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## Deschutes river alliance

Deschutes River Alliance is a science-based advocacy organization that seeks collaborative solutions for pool-level threats to the health of the Deschutes River and its tributaries. We support water quality, a healthy ecosystem, and to establish and protect robust populations of resident and anadrome fish throughout the river basin. Since 2013, the DRA science team has worked tirelessly to determine the source and extent of the significant negative environmental changes taking place in the lower Deschutes River. Led by water quality experts and aquatic insects, we are working to create a strong scientific case to support understanding of these changes so that we can effectively support well-thought-out solutions. Listen to John Schwartz portraying Luke the wandering steelhead incubator as he serenades us on the banks of the lower Deschutes River. Then a river of memories. DRA's first 2017 documentary video documents numerous water and ecological quality changes that have been seen in the Lower Deschutes River after the construction and implementation of the Pelton Round Butte Selective Water Withdrawal Tower. Featuring interviews with several long-time Deschutes River users and local business owners, the video provides a primer on the problems faced by smaller deschutes and DRA's efforts to protect and restore this remarkable river. The latest DRA video highlights the impact that selective water withdrawal operations have had on businesses and the community in Maupin, Oregon. And describe stare dra's efforts to fight back, using an important clean water act process to ensure the water quality of the river and aquatic life are protected. Look as a member of the DRA Council, and key leader of the Science Team, Rick Hafele recounts the abundance of biological activity that was once present on the lower Deschutes River. I started fishing when I was a kid, looking for my chandeliers on a creek in Ozark. They were great bait for the little mouth perch. Then, at 14, I caught my first rainbow trout planted in a spring creek, also in the Ozarks. I've never been the same after that trout. He began a lifetime obsession chasing wild trout into cold, clean waters. When I first caught my steelhead on Deschutes in 1983, things changed for me again. I fell in love with the river and fished, floated, camped and tanned in the soul rejuvenation wonders that were Deschutes for the next 37 years. I still do. However, these wonders have recently changed for me again. And they changed for Deschutes. Predictable swarms of chadis around the lantern in the evening are fewer. Frequent trout growths crawl on incubator insects less common. Fewer swallows, bats, and nighthawks ply the evening sky above your head. There is a general sense of reduced natural fecundity along the And while I suspect that my age contributes somewhat to a more difficult time wading, the abundance of slippery, algae-choked rocks at the bottom of the river leaves no doubt that things on the river have changed for the worse. And now, there is a solid science that explains this recent decline in river health. Aldo Leopold, the grandfather of modern conservation, said in the foreword to his famous book, A Sand County Almanac, There are some who can live without wild things, and others who cannot. We must not consider this statement very hard to realize the impact of the negative changes we face on Deschutes, in our country, and on our planet. And most of the time, the major threat to wild and natural is from the poorly invented and poorly monitored activity of humans. Of course, no one wants more global warming. Everyone wants healthy forests, clean rivers and thriving economies. But these things must be fought for. There is a saying about making a difference when faced with such big problems: believe globally, act locally. For me, combating water quality degradation on Deschutes is a local action that will make such a difference. Fish and aquatic insects will benefit. Birds and bats will benefit. We're all going to win. That is why I am honored to support DRA's efforts to ensure clean and cold water on Deschutes. I hope you'll join me in donating to DRA, knowing that you'll make a difference, fighting for something that's just right. Let's do it! Written by DRA Board Member John Schwartz Check out an original song by John – Talkin Lukes Reintroducing Blues can be viewed on the DRA YouTube channel. The Deschutes River Alliance relies on the support of people like you to continue our work. Donate today! It's that time of year. Winter holidays are fast approaching. So it's time to think about what we might want. There are obvious questions: an end to the pandemic, world peace, and prosperity for all. But I make it bigger reach this year and ask for more help. Santa claus. The Easter Bunny. Tooth Fairy. I'm covering my bets by invoking them all. I'm serious this year. It's a simple wish. I want to make an announcement at the governor's office. I want to hear that the governor