

April 23, 2007

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

**FROM:** Roger Wood, Special Projects

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item P: Restoration Priorities  
May 15-16, 2007 OWEB Board Meeting**

### **I. Introduction**

This staff report asks the Board to adopt the limiting-factors format and approach to identifying watershed restoration priorities for the Grande Ronde, Imnaha, John Day, Powder, and Umatilla basins, and the update of the previously adopted Hood-Fifteenmile Basin document. The limiting factors documents are intended to be used as guidance by OWEB in the review of grant applications and to help ensure a clear and strategic approach to prioritizing the funding of projects. Formal administrative rules will be proposed later in 2007 or early in 2008 to define exactly how the documents will be used by OWEB.

### **II. Background**

The Board has identified the development of funding priorities as a significant need for project review and evaluation in OWEB's grant program. The authorization and mandate for development of regional restoration priorities comes from statutory direction. ORS 541.371(c) states that OWEB: "*Shall establish statewide and regional goals and priorities that shall become the basis for funding decisions by the board. In adopting such goals and priorities, the board shall adopt priorities for grant funding based on the Oregon Plan and on measurable goals. In carrying out this function, the board shall consider local economic and social impacts among the criteria.*" OWEB has also identified adoption of these basin priorities as an agency performance measure.

In September 2002, the Board authorized staff to contract for the facilitation of efforts to develop restoration priorities in two pilot basins, the Lower Columbia and the Hood-Fifteenmile basins.

The ultimate goal is to establish investment priorities for each of the 15 Oregon Plan reporting basins in the state using information from Columbia subbasin planning, species recovery planning by federal and state agencies, action plans developed by local stewardship groups, and prioritization principles developed for the Board. As discussed in previous meetings, these priorities will help focus the review of grant applications for restoration projects and assist in informing funding recommendations.

The Board allocated funding in May 2004 to coordinate OWEB regional priorities with subbasin plans in the Columbia Basin and to complete regional priorities in the remainder of the state.

Since that time, OWEB has contracted for the development of priorities in the Rogue, South Coast, Willamette, Hood-Fifteenmile, Deschutes, Malheur, John Day, Umatilla, Grande Ronde, Innaha, and Powder basins.

### **III. Status and Approach**

The present group of restoration priorities was contracted to Watershed Professionals Network (WPN), which has reviewed the subbasin plans for each of the drainages in the basins and has developed a crosswalk between the Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) analysis and the proposed restoration priorities. The EDT is a stream-based approach to modeling limiting factors for target salmon species. The crosswalk helps to broaden the range of priorities and specifically include upland habitat priorities.

Adoption of these documents completes the work in the Columbia Basin except for two areas: the Oregon portions of the Walla Walla and Owyhee basins. Specific mention of the Walla Walla area was accidentally omitted from OWEB's contract with the WPN and thus the area is not covered by the scope of work for that now-expired contract. OWEB has spoken with local Walla Walla Basin partners and is now considering the best way to cover that area. The Owyhee Basin was included in the original contract with WPN and the contractor did initiate work there. However, there presently is not enough local consensus on limiting factors and priorities to produce a product for presentation to the OWEB Board. The contract was thus adjusted to substitute the update of the Hood-Fifteenmile document for the Owyhee document.

The Limiting Factors materials for the respective basins are attachments to this report and will be available on the OWEB web site at [www.oregon.gov/OWEB/restoration\\_priorities.shtml](http://www.oregon.gov/OWEB/restoration_priorities.shtml).

### **IV. Next Steps: The Coast and Umpqua**

The documents presented today for adoption complete the contract with WPN for the Columbia Basin drainages. As noted above, OWEB will continue to pursue completion of documents for the Walla Walla and Owyhee basins. The remaining basins are the North Coast, Mid Coast, Umpqua, Klamath, and Lakes basins. Staff are presently considering options for proceeding with the coastal and Umpqua areas. One or more contracts for this work will be signed within a few weeks and the products will be brought to the Board at its September 2007 meeting. Contracts and work in the Klamath and Lakes basins will follow with presentation to the Board anticipated for either September of 2007 or January of 2008.

### **V. Recommendation**

Staff request the Board approve the approach and content of the Grande Ronde, Innaha, Hood-Fifteenmile, John Day, Powder, and Umatilla basins regional restoration priorities, as shown in Attachments A-F.

#### Attachments

- A. Grande Ronde
- B. Innaha
- C. Hood-Fifteenmile (update)
- D. John Day
- E. Powder
- F. Umatilla