

Testimony from Dr. David Eisler presented to the Oregon Board of Forestry, April 29, 2008

In 2006 many of us who track salmonid research recognized a growing number of studies demonstrating impacts on salmon from low levels of certain pesticides. Because there is no process for research agencies to bring these studies to the attention of ODF, Paul Englemeyer and I had a meeting with ODF staff. I would say that our presentation was met with some skepticism. We had hoped for an ongoing discussion in follow-up meetings but it was recommended that our next step would be the upcoming 2007 Issue Scan.

As it turned out there were many people who submitted a wide range of concerns and issues concerning pesticides. The one high priority work plan issue for 2008 which ODF staff forwarded to the Board was the need for a literature search and you, the Board, approved it and here we are at the April meeting.

This Board certainly understands that good decision-making is based on good science. In 2005 the Board identified the need for the systematic review of new scientific information for the management of State forests. It is no less important that the parameters for the literature search be designed with input from the federal agencies and academic institutions that carry out much of the research, including but not limited to USGS, NOAA, EPA, USFW, and OSU.

Ultimately it is the Board of Forestry that must be responsible for the effectiveness of the Forest Practices Act in protecting the natural resources of the state. Those resources include water quality and aquatic life. Levels of pesticides in State waters as a result of approved forestry practices are the specific concern of the Board as mandated by the legislature and the process for monitoring, testing and review is spelled out in ODF policy. The phrase "levels injurious to aquatic life" should form the basic question that the Board must ask itself, "Could the levels found in water samples be injurious based on the best available current science?" If the Board is unwilling to address this question or to set a reasonable timeline to answer it then it is putting the State's natural resources, including endangered species, at risk.

We can only hope that a forthcoming literature search occur as an open and transparent process which informs the decision-making Board, ODF staff and those of us of the general public who have been working to restore salmon runs throughout the state.