

Oregon Environmental Literacy Task Force

Monday, June 6th, 2011– 1:00pm to 4:00pm
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer Street NE. Suite 360, Salem OR, 97301-1290
Phone: 503-986-0056

Welcome from Traci Price & Introductions

Present:

Carolyn Devine, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Traci Price, Task Force Chair
John Sheehan, Metro
Jon Yoder, Salem-Keizer School District
Stephanie Wagner, Friends of Tryon Creek State Park & PSU Center for Science Education

On the phone:

Pat Willis, 4H
Lori Stole, Sustainable Oregon Schools Initiative
Lara Christensen, Gray Family Fund of Oregon Community Foundation
Jim Quiring, Tillamook Forest Center & Department of Forestry
John Falk, OSU College of Science
Tom Gaskill, Department of State Lands – South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Kolleen Yake, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council
Nancee Hunter, Oregon Sea Grant at Hatfield Marine Science Center

UPDATES:

Governor Committee

Traci – John Falk, Jon Yoder and I had a positive meeting with Nancy Golden (Governor's Education Advisor) a few months ago. We were informed that we would have to wait until after the legislative session to follow-up on our request for an Executive Order. I emailed the Governor's Office to confirm their interest in reviewing our efforts after the legislative session. I was informed that we will be directed to "staff" due to end of Dr. Golden's contract on June 30th as the Governor's Education Advisor. At this point, we do not know which "staff" member will need to connect with nor do we know when the Governor's Office will know the status of his Education Advisor following June 30th.

John F. – back to square 1? We can hope that Nancy will pass along info to her successor but will need to encourage that to happen.

ACTION: Traci will follow-up with the Governor's Office after the legislative session to determine next steps.

Standards Alignment

Lori - July 18th-19th have been set for folks to come together at the Alsea Fish Hatchery (about 10 people representative of higher education, formal education – especially classroom teachers, non-formal education) to complete the alignment of the environmental literacy strands with Oregon Academic Standards and Graduation Requirements. Bora &

Lori have been working on cleaning up the proposed environmental literacy strands – version 2

Traci – will make sure to circulate standards updates with notes from this meeting

Lara – how do we strengthen the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) role?

Lori – not due to lack of interest, just not on the priority list for what they're supposed to be doing

Lara – is there a creative partnership opportunity that we can explore to support a combined position within ODE?

Lori – sounds like they just don't have the capacity to respond to new initiatives

Lara – this can be long-term planning to create a staff position

Lori – might connect with Farm to School to learn how they managed to fund a position within ODE

Nancee – what would we be asking ODE to do?

Stephanie – support standards alignment

Lori – help broadcast information out to the school community

Nancee – we've done similar alignment work with Ocean Literacy and b/c of the West Coast Governor's agreement they've been able to engage Cheryl Kleckner (ODE Science Curriculum Specialist) as a member of the committee – Cheryl suggested creating a guidance document/tool to share with ODE's network

Lori – Cheryl has great input, others outside ODE can't really provide that perspective

John S – it's ODE's standards, they can help us best determine fit. Down the road, we'll need ODE's involvement to work within the formal education structure. How do we implement to scale w/o ODE's involvement?

Traci – standards, assessment and Gov's office present best intersections

Lara – movement, coalition; creating a position within ODE could assist with activities #29-35 in the literacy plan implementation timeline – have ODE grow with this movement. Someone within ODE who knows the plan and can help broker implementation around the state and work with federal No Child Left Inside (NCLI) funds. ¼ time or ½ time position at ODE.

SUMMARY: We all agree that we need to work from within ODE in order to best integrate the environmental literacy plan into schools

Infrastructure Committee/Implementation Committee Leadership

Traci – As follow-up from our last meeting, we organized a meeting between the organizations who have expressed interest in a leadership role with implementation of the literacy plan: OSU, Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). In lieu of determining a singular entity to serve as lead coordinator for implementation of the plan, we drafted a document that outlines potential leadership roles and responsibilities for a number of organizations. This structure has implications for funding. It was our best attempt at outlining a way to move coordination forward.

John F – in order to really ensure that all of these pieces are moving forward in a coordinated manner, it needs some structure – someone needs to know what's going on in all the pieces

John S – is that where some of the initial fundraising needs to happen - to fund a position?

