



OWEB Board Meeting Report  
June 3, 2009

**DISCOVERY REPORT - March 31, 2009**

Gard Communications submitted a Discovery Report that outlines the first phase of contract activities from February through March. The Discovery Process consisted of reviewing existing research, auditing existing communications materials and conducting one-to-one structured interviews with key stakeholders. We worked closely with OWEB staff to develop a list of stakeholders and questions for the structured interviews.

**One-to-one interviews:** Interviews were conducted with 15 stakeholders. We also listened to the testimony from 21 stakeholders at the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on February 24. Finally, we gathered input from OWEB board members directly at the board meeting on March 19. Initial observations include:

- Communications must define what is meant by the term watershed.
- Oregon's approach to watershed enhancement is unique.
- Oregonians care about what OWEB does, not who OWEB is.
- Oregonians care about iconic projects.
- A large corps of watershed ambassadors is already in place.
- Facts are good, but emotion is better.
- Watershed enhancement can be connected to climate change efforts in some respects, but is also a powerful environmental positive on its own.

**Review of Research:** We reviewed two existing research reports:

- "The Language of Conservation," an older piece of research (2004) conducted for the Trust for Public Land and The Nature Conservancy. The main findings of this research confirm input from the stakeholder interviews.
- The statewide survey conducted for The Nature Conservancy in June 2008. One key finding is that Oregonians think that Oregon is not doing enough to promote conservation and that the state should do more. Ninety-five percent of Oregonians felt protecting water quality in rivers and streams was extremely important or very important.

These findings validate key input from stakeholders – water is important, water quality is ranked very high and Oregonians don't want to lose existing water resources.

**Review of Communications Materials:** OWEB and associated organizations working on Oregon watersheds have produced a wide array of communications materials. Our observations:

- Almost all of the material is aimed at a committed and informed reader. There is little information aimed at what might be termed “ordinary Oregonians” unaware of or uninterested in watershed issues.
- In order to broaden support for watershed work, communications materials that are less detailed and more broadly targeted may be needed.
- Each document has a different look and feel. There is no single overview piece that simply explains what OWEB does in everyday terms. It may be important to develop a piece of this type, or at least this message for inclusion in other pieces.
- OWEB has not been consistent with co-branding efforts. OWEB does not always have much visibility in partner-produced publications or on their websites. An increased emphasis on co-branding may be helpful going forward.

**Goal and Objectives:** Goals and objectives will be presented in the draft communications plan. One refinement to project goals is the need of promoting and gaining support for watershed enhancement/restoration as opposed to recruiting more volunteers for specific projects.

### **DRAFT MESSAGE PLATFORM - May 5, 2009**

A draft message platform was submitted in May. After review and revision, these will be included in the draft communications plan.

#### **Draft goals and objectives:**

- A majority of Oregonians begins to view our water resources/watersheds as part of a connected, statewide system, with each part integral to the quality of the whole.
- A majority of Oregonians believes that the health of our watersheds is directly tied to the quality of life in Oregon.
- A majority of Oregonians understands that we must act in order to maintain our healthy watersheds – that we will lose our healthy water resources/watersheds unless we continue to maintain them.

#### **Key audiences:**

- The primary audience consists of Oregonians who generally support environmental causes but who have not focused much or any attention on watersheds.
- An important secondary audience consists of Oregonians whose primary concerns are practical and/or economic, rather than environmental. They care about maintaining Oregon’s quality of life for the future and for the next generation.

**Proposed Message Platform:**

- Healthy watersheds are vital to clean water, healthy habitat for fish and wildlife, strong communities and a vibrant economy for Oregon. Oregon's unique approach to watersheds creates community, provides maximum value from public dollars, and protects irreplaceable resources. OWEB is vital to the success of these efforts. We must continue these successful efforts or risk losing the resources we value.

**Sample messages:**

- Our lakes, rivers, and streams are vital to Oregon's health.
- Our watersheds are crucial because they provide clean water, natural beauty and habitat for fish and wildlife.
- No matter where you live in Oregon, you're in a watershed.
- We must work together to make sure we always have clean water, natural beauty and healthy habitat.
- Healthy watersheds keep Oregon green and beautiful for everyone to enjoy.
- The Oregon way of taking care of our watersheds is a one-of-a-kind model for the rest of the nation.
- OWEB is the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board. OWEB makes this work possible by providing funding and direction.
- Not many people know about OWEB, because it works behind the scenes, but it is one of Oregon's great success stories.
- OWEB's work helps build and strengthen communities, protects the beautiful parts of our state, and makes sure we have clean water and healthy habitat.
- OWEB's work creates local jobs and fuels economic activity.
- Oregon's unique, voluntary, citizen-led work is possible because it is supported by consistent state funding through OWEB.

**RESEARCH – May 8, 2009**

Timing options for the statewide consumer survey:

- Option 1: the research informs the strategic planning process and therefore it is conducted earlier. Timing: May-July.
- Option 2: the strategic planning process informs the research, which then informs the communications plan. Timing: July-October.

**NEXT STEP**

The completion date for the Draft Communications Plan has been moved from May 26 to end of July to coordinate with the Strategic Planning process that will start in May.