

APPROVED BY THE BOARD APRIL 28, 2015
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
March 18, 2015
OWEB Board Meeting
Salem, Oregon

Minutes

OWEB Members Present

Eric Quaempts
Doug Krahmer
Ron Alvarado
Lisa Phipps
Morgan Rider
John Roberts
Bob Webber
Karl Wenner
Alan Henning
Mike Haske
Will Neuhauser

OWEB Staff Present

Meta Loftsgaarden
Renee Davis
Greg Sieglitz
Dana Hicks
Eric Hartstein
Brandi Elmer
Liz Redon
Courtney Shaff
Kathy Leopold
Sue Greer
Sharon Clarke
Tom Shafer
Troy Wirth
Cyrus Curry
Wendy Hudson
Krystyna Wolniakowski
Andrew Dutterer
Linda Burnett

Others Present

Eric Riley
Dan Bell
Kelley Beamer
Ryan Gordon
Larry Six
Amy Charette
Tom Stahl
Gabe Williams
Sandy McKay
Rebecca McCoun
Kristen Larson
Jan Irene Miller
Clint Nichols
Scott McEwen
Margaret Magruder
Dana Dedrick
Mark Trenholm
Rob Walton
Liz Vollmer-Buhl
Ryan Houston
Luke Westphal
Siletz Tribe
Julie Diceone
Mark Saelens
Ken Bierly
Bruce Lumper
Whitney Olsker

A. Public Comment

The OWEB Board took general Public Comment.

- Dan Bell, representing The Nature Conservancy, commented on Sage Grouse efforts and encouraged the Board to continue to support Sage Grouse .

B. Focused Investments Partnership Process and Priority-Setting

Renee Davis, Deputy Director, briefed the Board about the status of the Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) process to date.

- She went over the Definition, Criteria and Solicitation Process (Attachment A to the Staff Report) which was adopted in July of 2014
- She briefed the Board on the Priority Setting Process and the use of local groups to accomplish this task
- Next month – At April’s Board meeting the Board will adopt the priorities
- She talked about the Solicitation Process and what that next phase would include (Attachment B to the Staff Report)

Deputy Director, Renee Davis then moved the board's focus to Priority Setting

- Bob Webber: commented that the board should focus on funding high priority partnerships
- Morgan Rider: asked for an update on the criteria for high performing partnerships
- Executive Director, Meta Loftsgaarden: referred board members to Attachment A, page 2, number 3 – which addresses the process for selecting applications for Focused Investment Partnerships

Deputy Director, Renee Davis, began the discussion with the Board surrounding priorities: Renee asked the Board to keep these questions in mind:

- 1) Are there any additional priority categories other than the six in front of you that need to be added?
- 2) What additional information do you need to make a decision in April?
- 3) Is there additional clarification or information that you need to make a decision on draft Focused Investment Priorities in April?

Renee Davis talked about what makes a priority: (How to connect FI Priorities to these)

- Needs to have clear significance to the state
- Examples:
 - Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds
 - Oregon Conservation Strategy
 - Governor's Priorities
 - Ag Water Quality Program
 - Integrated Water Resources Strategy

Renee introduced Krystyna Wolniakowski to provide background on expert outreach. Wolniakowski has been assigned to lead expert conversations around Focused Investment Priorities.

Renee referred the board to Attachment C:

- Renee referred to 42 priority suggestions which were then converted into 12 themes
Attachment E – Summary of January Board discussion
- Two big results were:
Reframing 12 themes into different priority categories (more habitat based and less geographically focused)
Added this board meeting for the board to hear more about the 7 Themes and be able to come to a final decision in April

Renee discussed the work of staff after the January Board meeting to consult with experts across the state, to bring the board more information to make an informed decision in April.

