

Pacific City Session Overview – May 10, 2012

Note: the following information is offered for the Board to consider as it develops its Long Term Investment Strategy.

Long Term Investment Strategy Comments

In Pacific City, many participant comments related to local capacity support, which included OWEB funding local watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts and others to provide technical assistance to landowners, data coordination and assistance in local and regional collaborative efforts. Related, comments indicated that participants see OWEB as a vital partner in data collection and dissemination, including making data accessible to others. They said OWEB should take a whole watershed approach that engages local partners in all phases: from priority setting to planning and implementation. Since locals have the expertise, OWEB should fund these groups sufficiently so they have the capacity to do restoration, engage landowners and other citizens, and monitor effectiveness. Many of the comments emphasized the importance of local buy-in and involvement in whatever next phase OWEB enters. Some feedback supported OWEB investing in or leaving flexibility within current programs for innovative techniques and projects.

Additional Advice

In addition to strategic investment inputs, many suggestions were made about how OWEB could improve its grant application, management and administrative process. Suggestions were made for how to improve the review process so it is fair and efficient (e.g. grant application peer review, consistent guidance for regional review teams, and an online application) and providing feedback loops for projects during implementation. Several comments surfaced that related to acquisitions, most of which suggested OWEB continue and/or expand this program but there were no consistent messages about how to do this.

Wrap-Up

In conclusion, Executive Director Tom Byler and Board members Debbie Hollen, John Jackson, Lisa Phipps, and Bill White summarized that they heard a lot of discussion around adaptive management and communication. They heard OWEB should bring all parties to the table and maintain a local focus. They heard that, in many ways, OWEB should keep doing what it has been doing. Participants would like to see strategies that support a vital and stable ecosystem (including fish habitats, water quality and upland areas) ten years from now and, to do this OWEB should provide capacity support for planning and technical assistance on monitoring, while also helping groups work collaboratively together. They heard that OWEB should share experiences and successes: to keep public support and to inform the next generation of restoration efforts. Finally, they heard that OWEB will need to strike a balance between broad support across the state and more focused efforts in high impact or high benefit areas.