has issued a warrant to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to unequivocally begin applying Oregon environmental laws. No more exposing air or water polluters. No more secret agreements made behind closed doors that favor industry and political patrons. Stop pulling your foot on the application. Photo Rick Hafele Oregon environmental regulations are designed to protect people as well as fish and wildlife. Each time regulations are ignored, someone or something suffers. In the case of Deschutes River, offering Portland General Electric (PGE) a pass to comply with the requirements of the license and allowed results in compromising 100-mile of an idyllic Wild and Scenic River. We are now beyond discussing even if, after PGE claims, the damage is minimal and necessary to make it possible to have a few migrating fish planted above the Pelton-Round Butte (PRB) Hydroelectric complex. The damage is real and the compromise for a petty number of fish reintroduction is inappropriate at best. ODEQ not only turned a blind eye to the water quality overruns that surface water created at Round Butte Dam, but joined year after year with PGE's requests for special dispensation from the state's application of rigorous water quality limits. The State must require that the PGE meet its fundamental obligations and requirements: compliance with the water quality requirements of the PRB project and a much more effective programme for the reintroduction of fish. In March 2019, Rob Davis of The Oregonian/Olive.com, published a series of four-part investigations called Pollution of Money. Both Davis and The Oregonian received numerous prestigious national awards for the work that came into the story. You can find the series here: Polluted Money tells a tawdry story of how campaign contributions to Oregon politicians have led to influencing what polluters in the Oregon environment can get away with. The major leverage they use is as follows: if THE ODEQ acts as a regulator, the ODEQ budget will be reduced. The end result, in Davis' words, is that, an expansive review of internal documents and dozens of interviews with current and former environmental regulators, lobbyists, lawyers and lawmakers reveal that pressure tactics have instilled a deep culture of respect at the Department of Environmental Quality. Oregon Ballot Measure 107 went through the last election with 78% of the vote. In accordance with this, the governor and the legislature can and should impose campaign spending limits and mandate transparency in the disclosure of donor identity. Good thing. But the governor doesn't have to wait for the new legislation to stand up to the campaign contributors - she should take over and defend Oregon air and water now. Governor Brown should force the ODEQ to do its job and the polluters coddle no longer - even (or especially) when their permit fees cover part of the agency's budget. In Davis' report, he cites a former candidate for director at the ODEQ. Craig Johnston is a former lawyer at the Environmental Protection Agency and a law professor at The Northwestern School of Law at Lewis and Clark College. Johnston says, people think this is ecotopia. But the political climate in is that it simply does not take environmental mandates very seriously. Back to my Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Kwanza, and the winter solstice they want. The governor should join an informed citizen to step up and reclaim Oregon, so intended by former Governor Tom McCall, by ensuring the strict application of our basic environmental laws. -Greg McMillan, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Alliance Deschutes River Alliance Deschutes River is counting on support from people like you to continue our work. Donate today! Legal/Advocacy CWA trial In early November, we presented our second brief to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the ninth circuit. In our short turn, we responded to calls made by Portland General Electric and Confederate tribes from the Oregon Warm Spring Reserve. Those co-owners of the Pelton Round Butte hydroelectric project are responsible for the operations that led to the severe degradation of the water quality of the Deschutes River. This was the last short of the DRA before the Ninth Circuit. In the coming weeks, PGE and tribes will likely respond to our recent brief. Subsequently, Circuit IX will review the summaries and will most likely schedule a hearing in early 2021. We'll keep you updated on any developments as it happens. OdEQ action In mid-August, DRA filed a pollution complaint with the Department of Environmental Quality regarding dissolved oxygen levels in the lower Deschutes River. For years DEQ has not applied the trout breeding standard between 15 June and 15 October. This year's DRA members observed and photographed clear indications of trout breeding in August and filed our complaint based on this direct evidence. But DEQ closed our complaint on September 1, choosing to take no action - not even to investigate. In mid-October, I challenged the