



Oregon

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April 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Carolyn Devine, Communications Coordinator

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item D: Education and Outreach Subcommittee Report
May 20-21, 2008 OWEB Board Meeting**

I. Introduction

This staff report describes the process and current activities of the Board Education and Outreach Subcommittee.

II. Background

OWEB's Education and Outreach Strategy continues to evolve to better fit the needs of the agency's mission and objectives. The statutes guiding the education and outreach investments of OWEB state that OWEB "shall provide educational and informational materials to promote public awareness and involvement in the watershed enhancement program." (ORS 541.370)

Development of an OWEB Education and Outreach Strategy began in September of 2003 as an effort to create an implementation plan for the Board's 2001 strategic plan, *A Strategy for Achieving Healthy Watersheds in Oregon*. The Board's Citizen Understanding Subcommittee began pursuing a three-pronged approach in early 2004 that differentiated efforts aimed at enhancing citizen awareness from those designed to increase knowledge and develop critical skills in key constituencies. Adopted in May of 2005, the Education and Outreach Strategy had evolved into an umbrella plan that connected and supported all of OWEB's education and outreach functions: the Grant Program, Oregon Plan support, partnerships, and support of local voluntary efforts. The strategy was comprehensive and ambitious. Its full implementation would have required a much larger funding and staffing investment.

At the Board retreat in July of 2007, the Board decided to re-visit its Education and Outreach Strategy and in December, a Board subcommittee was created. Board members include Jim Johnson, Meta Loftsgaarden, Dan Thorndike and Patricia Smith. Staff include Tom Byler and Carolyn Devine. The Subcommittee has met three times, from which a set of assumptions, a process, and a timeline for moving forward have been drafted.

On May 6, 2008, the Subcommittee will meet for a day-long focused discussion from which staff hope to present recommendations to the Board for OWEB's target audience(s) for future Education and Outreach grants.

III. Education and Outreach Subcommittee Draft Assumptions

Listed below are the subcommittee's draft assumptions describing the circumstances, basic beliefs, and values that affect their approach. These assumptions continue to be challenged, reviewed, and adjusted.

- Measurable goals and outcomes of education and outreach investments are critical. OWEB needs to be able to articulate the impact and value of its education and outreach efforts.
- One size does not fit all. Each region of the state is unique and may require different education and outreach programs. Those most influential in helping OWEB maximize its measurable goals should be the target audience. Each region will have different stakeholders, who are at different stages of commitment to OWEB's sustainability goals. However, comparable measurable outcomes across regions will be important to demonstrate statewide impact.
- Tailor the message to the audience. The methods of communication and education and outreach need to be appropriate for the audience. If an improper match occurs there is no return on the investment, or a negative result can occur. Therefore, OWEB needs to know what its target audience is thinking or feeling before creating the message.
- Partnerships are an important way to leverage OWEB investments. If OWEB has a clear enough target audience and associated messages, partners can be more easily identified.
- Look for opportunities to maximize the impact of OWEB investments. The most effective education and outreach grant projects funded by OWEB are those that have a multiplier effect and give back to the community through furthering the education of a second or third tier of learners, providing useful monitoring data that are used by agencies, or creating clear improvements to the land.
- OWEB can't do everything everywhere. There are a lot of good ideas but OWEB can't fund them all. The over-arching goals should define and prioritize our focus.

IV. Process

The Subcommittee and full Board will first discuss measurable goals and specific audiences. Once these are vetted with the Board, a group of stakeholders will be engaged to further refine the goals and audiences and provide advice for the strategy and its implementation. Following these stakeholder meetings, OWEB staff and the Subcommittee will bring a strategic recommendation to the full Board for final approval.

V. Recommendation

Staff will update the Board on progress made at the May 6 Subcommittee meeting, and may have recommendations for the October 2008 Education and Outreach grant cycle.