



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360

Salem, OR 97301-1290

(503) 986-0178

FAX (503) 986-0199

www.oregon.gov/OWEB



April 28, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Greg Sieglitz, Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager
Renee Davis-Born, Data Analyst and Information Specialist

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item I: Oregon Plan Products
May 20-21, 2008 OWEB Board Meeting**

I. Introduction

In this report, staff provide an update about recent discussions regarding the need for and creation of high-priority products related to the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. The concept of Oregon Plan products initially focuses on making technical and technological tools available and useful to local groups such as watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts, and improving information flow and data sharing between agencies and local groups.

II. Background

OWEB provides support for several Oregon Plan-related products through direct allocations of non-capital funds. The Board has retained an Oregon Plan Products non-capital spending plan line item for each of the last several biennia to be utilized for Oregon Plan needs established through the Oregon Plan Monitoring Team and Core Team that do not fit well into the current suite of grant offerings provided through the regular grant program. Projects that implement the goals and objectives of the Oregon Plan Monitoring Strategy, the Oregon Plan Information Systems Strategy, recovery planning for salmon species, and the OWEB Research Priorities have been funded with this spending plan allocation in the past.

Results of these efforts provide technical and information resources to local groups and partner agencies charged with the implementation of the Oregon Plan. Examples include the joint Oregon Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Environmental Quality (ODFW and DEQ) macro-invertebrate sampling, DEQ volunteer water quality monitoring program, Middle Columbia River Steelhead Recovery Plan development, the Oregon Explorer website development, and mapping of anadromous salmon distribution in the state by ODFW.

III. Retreat Follow-up

At the 2007 Board Planning Session in Maupin, the topics of non-competitive awards, data development, and information and technology grants were discussed. The Board expressed a desire to have further discussion about the need for and use of the Oregon Plan Products spending plan line item. At the planning session, the Board specifically expressed the desire to hold off on funding additional Oregon Plan Products in the fall of 2007 and have staff return to

the Board in the spring of 2008 to discuss this type of funding allocation in more detail, especially when there was more clarity about the amount of available non-capital funding from the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund. This staff report and presentation to the Board assist in fulfilling those next steps.

IV. Oregon Plan Monitoring Team Progress

OWEB staff convened the Data Subcommittee for the Oregon Plan Monitoring Team for the first time in January of this year. The intent of the subcommittee is to address issues related to improving the collection, integration, and distribution of data and information among agencies and between agencies and local groups. The subcommittee is in the process of prioritizing potential projects, related to information management and technology for Oregon Plan themes such as fish, hydrology, and habitat, for consideration by the Oregon Plan Monitoring Team and Core Team. Work by this group will address the need for Oregon Plan-related products to inform such activities ranging from project planning and implementation by watershed councils to reporting on Key Performance Measures by OWEB and other agencies.

V. Examples of Oregon Plan Products on the Horizon

The following is a list of example Oregon Plan Products staff are currently considering that would improve the accessibility of technology tools, data, and information, and would facilitate information sharing among Oregon Plan partners.

A. Digitization of remaining National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps

This investment by OWEB in data development will result in a comprehensive map delineating the location of wetlands statewide that is available via the Internet. These data are critical to local and state-level decision-making. For example, they are used by watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts to determine the change in wetland area through time and prioritize restoration activities. This product is discussed in greater detail in Agenda Item K.

B. Equipment for DEQ's Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program

In the past, OWEB provided funding for purchase of equipment to be used by volunteer groups such as councils and districts as part of this DEQ program. Over 50 groups from around the state have participated in this program. Data have been submitted from over 1,000 locations in the state. The success of the program results in the need for periodic replacement and upgrade of monitoring equipment in order to continue to make these technical resources available to local groups. The equipment enables local groups to expand the water-quality monitoring network informing both their local watershed needs and the larger Oregon Plan needs.

C. Oregon Explorer natural resources digital library

In January 2003, the Board unanimously approved the Oregon Plan and OWEB Information System Strategy. The strategy calls for, among other things, the creation of a web-based "portal" that provides access to data, tools, and expertise related to the Oregon Plan. In order to address this need for a readily accessible and user friendly resource, OWEB awarded funds to the Institute for Natural Resources and OSU Libraries to build Phase 1 of the Oregon Explorer natural resources digital library (www.oregonexplorer.info). The Board also has supported basin-specific websites within this framework for the Willamette, Umpqua, and North Coast in 2004, 2005, and 2007.

Recent discussions among staff from OWEB, watershed councils and other local groups, and the Oregon Explorer Program, suggest shifting the emphasis to focus on local derived and OWEB specific needs. Some examples of this refined focus include the following types of activities:

- Upload and integrate local data – This would build upon tools developed for the Umpqua Basin Explorer last year allowing local groups to add their data and information to the Oregon Explorer websites. A specific proposal under discussion would expand this functionality to address needs articulated by local data management groups in the Deschutes and Lakes basins.
- Spatially based data management system – This functionality would improve OWEB’s ability to manage data in a map-based format. This work will utilize the improvements made to the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory last year and make other Oregon Plan related information, such as the location of monitoring and education projects, available in an easy-to-understand manner and on-line.
- Online paperwork submittal to OWEB – This feature would address a topic that has long been in discussion by OWEB staff by making available to grantees more of the many forms we require to be filled out and sent to OWEB.

D. Inventory and online data management system for fish-passage barriers

This effort would build upon recent work by ODFW to create a data standard for fish-passage barrier inventories. The product would be a comprehensive, standard, compliant barrier inventory and restoration database that includes data from such sources as ODFW, Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Department of Transportation, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, counties, and tribes. The database would accommodate the addition of future inventories and serve as the source dataset for a web-based information management system that enables visualization, assessment, and prioritization of the passage barriers statewide.

VI. Staff Recommendation

This is an informational item. No Board action is requested at this time. At the September 2008 Board meeting, the Board may be asked to consider funding requests for Oregon Plan Products identified as a result of the Oregon Plan Monitoring Team process and subsequent discussions by OWEB staff with watershed councils, districts, and agency staff who would be the ultimate users of the products and consumers of the information.