

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

A fitting legacy for a wildlife champion

The vision of a longtime state wildlife official has become a unique partnership between resource extraction and habitat conservation that will create a wildlife area for generations of future Oregonians.

Bob Mace, former deputy director of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, coined the term "watchable wildlife" to encompass what once were called "nongame" species, meaning those not hunted. After his death in 2006, Mace's estate permanently endowed the Bob and Phyllis Mace Watchable Wildlife chair at Oregon State University and an annual scholarship fund to benefit dedicated undergraduates. But his generosity and vision didn't end there.

Mace also bequeathed his family's 165-acre

homestead along the Rogue River, to be developed as the Mace Family Watchable Wildlife Area. The future attraction features river frontage the length of six football fields, and plans include the restoration of Whetstone Creek for wildlife habitat.

The partnership comes in with the future use of commercial gravel pits on the property. Excavation rights were sold to Knife River Materials. The royalties from the gravel operation will go into a trust fund managed by the Oregon Community Foundation, with earnings dedicated to developing the Watchable Wildlife Area and similar projects on the valley floor.

The gravel quarry eventually will be abandoned and filled with groundwater, creating

a 125-acre lake. Plans call for stocking it with trout and perhaps other fish species as well. It may be 30 years before the entire project is completed, but it will be well worth the wait.

In this way, a man who dedicated his life to preserving and protecting wild animal species will continue to do so long after his death, benefiting generations not even born yet.

Bob Mace was highly respected during his career. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council, of which he was a 23-year member, established the Bob Mace Distinguished Service Award in his honor, describing him as "the epitome of a true gentleman."

The wildlife area that will bear his family's name is a fitting tribute to his life's work.