OWEB Board Retreat

October 29 and 30, 2012

Oregon Garden Hotel, Silverton, Oregon

Facilitators' Report

In attendance for all or part of the session:

- Board Members – Sybil Ackerman, Alan Henning, Debbie Hollen, John Jackson, Kim Kratz, Will Neuhauser, Lisa Phipps, Eric Quaempts, Trish Smith, Dan Thorndike, Bob Webber, Karl Wenner, Bill White
- Staff – Lauri Aunan, Tom Byler, Rick Craiger, Renee Davis-Born, Meta Loftsgaarden, Cindy Silbernagel, Greg Sieglitz
- Facilitation Team – Robin Gumpert, Donna Silverberg

Day 1

Chair Dan Thorndike welcomed the group to the Oregon Garden Hotel in Silverton. Facilitator Donna Silverberg reviewed the retreat agenda and goals, and reminded the Board and Staff about the process that had led to today's discussion and draft proposal for a Long Term Investment Strategy (Investment Strategy) framework and portfolio. The series of stakeholder listening sessions, Board meetings and retreats, Executive Committee work; and managers and staff meetings have all contributed to the draft product.

Board members focused during this retreat on clarifying the proposal and deciding what to share out to the public as a draft for discussion and input. Donna emphasized that this product would not be considered 'final' after today, but that the Board is getting closer to its target of adopting an Investment Strategy in June 2013. She also reviewed the elevations chart to show where this process is nested in the various levels of OWEB decision making inputs. The Investment Strategy is informed by OWEB's mission and Strategic Plan, and informs future spending plans, funding decisions and grant processes. The Board was asked to focus this retreat on the Investment Strategy. Once the Investment Strategy is adopted, it will need to be implemented through future Board and staff work at the more detailed levels of spending plans, funding decisions and grant processes.

Overview:

Director Tom Byler thanked his Board for attending and for contributing to the dialogue, acknowledging that the Long-Term Investment Strategy has required extra time, and their

effort has been extremely valuable to the agency. He said this is a very exciting time for OWEB. Permanent funding under Measure 76 provides the opportunity to review our programs and where we are headed in the long term. He noted that the Board makes funding decisions and the Investment Strategy will be an intentional roadmap for the decisions the Board makes. He shared his hope that the Investment Strategy will provide a good compass to guide our investments and more transparency about our priorities that will benefit our stakeholders.

Tom noted that the product of the Board's July Retreat was the "framework" for our investments. The goal of this Retreat is to determine whether the Board is ready to share its draft ideas with stakeholders for their feedback. If so, the draft proposal would be sent to the public by the end of December. The proposed Investment Strategy will not be final until after stakeholder listening sessions early next year, and Board discussions at its January, March and June 2013 meetings.

Tom offered that any shifts resulting from the Investment Strategy will not happen immediately, but Board adoption of the Strategy will kick off more detailed staff, Board and stakeholder conversations about implementation. For example, the 2013-15 spending plan will likely look quite similar to the current spending plan.

Tom walked the group through the draft proposal document and there were a number of clarifying questions and comments.

Renee Davis-Born and Rick Craiger shared highlights from OWEB staff comments about the draft proposal, provided at an All-Staff Retreat on October 11, 2012. Staff saw opportunities in the draft proposal, noted red flags, and identified important considerations for the Board.

Rick reminded the Board of OWEB's history including the time when watershed councils were being created, the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, Measure 66 and the resulting large increase in grant funds, and the ongoing struggle with how to set priorities, there is a valid concern about the importance of grassroots efforts. Board members appreciated staff comments and had the following observations:

- Staff is saying we should not lose what has worked.
- The thoughtful discussion from staff is appreciated. I heard if you make changes, know that they need to be implemented in a thoughtful and deliberate way so as not to lose those who have done great work so far. Enlist them to help us go to the next level, and don't try to make these changes overnight.
- This shows me that we need to connect the Long-Term Investment Strategy with on-the-ground implications and implementation. The investment strategy will continue to be a work in progress, never actually 'final'.

- We should reiterate our commitment to the grassroots effort that has been so successful in the past.
- The rationale for the proposed phased-in increase to Focused Investments was not clearly articulated in the draft proposal.

Donna Silverberg then facilitated a Board discussion about three questions.

1. **<u>Is the proposal responsive to public input? If not, what needs to be refined?</u>**
   It was noted that being responsive is not the same as agreeing to all public input. With that clarification, Board members commented that they felt the draft proposal is responsive to public input. It was noted that the draft proposal is a reflection of where we've been and where we are going and that OWEB has never written it down before. It was also noted that there was no consensus from the public, with the exception of the consistent request for effectiveness monitoring and telling the story.

2. **<u>Is the proposal responsive to Board input? If not, what is needed?</u>**
   Board members thought that the draft proposal reflects Board input, and recognized that the Board will need to consider the next round of stakeholder feedback from the Long-Term Investment Strategy 2013 listening sessions.