Krystyna Wolniakowski referred the board to Attachment F. Her role:

- Ensuring priorities brought to the board have been thoroughly vetted with state and federal experts and are consistent with other state and federal plans already in place
- Expert outreach process – (Krystyna referred to the list of experts on pages 1-2 of Attachment F, she also noted the first round experts that were utilized on pages 3-4)

Renee continued the discussion with the Board regarding priority categories.

- She referred the board to Attachment H – priority categories
- Bob Webber: Inland Aquatic Habitat and why there was no map – he also questioned the “Inland” part of the title
- Lisa Phipps: Inland Aquatic Habitat, she asked what is the intent? Is this a catch-all (broad species), judging one proposal against another?
- Renee, answered the question that the board should consider how to provide sufficient guidance on this and how the board would like to proceed
- John Roberts: commented that there could be multiple priorities addressed and crossed within one project area

Renee Davis started the discussion around the Focused Investment Priorities and reminded the board that all six of the summaries have been reviewed by the experts and they are comfortable with them, from an expert perspective they do not suggest further narrowing.

- Doug Kraemer: should board be prioritizing the priorities?
Renee Davis, answered that No, we are not asking the board to prioritize the priorities but that the board could prioritize the limiting factors within a priority area.
Meta Loftsgaarden, Executive Director, added that the board could also have staff go back to the experts with specific questions surrounding prioritizing if they feel it would be helpful

1 – SAGE BRUSH/SAGE-STEPPE HABITAT

Limiting Factors:

- Altered fire regimes
- Invasive species
- Loss of habitat connectivity
- The need for successful approaches that restore specific types of sagebrush/sage-steppe habitats following fire

Key Strategies – OWEB’s Focused Investment Priority for sagebrush/sage-steppe habitat supports voluntary actions that address primary limiting factors related to the quality of this habitat type. These actions will be guided by the habitat and population objectives set forth in the State’s sage-grouse strategy and the combined ecological and social outcomes described in the State’s “All Lands, All Threats Plan.”

Renee asked the Board to identify questions to be addressed in further conversations with experts:

- Lisa Phipps: key areas and how broad in nature of acreages
- Mogan Rider: asked a question about regulatory implications
- Will Neuhauser: asked a question about connectivity areas and focal areas (what is the definition of focal areas?), the terminology “that support” in all of the six summaries – he is uncomfortable with it, too open ended. He also stated that landscape-scale needs to be more clearly defined
- Co-Chair, Eric Quaempts: suggested adding an appendix with key terms and be sure that we are consistent throughout the document
- Doug Kraemer: how did we come up with Connectivity Zones? What is the criteria?

2-OREGON CLOSED LAKE BASIN WETLAND HABITATS

Limiting Factors:

- Loss and degradation of wetland habitats, including salinization
- Water availability as a result of altered natural hydrologic functioning
- Invasive species, such as carp and non-native plants and macroinvertebrates

Key Strategies – OWEB’s Focused Investment Priority for Closed Lake Basin wetland habitats supports voluntary actions that address primary limiting factors related to the quality of this habitat type. These actions will be guided by the habitat, limiting factors, ecological outcomes, and conservation approaches outlined in the Oregon Conservation Strategy and the Intermountain Joint Venture’s (IMJV) Habitat Conservation Strategy Implementation Plan.

Renee asked the Board to identify questions to be addressed in further conversations with experts:

- Will Neuhauser: question of the case for its significance to the state, he stated it is not clearly described, what is the critical need? He clarified that he feels it is not clear to what the significance or crucial need is – he is not comfortable without more detail from experts
- Karl Wenner: commented on the need to see this listed and he sees the threat clearly. It is becoming more and more important and there is a tremendous threats without climate change, but with climate change it is even more critical
- Will Neuhauser: noted that the links in the chapters don’t correspond to the links so it makes it very hard to find (regarding layout of the document)
- Ron Alvarado: commented that the region is huge and that it serves as a major resting point for migratory birds, something to add to make the description more clear – also critical habitat for Sage-Grouse chicks (something to be added)

3-DRYSIDE FOREST HABITAT

Limiting Factors:

