

March 19-20, 2008 OWEB Board Meeting Executive Director Update #C9: Partnership Investments

Background

This report proposes an organizational framework for OWEB grant programs. Staff welcome Board member feedback on this concept.

Investment Summary

OWEB's primary vehicle for making conservation-related investments is through the regular grant process. This process offers two grant solicitations per year, at six month intervals. The types of grants offered include restoration, monitoring, technical assistance, assessment, and education and outreach. These offerings are statewide in scope and tend to allow applications for a broad range of activities to compete in the review process. The majority of OWEB funds are invested through the regular grant program.

The regular grant program process is not the only means for OWEB to solicit and review potential grant investments. Examples of other investment areas include:

- Special Investment Partnerships (SIP)
- Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)
- Whole Watershed Restoration Initiative
- Recovery Plan development and implementation
- Oregon 150 grants
- Coastal salmon fishing emergency grants
- Local Innovation Fund
- Products associated with the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds

Each of these investment areas has value because of the strength of its partnerships, focus on specific ecological needs, and leveraging of other funding sources, among other factors. From an organizational standpoint, staff increasingly refer to these other investment areas that operate outside the regular grant process as "partnership investments."

OWEB partnership investments have specific and limited ecological objectives, specific partner roles and responsibilities, and alternative delivery systems. OWEB maintains fiscal controls, technical review criteria, and enforceable agreements.

Partnership Investments Subcommittee

The number of partnership investment programs and their combined funding has grown over the years. Each partnership investment program is unique. Staff recommend creating a Partnership Investments Subcommittee to establish a more frequent Board-staff communication link to strengthen the understanding of the expectations and outcomes from each partnership.

Staff suggest that the Partnership Investments Subcommittee subsume the current Special Investment Partnerships Subcommittee and add two additional board members. Under this scenario, the membership of the Partnership Investments Subcommittee would be as follows:

- Diane Snyder
- Dan Heagerty
- Ken Williamson
- Dave Powers
- *One additional voting member*
- *One additional non-voting member*

The new subcommittee would continue to take the lead on Special Investment Partnership matters. It would also serve as the standing subcommittee to receive periodic updates from staff on other partnership investment areas. It is our hope that this organizational structure will lead to enhanced awareness and understanding of partnership investment issues by the subcommittee and full Board.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information about the Partnership Investments Subcommittee please contact Tom Byler, at Tom.Byler@state.or.us or 503-986-0180.