3. **<u>Do you understand the proposal? If not, what needs to be clarified?</u>**
   The Board had a lengthy discussion about clarifications that were needed to ensure the Board was on the same page about what the draft proposal means. Suggested clarifying edits were captured by the facilitation team. In particular, the Board spent a lot of time discussing the intent around the Board identification of specific ecological priorities or outcomes under Focused Investments.

<u>DAY 2</u>

Based on the Board comments from Day 1, the facilitation team, several Board members and managers refined the draft proposal and presented it to the group the morning of Day 2. Donna described the refinements and invited the Board to respond. Board members asked questions and offered suggestions that led to a further refined draft. **The refined proposal discussed at the retreat is included as Attachment A to this report**.

After significant discussion, Donna asked the Board to show, using the five finger consensus tool, their level of support for sharing the framework with the public as a draft proposal. All Board members present agreed. A few caveats were expressed:

- Put 'proposed' on the documents.

- Ensure consistency in messages across the three pages.

Donna then asked for a show of fingers on Board support for sharing with stakeholders the proposal to phase-in, over time, an increase in resources for Focused Investments. The Board supported sharing this idea with stakeholders, with the following caveats:

- Focused Investments will be spent on quality projects – we won't box ourselves in to putting more in to Focused Investments if we don't receive proposals we think are worth funding.
- There will be transparency about our intentions not to do a major shift right away, but that we will retain flexibility around this given future needs and opportunities that arise.
- There is a remaining concern that we still have unanswered questions about the benefits and consequences of this shift.

Rationale for phased-in increase in Focused Investments

Donna noted that several Board members had commented that the draft proposal was not as clear as it could be in its rationale for why OWEB is proposing a gradual increase in Focused Investments. She asked Board members to work in three small groups to articulate their rationale.

Group 1

- Greater ecological benefits – targeted landscape/issue approach
- Leverage partnerships funding/social capital/ecological
- More focused monitoring to measure/evaluate success
- Broader community investment and cooperation in restoration
- Fosters collaborative problem solving
- Potential for more stable integrated approach at larger scale

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Group 2

- Define and support an ecological outcome
- It is a way to marshal resources
- Based on time and circumstances we identify an ecological outcome that needs to be addressed
- Accountability on a broad scale
- Potential for longer term funding for partners

Group 3

- Want to see OWEB move to more strategic decision making (It was clarified that this statement is about OWEB being more strategic, not about partners being more strategic)
- Our history/maturity has informed our direction
- Focused energy when field is ripe results in accelerated outcomes at scale e.g. Deschutes, Tillamook, Sandy River
- We can demonstrate our effectiveness
- Monitoring gives us the opportunity to prove the value of strategic investment

Based on the small group discussions, Board members discussed additional messages that will be important to convey:

- There are not enough grant funds to meet all needs; therefore the Board needs to make explicit choices about priorities.
- The Board appreciates and values the hard work and efforts of local grassroots groups. We are committed to supporting them now and in the future.
- To value and continue the good work that has been done to date.

Next Steps

Donna helped the group set forth a plan for refining the draft proposal for public comment:

- Small group refine (Sybil, Bob, Lisa, Kim, OWEB manager, and facilitation team)
- Email refinement to Board, staff and stakeholder focus group for feedback on clarity
- 1 week for comments
- Refine as needed
- Take to Listening Sessions as 'DRAFT Proposal'

Outreach ideas

Board members are committed to listening to stakeholders and being responsible to the people of Oregon, who are our funders. It was noted that we are trying to use the best process we can and provide opportunities for public input.

- Stakeholder focus group to help the draft proposal be as clear and understandable as possible for the public
- January Board meeting opportunity for public comment
- Webinar offered as part of the 2013 Listening Sessions in the 6 regions
- March Board meeting

- June Board meeting

Wrap up:

Tom said he was impressed with this very engaged and thoughtful board. Clearly, everyone cares about the issues and is asking great questions, and this means a lot to staff. We appreciate your patience and diligence going through this process. We are still far from a final decision on this and even beyond that, there will be many more decision points for the Board. Tom said he is excited about the opportunities and looks forward to the next step of hearing from the public.

The meeting concluded with wrap-up comments from Board members and staff.

ATTACHMENT A

***Refined draft proposal discussed at October Board Retreat, to be further developed by small group of Board members, facilitators, and OWEB manager**

All investment areas lead to ecological outcomes

Open solicitation investments based on locally selected ecological outcomes

- Small grants
- regular grants (capped)
- Large grant offering
- Includes outreach

Focused investments based on collaboratively prioritized ecological outcomes

- Refined by clear criteria
- Outcome based
- Outcome measured
- Time limited
- Tools unlimited (e.g. Grant, RFP, Contract, MOU)
- Includes outreach and emerging issues related to Board focus

Operating and Capacity Investments

- Council and District operating funds
- Standards for: eligibility; reporting; and accountability

Foundational Underpinnings for all:

- Board selected
    - Effectiveness monitoring
    - Reporting results
    - Emerging issues/ideas