- Uncharacteristically intense wildfires as a result of fire suppression in forests
- Densification of forests due to altered fire regimes
- Loss of forest structure and connectivity
- Uncharacteristic outbreaks of diseases

OWEB’s Focused Investment Priority for dryside forest habitat supports voluntary actions that address primary limiting factors related to the quality of this habitat type. These actions will be guided by the habitat, limiting factors, ecological outcomes, and conservation approaches outlined in the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

Renee asked the Board to identify questions to be addressed in further conversations with experts:

- Ron Alvarado: asked a question about Oregon Department of Forestry’s priority areas and why it wasn’t listed – specific plan with hot spots noted (good reference materials)
- Mike Haske: commented that the title should be “drytype” instead of “dryside” as the title suggests one area of the state

- Karl Wenner: commented that the degree of specificity needs to relate back to the water aspect of it also, how does it impact the watershed?
- Will Neuhauser commented that being able to see the primary layer (habitat based) along with other secondary layers could be helpful in determining the most critical areas.

4-OAK WOODLAND AND PRAIRIE HABITAT

Limiting Factors:

- Habitat loss and fragmentation
- Habitat degradation, including disease
- Conifer and invasive species encroachment
- Impaired habitat persistence, especially lack of recruitment of young oaks

OWEB's Focused Investment Priority for oak woodland and prairie/chaparral habitat supports voluntary actions that address primary limiting factors related to the quality of this habitat type. These actions will be guided by the habitat, limiting factors, ecological outcomes, and conservation approaches outlined in the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

Renee noted that there are three types of oak habitats in Oregon, Oak Savannah, Oak Woodlands, and Oak Forests. She also stated that these oak habitats occur in the three areas of the state: 1) Oak and prairie habitats of the Willamette Valley ecoregion; 2) Oak woodlands of the East Cascades and foothills along the Columbia Gorge, including both Hood and Wasco counties and south to White River; and 3) Southern Oregon oak and chaparral habitats of the Klamath, Umpqua and Rogue River ecoregions.

Renee asked the Board to identify questions to be addressed in further conversations with experts:

Board member Will Neuhauser commented that the Board would need to get information from the experts on what information is important to take from the plans.

5-OREGON COASTAL COHO HABITAT AND POPULATIONS

Limiting Factors:

- Impaired ecosystem functions that have resulted in decreased instream complexity and degraded rearing and spawning habitats
- Degraded water quality (i.e., dissolved oxygen, temperature)
- Insufficient water quantity/flows during critical low flow periods

OWEB's Focused Investment Priority for Oregon's Coastal coho habitats and populations supports voluntary actions that address primary limiting factors related to the protection and restoration of the watershed functions that support coho habitat and health of coho populations. These actions will be guided by the habitat, limiting factors, ecological outcomes, and conservation approaches outlined in the Oregon Coastal Coho Conservation Plan and NOAA Fisheries Southern Oregon Northern California Coast Coho Recovery Plan, which are listed on page two of this document.

Coastal Coho have been listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act, however, there is the potential to see it de-listed.

Renee asked the Board to identify questions to be addressed in further conversations with experts:

- Ron Alvarado: what is being done to get the species de-listed, will it happen within the next 10 years?
- Morgan Rider: more detail in the Oregon Coast Coho Recovery Plan
- Lisa Phipps: commented that we should consult with Oregon Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources Conservation Service as additional experts; she also stated that the Oregon Coast Coho and Southern Oregon/N. California Coho Salmon ESU should be called out more clearly; should consider estuaries as a specific habitat type; may not want to highlight CZARA
- Will Neuhauser: it seems that there are two different lists, should be a priority that gives direction; the need to focus on quantity and quality of habitat; why are estuaries not highlighted?
- Morgan Rider: we should consider water supply and resiliency, this may need to be addressed more broadly
- Board Member, John Roberts commented that this has the potential to cross state lines and asked how do we coordinate with California in the Southern part of the state
- Alan Henning: there is a partnership with Department of Environmental Quality and California within the Klamath and they are spending money in Oregon to address projects that affect California