DEQ action with a petition calling for reconsideration. Citing clear warrants in Oregon administrative rules that the agency ignored, we asked DEQ to ensure that dissolved oxygen levels meet regulatory requirements that support the biological needs of breeding trout. We are now awaiting THE DEQ response and intend to follow this issue until the regulatory requirements are met. Chlorpyrifos We continue to carefully follow and participate actively in chlorpyrifos regulations at the state level. I offered comments on the Oregon Department of Agriculture's proposed rulemaking which tried to regulate the use of pesticides. The proposed rules were only hated by the bill approved for 2020. But for the legislature that would have come out, that bill would have been the law. We will continue to push for a complete ban on chlorpyrifos at the state level in order to protect fish and wildlife from deadly pesticide. Dam In August, DRA submitted comments in support of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife recommendation not to grant The Ochoco Irrigation District a fish crossing waiver for Bowman Dam. Oid, which tries to modify Bowman Dam, it is necessary to provide either fish fish dam or attenuation resulting in a net benefit for fish compared to fish passage. Our comments, would be the recommendation of ODFW, said that the proposed oid mitigation was severely lacking and necessary to be improved. DRA followed this issue and provided testimony to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Committee meeting in view of the waiver. There, we urged the Commission to refuse waiver until the IDI proposes extensive mitigation efforts – focusing on constantly increasing flows and reducing nutrient pollution in the lower Crooked River. The Commission rejected the waiver 5-1. As any change on the Crooked River will have an impact on smaller deschutes, we will continue to follow the development of this problem. Science In June, DRA published our 2019 water quality report – the sixth annual report. Some interesting changes were observed in 2019 compared to results in previous years. These findings are detailed and justified in the report. While any positive changes are welcome news, Oregon water quality standards are not yet met. In the absence of effective action by state and federal authorities, DRA will continue to seek the application of water quality standards in the Clean Water Act as a means of principle to improve water quality in the lower Deschutes River. Miss's Macroinvertebrate Hatch Survey Report was released in April. The survey data compiled in the report is a systematic attempt to document changes in the timing of the occurrence of adult insects and abundance on the lower Deschutes River. The data, presented by highly experienced guides and fishermen, provide the only continuous assessment of changes to the aquatic insect populations of the lower river. Also in April, DRA released our first annual Crooked River Water Quality Report. The Crooked River was found to be the largest source of nitrogen-laden water in Billy Chinook Lake. Water laden with nutrients leads to recurrent blooms of toxic algae in the reservoir. By largely composing the damage, the operators of the Pelton-Round-Butte hydroelectric project (Project) mainly selectively selectively these contaminants directly into the lower Deschutes River, thus inducing the growth of unpleasant algae, and disrupting the cycles of invertebrate hatches that under the cover of the river's reputation as a world-class trout stream. The fact that this degradation has been established through several studies, including PGE's own 3-year study of water quality. DRA staff presented a research poster at the Oregon chapter of the American Fisheries Society Conference in March 2020. The poster focuses on the impact that nutrient pollution in the Crooked River has on the lower opening after it is withdrawn from Lake Billy Chinook and unloaded by project into the lower river. The poster shows the resulting degraded water quality, the transition to pollution-tolerant aquatic life and ecological integrity of the river. CommunityIn February, we again threw a heck of a party at our fourth annual collection and auction. It was a fun filled event to highlight our community and support conservation work and protect the river. In 2021, we will go virtual – with us for the live event on February 20, 2021. Like countless others, DRA has made appropriate adjustments in our operations to deal with the Cofid-19 situation. From operating primarily remotely to restructuring our budget – DRA faced the problem on the head and we are a stronger organization for it. As part of our Covid-19 exchange, we hosted bimonthly online events with our supporters. They were both informative and fun! We look forward to continuing this kind of collection well in the future. DRA supporters continued supporting our Maupin community by caring for our adopted stretch of highway at a gateway to Maupin. Maupin, you've got it.

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