

May 12, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Lauri Aunan, Grant Program Manager
Bev Goodreau, Grant Program Specialist

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item O: Small Grant Program
June 2-3, 2009 OWEB Board Meeting**

I. Introduction

This staff report provides information on the 2007-2009 Small Grant Program in anticipation of a staff recommendation for the 2009-2011 Small Grant Program at the September 2009 Board meeting.

II. Background

In 1999, OWEB was seeking ways to be more responsive to small, straightforward restoration grant applications. During this time, the Legislature added a budget note to OWEB's budget to encourage the agency to initiate a county-based, local cost-share program.

In response to these identified needs, in September 2000 the Board authorized the formation of a subcommittee to provide guidance for developing a Small Grant Program. The subcommittee developed nine overarching policy objectives, which the Board approved at its January 2001 meeting. At that meeting, the Board also authorized staff's initiation of rulemaking to develop a program with the nine policy objectives serving as a guide. A Rules Advisory Committee — composed of representatives of the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, Soil and Water Conservation Commission, watershed councils, and other interests — met five times over the summer to develop rules.

In January 2002, the Board adopted administrative rules establishing a Small Grant Program. Twenty-eight small grant teams (Attachment A) consisting of representatives from local watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and tribes were each awarded \$100,000 to put toward restoration projects of \$10,000 or less, a total commitment of \$2.8 million.

OWEB's rules designate the following project types as eligible for Small Grants: instream process and function, fish passage, urban impact reduction, riparian process and function, wetland process and function, upland process and function, water quantity and quality/irrigation efficiency, and road impact reduction.

For the 2001-2003 biennium, teams awarded approximately \$2.5 million for 403 projects, averaging about \$6,100 each. All of those projects have been completed.

For the 2003-2005 biennium, the Board again awarded \$2.8 million for the Small Grant Program. The 28 teams awarded approximately \$2.4 million for 384 projects, that averaged about \$6,200 each. All of those projects have been completed.

For the 2005-2007 biennium, the Board again awarded \$2.8 million for the Small Grant Program. The 28 teams awarded approximately \$2.3 million for 378 projects, again averaging about \$6,200 each. Of those projects, 34 (9%) have not yet been completed.

III. 2007-2009 Biennium

In May 2007, the Board awarded \$2.8 million in capital funds for the Small Grant Program for the 2007-2009 biennium. To date, the 28 teams have recommended and OWEB has funded 318 grants for over \$2.2 million with an average of \$7,000 per grant. Attachment B shows Small Grant funding by team to date. Currently, four teams have allocated all of their allotted \$100,000 and another six teams have awarded almost all of their funds. At this time, 101 (32%) of the funded projects have been completed. Past experience has shown that there will be a number of funding recommendations from the teams as we near the end of the biennium. Teams have been asked to submit any new applications they wish to recommend for funding as soon as possible to allow time for processing before the end of the biennium (June 30, 2009).

IV. 2009-2011 Biennium

The Small Grant Program continues to be extremely popular because of its ability to fund restoration projects more quickly with less process and paperwork than the regular grant program. The program also serves an important function by providing an element of local control and by fostering local collaboration.

Additionally, small grant projects often offer excellent examples of local collaboration and partnerships including work with local volunteers, non-profit organizations, city, county, state and federal agencies. The table below reflects completed project match funds/in-kind donations leveraged to achieve the on-the-ground restoration projects for the previous bienniums.

Small Grant Match Funding—Completed Projects			
Biennium	2001-03	2003-05	2005-07
OWEB Funding	\$2.5 Million	\$2.4 Million	\$2.3 Million
Match Funding/In-kind (25% required)	\$3.2 Million (128%)	\$2.4 Million (100%)	\$3.2* Million (139%)

* Reflects amounts for closed grants only

In previous biennia, when state funding was more predictable and secure, OWEB staff asked the Board to allocate funding for the Small Grant Program at the May Board meeting prior to the beginning of the new biennium. Because of the unprecedented state budget shortfalls and uncertainty about OWEB’s budget, staff plans to develop Small Grant Program recommendations as part of the overall spending plan for the Board at its September 2009 meeting.

V. Recommendation

This is an informational item. No Board action is requested at this time.

Attachments

- A. Small Grant Team Map
- B. 2007-2009 Funding to-date by Team