We all agree that the need is to fund a role or position. Do we need to focus on fundraising for a position – near the front of the list for what we do next?

Lori – yes, a number of the organizations listed in the implementation committee could play that role with support

Jon – does that mean that any organization of the implementation committee would be willing to house that role with funding?

John F – OSU would be interested but we need to consider the political implications – strategically, we should think about where it makes sense to house this person. And then,

what would it take from a resource perspective? Even if we hire a contractor they still need to be affiliated with some entity.

Traci – two questions – where is the best fit home for the position? What is the fundraising capacity from that org or this group to raise the support needed?

John S – the first step doesn't have to be a final step – can it be for one year? Metro could explore the needs – if a contract, does the person need an office space, etc?

Stephanie – think it might need to start somewhere that it might end up – in terms of the folks who would guide this on a statewide level; advantage to being in a non-profit; EEAO; is it challenging to fundraise for a temporary contract/position?

Lara – it might not be hard to approach it from that perspective; give a little more thought to degree of nimbleness, balance, starting off on the right foot, etc. Understanding that meetings can be held in any of the partners' offices. Priorities have been clear about what we want to do. Figuring out priorities for this year might help decide where it should be housed.

Jon – might want to look at next 5-10 years. If we want this to be integrated into the formal K-12 system we know where it needs to be.

Stephanie – look at outside funding for ODE – how can it be brought into ODE?

John S – is there a bridge? How do we support the road into ODE?

Lori – can coordinate a meeting with Ed Dennis, Theresa Levy, Cheryl

Jon – Susan Castillo, on board of Straub; former student is Susan's assistant

Traci – follow-up with Brent S, Michelle Markestyn...find out about Farm-to-School position creation and maintenance

Lori – Farm to School position at ODE is retiring – Lori will follow-up

Jon – Sounds like they want it to be a NOCLI position ;-)

John S – WA has an office of environmental ed – anything we can learn from them?

Carolyn – might want to request a 2-year "contract" for someone to work on these activities between now and the next legislative session

Stephanie – under a non-profit, EEAO for the 2 years to coordinate

Carolyn – experiencing a position change at OWEB

Traci – does someone in an existing position have the ability to coordinate these meetings/activities?

Kolleen – May have some flexibility to incorporate some coordination of this work within her position

Lori – SOSI could but not without funding

Lara – if folks wanted to propose a contract or position supported by OCF, this is something that they could consider as a bridge. Lara could find the right people at OCF to propose this to. We've already got SOSI, Upper Deschutes offering to help out.

John S – we need a point person

Kolleen – would need to know time commitment, scope of work to really know whether this could happen

Traci – a next step for the implementation committee list is to create a budget that demonstrates the need for each of these orgs to fulfill their responsibilities

John S – volunteered to write a position description for the coordinator

Carolyn – do we need to just put the coordinator position as "Traci" for the requests?

Lara – easier to fund if you know the plan and who will be carrying it out

John S – input for position description? Coordinating partners, fundraising, relationships with ODE, teacher professional development (coordinating with OCF's EE program 2012 workshop), communications, resource directory

ACTION: Lori will coordinate a meeting with ODE (Ed Dennis, Cheryl Kleckner, Susan Castillo, Theresa Levy) and Bora, Jon, Traci and Lori to explore the potential to bring outside \$ to establish an internal ODE position to coordinate implementation of the Plan

ACTION: Traci will follow-up with Farm-to-School folks to learn more about the position in ODE

ACTION: John S will draft a job description for the "Coordinator"

Funding

Traci – During the partnership meeting with OSU, OCF and OWEB, Lara suggested exploring establishing an endowment fund at OCF. Last week, Lara and I met with a few development staff at OCF to talk through the possibilities. While OCF offers a variety of funds (discretionary, advised, designated, etc) we determined that the best fit seemed to be with the Community Field of Interest Fund. (*see attached) OCF establishes these funds for ideas that have sound investments and identified long-term community interests. A few notes: we would want to solicit pledges for \$500K to launch the fund; the fund has the potential to work with the already established Environmental Education Grant Program at OCF (in support of the literacy plan implementation timeline and priorities); if/when there is no longer a need for the fund (once every school across Oregon has implemented the plan!) the fund can essentially become an integrated part of OCF priority programs (ie. Environmental literacy could be a component of the Early Childhood Program); the fund would have an advisory council who would be responsible for direction and recommendations.