6-INLAND AQUATIC HABITAT

Limiting Factors:

- Impaired water quality
- Reduced water quantity
- Loss of habitat connectivity
- Spread of invasive species

OWEB's Focused Investment Priority for Inland Aquatic Habitat for Native Fish Species supports voluntary actions that address limiting factors related to the quality of this habitat type. Initiatives under this priority will identify the primary limiting factors outlined in associated federal and state recovery and conservation plans that initiative is aiming to address, and will be guided by the habitat and population objectives and conservation approaches set forth in these plans. Focal areas for the Inland Aquatic Habitat for Native Fish Species Priority include those areas in Oregon that are identified as priority geographies by the associated federal recovery and/or state conservation plans.

Renee asked the Board to identify questions to be addressed in further conversations with experts:

- Ron Alvarado: noted the accomplishment of the de-listing of the Oregon Chub as a positive note
- Co-Chair Eric Quaempts: commented that the addition of fresh water mussels should be added to the list (as a species of interest) – they are culturally important to the tribe as well
- Will Neuhauser: commented that we should be more inclusive of more species within this category (suggestion: migratory birds, why stop at fish?)

- Karl Wenner: commented on the framing of the priorities and noted that we may have others coming that we do not know about yet
- Will Neuhauser: commented that he would like to see the OWEB Board make a significant dent in ecological outcomes
- Bob Webber: commented that it is not focused enough, too broad

Agenda Item B - Public Comment:

- Larry Six of the McKenzie Watershed Council talked in support of the focused investment process and commented that he still is very much in support of the regular grant program as well. He stated that the Board should prioritize some of the priorities, due to the fact that there will be a lot of organizations out there doing a lot of work to get funded and he wanted the board to be aware of that.
- Dana Dedrick of the Long Tom Watershed Council commented on her concern of the shift away from the Oregon Plan. She talked about adding water quality to fish priority. She talked about inland aquatic habitat, lots of improvement happening, be careful not to shoot for de-listings. She asked the board to consider more money into inland habitat and remove coast from inland fish. Consider the funding partners and the gaps you may leave.
- Liz Vollmer-Buhl of the Suislaw Watershed Council commented on not taking away from Open Solicitation. She also noted that there is a lot of confusion out in the communities and watersheds about this process. She was happy to see Coho as a priority. Priorities should be set at an appropriate scale. She asked that estuaries be segregated out into their own category
- Jan Irene Miller of Linn County commented on the need for municipalities to be involved in the expert process. She talked about endangered species being human beings and encouraged that OWEB ask for water quality/quantity in the solicitation process. Inland aquatic impacts up and downstream. Need to be sure there is collaboration.
- Ken Bierly of the High Desert Partnership, talked about the Harney Basin Wetland Initiative. The focus should be on specific basins within the Harney Basin. He talked about addressing species not yet listed now. He talked about a focused initiative with more partners, timing is critical.
- Dan Bell, of The Nature Conservancy, talked in support of the Long Term Investment Strategy and the Focused Investment Partnership. He talked about the impact of the strategic action plan to the outcome of ecological benefits. He talked about the efforts going on throughout the state to come up with a strategic action plan and many proposals over an accelerated two month period. He stated that there is a need for clear priorities in April from OWEB Board.
- Amy Charette, of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs talked about the need in the John Day River for a Focused Investment Partnership, habitat needs are critical, and the John Day is a prime location for a partnership. She stated that they need the funding to make more of an impact, they have been operating on a limited budget. Sandy McCoy of the Gilliam Soil and Water Conservation District spoke in support of the partnership need and the John Day Basin being prime and ready for a focused investment partnership that will be affective across the state. Gabe Williams of Wheeler Soil and Conservation District spoke in support of the need for a partnership in the John Day and talked about connections with landowners.
- Tom Stahl, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, spoke in support of the Focused Investment Priority themes, he talked about them aligning with the Oregon Conservation

Strategy. He talked about the Coastal Coho and Inland Native Fish Themes, they support the use of conservation and recovery plans to guide priorities. The focused investment priorities fit well with the implementation phase from ODFW. Watershed scale is key and there is a benefit to multiple species. He noted a question about the connection between the Special Investment Partnership and Focused Investment Partnership process and how that would work.

