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Oregon State Legislature
State Capitol
Salem, OR

NEWS RELEASE

April 12, 2017

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Legislature honors pillar of the South Coast fishing community

HCR 14 commemorates the career of South Coast ODFW biologist Tom Rumreich

SALEM – Tom Rumreich is credited for educating more than 100,000 Oregon school children about fisheries and he helped build the successful Salmon-Trout Enhancement Program as we know it today. Now, the Oregon Legislature is taking notice.

The Oregon Senate passed House Concurrent Resolution 14 today, honoring the retired Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife STEP biologist for his contributions to fish populations and outdoor education. Sen. Arnie Roblan (D-Coos Bay) and Rep. Caddy McKeown (D-Coos Bay) were chief co-sponsors of the resolution.

“Tom Rumreich is known all throughout our region and around the state for his infectious positive attitude, intelligence, passion and ability to deliver results when it comes to boosting our salmon and trout populations,” Roblan said. “He has done a great job of incorporating education and volunteerism into his work so that people of all ages can begin to take ownership, and view the health and survival of these species as a community good, as well as environmental and outdoor recreation benefits.”

Rumreich is commended for his 37 years of service with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, as well as his contributions to his community and the salmon and trout fisheries of Oregon. His contributions have been felt far beyond his own community, as his work to raise funds to build a coastal hatchery with a school classroom has served children from all parts of the state.

“Under Tom’s leadership, the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program has grown the fisheries industry in the Coos Bay area to the tune of millions of dollars in economic impact, not to mention the educational value invested in our youth,” McKeown said. “His retirement leaves behind the legacy of a biologist, a manager, an educator and a well-respected community member. We in southern Oregon consider ourselves lucky to have been blessed with Tom Rumreich in our little corner of the world.”

Five days after graduating from Oregon State University with a degree in fisheries science, Rumreich began his career with ODFW and spent most of it working on STEP. The program’s goals are to rehabilitate and improve natural habitat and native fish stocks, ensure that the harvest does not exceed the population’s reproductive capabilities, provide for volunteer participation in achieving the state’s fish management objectives and support public education programs related to fisheries.

In his day-to-day work, Rumreich developed and carried out a variety of projects such as stream and bank restoration, tree planting and hatchery construction in the Tenmile, Coos and Coquille district. He also created educational programs that include salmonid life cycle instruction, hands-on fish wrangling and field trips for students from elementary through high school to learn about fish, fisheries and habitat restoration. His programs incorporate volunteers, as well, supporting his goal of involving the whole community in the fisheries resource.

Rumreich retired from ODFW in August 2016. HCR 14 passed the House of Representatives in late March with unanimous approval.

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