John F – if we start this, I'd like to open it up to something that's not so narrowly focused on K-12 in terms of venue and age

Stephanie – totally agrees – something that goes through ODE could support the K-12 part; PSU's Center for Science Learning

Lara - it could become part of general granting to our state – helps get it integrated into OCF's priorities outside of a designated program of interest

Carolyn – could be a better fit if it was a broad focus of an organization – could help provide funding across program areas more creatively

Traci – offers investors the opportunity to sit on the advisory board and coordinate their funding initiatives

John S – consider the utility companies with requirements to support education

Pat – water utilities require education – worth processing this through

John S – you have to try; you can't always know but there are people behind it who will help make it work

Carolyn - \$500K is a doable fundraising task for this work

John S – part of the coordinator's role

Jim – imagined environmental literacy bridging over more than just K-12; really attracted to broadening beyond the K-12 audience, all ages

John S – starting broad is great but we don't want to lose site of our priorities

Stephanie – we could create a broad description but prioritize implementation of our plan

Jon – do we need to be more narrow? – we could focus on regional coordination – funding from the fund could go to regions

Traci – the difference between the Field of Interest Fund and an Endowment is that an Endowment has to be attached to a 501(c)3. If, for example, we wanted to use the Environmental Education Association of Oregon (EEAO) as the 501(c)3, all contributors would need to give to EEAO and then EEAO would write the check to OCF. With the Field of Interest Fund all contributions go directly to OCF (also a non-profit). The benefit is that people can give into the community fund that we create – no attachment to any preconceived notions or opinions about an organization.

Lara – benefit of Community Field of Interest is that you'd be under OCF's programs as opposed to an endowment fund – broadens plan. The Council could really help steer the fund/program; their role is important in directing the future of environmental literacy.

Traci – planning to explore funding interest from folks in next couple of months

Lara – demonstrating support from this community to OCF would increase visibility and support from OCF – they want to see this benefit the community in general. OCF is doing the best they can to support their goals but one of their goals is to see the community step up to take action.

Carolyn – how does this relate to federal funding/ODE?

John S – a lot would be determined by the rules of the funding

Stephanie – could use this kind of coordination to leverage funds – could serve as hub

Traci – the Advisory Council – opens doors to conversation about coordinated funding approach

John S – do we need a concept paper for this?

Traci – will draft a concept paper for the fund

John S – why can't these (the Community Field of Interest and the Gray Family Fund) be part of the same program?

Lara – mostly as it relates to giving – if someone has a bequest or an individual wants to give, they don't give through the Gray Family Fund. Stepping forward to demonstrate support for the grant program that the Gray Family established wouldn't work against it – we're rallying the community to support this program.

Carolyn – how would this work with outdoor school?

Lara – OCF is considering establishing an endowment for outdoor school – outdoor school is not separate from environmental literacy. How can our community organize to leverage more resources for our work – more of the message than how will this compete with already limited funding for this field. Perhaps set up a technical advisory board to the advisory committee – how we structure the body of knowledge that is represented as decision makers for this program so that it's not about competition but the small pieces that leverage the state to make requests on the local level. Who should be on the advisory council? Regional representation?

Tom – trying to puzzle out how the Common School Fund (Department of State Lands) fits in...attach the literacy plan with the Common School Fund – wondering if this might be the place? In terms of federal funds, ODE, etc.

Lara – we can ask the development folks – OCF is very flexible as long as it's something that the community wants. The leveraging and the matching would be best avenues.

ACTION: Traci will draft a concept paper for the Community Field of Interest Fund and explore potential investments

ACTION: All, if you have thoughts/relationships with funders who would be interested in a sizable investment – please connect with Traci to discuss plan of attack

ACTION: The only way this will work is if we all pitch in! Warm up your checkbooks please...;-)

Other items

ACTION: Traci will send a doodle poll for an early September meeting

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm