Mentioned the wildlife conservation stamp; said anybody who goes to a wildlife area and buys a parking permit goes into the conservation program;

Hargrave – We're working hard to make the connection with non-game people; we're using social media; we're going in the right direction, I believe.

Comment – What I haven't heard at all is global warming is happening when has an impact on indigenous species and forests? The concern is the relationship between forestry, wildlife, and fossil fuels; in the Portland area we just passed a 10c per gallon tax on fuel; I see that as a possible connection.

Melcher – We have this alternative task force that is looking in Oregon, and there is also a national effort convened by the national association of fish and wildlife agencies – that group is proposing royalties on gas and oil.

Question – Is there a carbon sequestration program that would work?

Question – Are you working with forest agencies?

Melcher – We work very closely with the Oregon Department of Forestry, Forest Service, and BLM. Years ago, those agencies wouldn't hardly talk to ODFW “so we've come a long ways”

Question – Why is only 1% of the ODFW budget dedicated to water quality/water quantity program? Water quality and quantity seems to have a huge impact on fish.

Melcher – We're not the agency that manages water; we manage fish, but we work closely with agencies that do manage water.

Melcher – your attendance at this budget meeting is a good start. I would encourage you engage with your legislator and tell them how important you think fish and wildlife are. He encouraged people to engage with them now rather than later when they are busy, and in general terms, i.e., “I support funding for fish and wildlife.

Question – What about hatcheries?

Answer – Most of our hatcheries are at their HGMP limits. We do have some ability to expand trout production. Hatchery maintenance – we're chipping away at it.

Melcher presented a snapshot of the 2017-19 budget. That budget is based on current levels. When asked if ODFW would request additional general funds, Melcher said no.

Question -- How does ODFW decide which species are funded? How come there is not more funding for wolves?

Melcher – Generally speaking we spend hunting dollars on species that get hunted. We are spending some hunting dollars on wolves right now. Our district wildlife staff is funded with hunting dollars. There is not a wildlife district in the state that is not interested in working on non-game species. We're doing a lot of that work but we could do a lot more; we'll be the first to admit it.

Alternative Funding Task Force -- Melcher talked about the alternative funding task force and noted that healthy fish, wildlife and habitat are important to 90 percent of Oregonians. The task force's recommendations are due in September. He noted the next meeting of the task force will take place on June 8, and that task force meetings are open to the public.

Melcher -- I really think as this task force moves forward and we get this new revenue stream we will have more sessions like this to decide how to use those funds; it won't happen in a vacuum.

Comment – I wish the department would take another look at the cormorant control; I hope you take a better look at the science when it comes to predator control to find non-lethal ways of controlling predators.