

April 27, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Greg Sieglitz, Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item K: Oregon Plan Products Request
May 16-17, 2006 OWEB Board Meeting**

I. Introduction

This report seeks Board approval to continue funding for an Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) monitoring project in the Lower Columbia River ESU.

II. Background

At the September 2005 Board meeting, the Board approved a \$250,000 reserve in non-capital funds for projects and products needed to implement the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds that arise during the course of the biennium. At the January 2006 meeting, the Board revised the Oregon Plan Products reservation to \$375,000 to specifically support ODFW monitoring of fish and wildlife habitat on the Lower Columbia River. The Board received a memo from ODFW briefly describing the Lower Columbia River monitoring at the September 2005 meeting and the project was included in ODFW's presentation at the January 2006 meeting.

III. Oregon Plan Monitoring for the Lower Columbia Coho ESU

The objective of the proposed monitoring is to provide the information and analysis needed to evaluate the status of Lower Columbia coho populations and their habitat and to support Oregon's salmon recovery planning efforts for this region. Figure 1 illustrates the geographic region involved.

Wild coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) abundance in the Columbia River Basin once averaged 618,000 adults but declined to critical levels in the 1980s. Peak spawner counts conducted since 1949 at ten index sites throughout the Lower Columbia River show a pattern of decline to low levels in the late 1970s and 1980s and approaching zero in the 1990s. In 1999, naturally produced coho in the Lower Columbia River Basin were listed as an endangered species by the State of Oregon and in 2005 were listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

In January 2003, ODFW received a grant from OWEB and partnered with NOAA Fisheries and Portland General Electric to initiate a monitoring program for coho in the Lower Columbia River Basin. Since that time, ODFW has received additional funds from OWEB, the Lower Columbia Bond Fund, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Sport Fish Restoration Program to continue monitoring through June 2006.

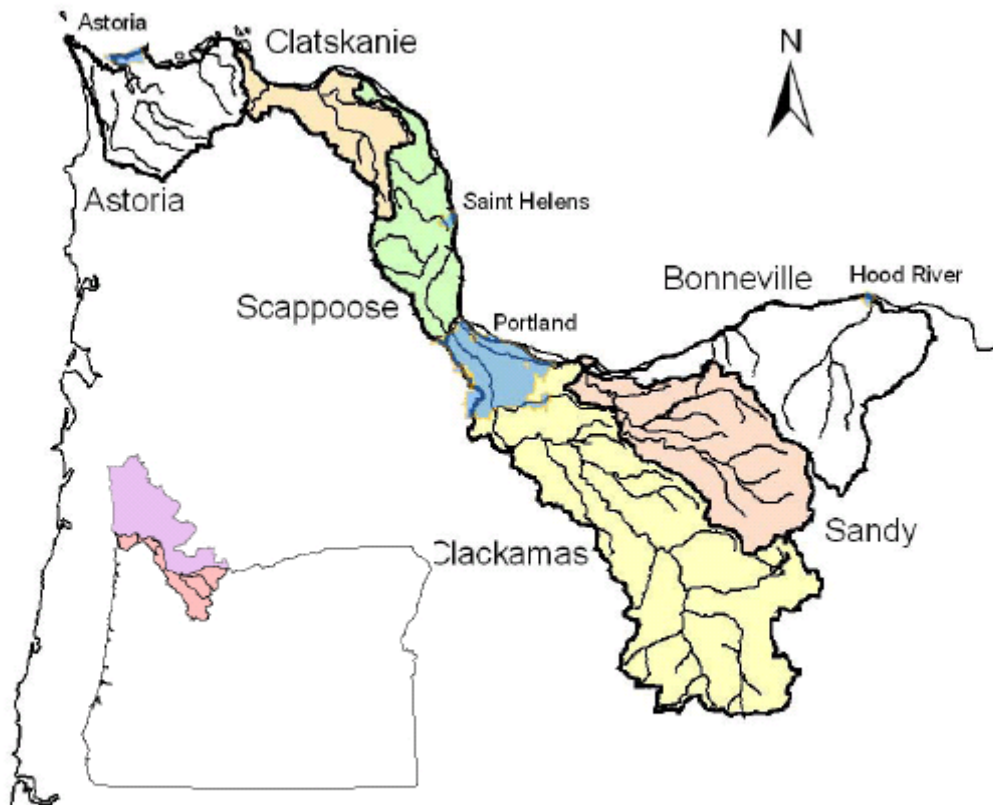


Figure 1. The Oregon portion of the lower Columbia River ESU with the boundaries of the Astoria, Clatskanie, Scappoose, Clackamas, Sandy, and Bonneville population complexes and area cities.

Findings to date include: the proportion of spawning fish and the timing of spawning varies between portions (complexes) of the ESU; the variation in the last three years can be linked to streamflow variation within complexes; straying of hatchery fish was localized although the Bonneville complex experienced strays from upriver; abundance increased without the influence of hatchery strays; and abundance goals in the Sandy and Clackamas basins were reached the last two years. Density of spawning adults and the proportion of wild spawners remains lower than in basins on the Oregon Coast.

This request would continue implementation of the ODFW Oregon Plan Monitoring in the Lower Columbia River through the end of the 2005-2007 biennium (July 2006 through June 2007). ODFW will conduct habitat surveys, spawner and juvenile surveys, and landscape assessment to provide information that will support assessment and analysis similar to that recently utilized for the Oregon Plan Coastal Coho Assessment. All work funded within this project is consistent with the sampling methodology and field protocols developed for the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and supports implementation of the Oregon Plan Monitoring Strategy. Tasks include:

1. Monitor trends in the abundance and condition of salmonid habitat in each of eight populations in the Lower Columbia Coho Species Management Unit;

2. Monitor trends in the abundance and distribution of adult and juvenile salmonids in each of eight populations in the Lower Columbia Coho Species Management Unit; and
3. Monitor freshwater and marine survival rates of salmonids in one Life Cycle Monitoring Site.

**Proposed ODFW Budget for
Lower Columbia River ESU Monitoring**

Seasonal Field Biologists (6 FTE)	\$164,154
Permanent Biologist (1.5 FTE)	\$86,959
Equipment, Vehicles, Supplies	\$89,795
Subtotal	\$340,908
ODFW Indirect (10%)	\$34,092
Total	\$375,000

IV. Recommendation

Staff recommend the Board allocate \$375,000 of non-capital funds to the Lower Columbia monitoring project.