- Bruce Lumper of Wasco County Watershed Council, and Whitney Olsker of USDA Forest Service talked about his support for the draft Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat focused investment priority.
- Mark Salens, Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, commented in support of the Focused Investment Partnership for Sage Brush – Sage Steppe Habitat Priority area. He commented on the need to continue the work that is currently being done surrounding Sage Grouse.

Renee Davis, Deputy Director, moved the Board to the next steps of the process and reminded the board that she is taking suggestions today to turn into adoption of focused investment priorities at the April Board meeting.

Question 1 – Are there any other priority categories that need to be added?

- Lisa Phipps: Estuaries – as a stand-alone (well beyond Coastal Coho)
- Will Neuhauser: supportive of the concept of Estuaries as a stand-alone
- Morgan Rider: sees this as a lens, as the board evaluates, considering geographies
- Eric Quaempts: It seems more functional in nature
- Bob Webber: Question about the process and how the selection process will be structured
- Morgan Rider: Is comfortable with the priorities if application sideboards are really clear
- John Roberts: Did the experts discuss estuaries as a category?
- Will Neuhauser: Is there is a quantitative difference where estuaries are concerned
- Doug Krahmer: Hold to the 6 – strengthen language to call out what we think is important, and find a way to narrow how we fund
- Alan Henning: Further clarify what OWEB Board is looking for, so that partners don't waste their time on those items that may not get funded
- Renee Davis: told board members we could provide a map that may be helpful to have a visual
- Co-Chair Eric Quaempts – stated looking at Estuaries as a stand-alone and as incorporated into existing categories for decision in April
- Ron Alvarado: Made a suggestion that we allow space for improvements once the process is underway
- Karl Wenner: Try not to make this more complicated than it needs to be, these priority areas are all important to the board – some may also be able to apply to regular grant program

Meta Loftsgaarden, Executive Director, reminded the board that staff need to get to a decision point for April's adoption of priorities for focused investments.

Renee Davis, Deputy Director, moved to the next item:

Question: Any new information needed on the Sage Brush Sage-Steppe Habitat item?

- Mike Haske: Would like to ask if there is another bullet in primary limiting factors, consultation with landowners. There is a lot of new information coming out on Sage Grouse, a Memorandum from Fish and Wildlife Service and a map that is available, FIAT, Fire and Invasives Assessment Team, does the board want this information? If there are specific people that the board would consider on the review team, if so he would like somebody from the Agriculture Research Station in Burns
- Doug Krahrmer: List of experts – get a broader perspective from Agriculture, Experiment Station – private landowner piece

Renee Davis: We will blend that in to all of the 6 priority categories

Question: Any new information or clarification needed on Oregon Closed Lakes Basin Wetland Habitats

- Doug Krahrmer: Consider at April meeting prioritizing areas in green?
- Renee Davis: That was the intent, just to focus on areas in green
- Mike Haske: If a proposal reaches more than one benefit within the same focused area, the proposal should call that out

Question: Any new information or clarification needed on Dryside Forest Habitat

- Renee Davis asked the board if they would like the hot spot information from ODF and the heat map from TNC – she asked for feedback on that
- Doug Krahrmer: use title Drytype Forests instead of Dryside Forest Habitat

Question: Any new information or clarification needed Oak Woodland and Prairie Habitat

- Renee Davis: There is a broader collection of plans for this process
- Will Neuhauser: This is the one map that does not have a legend, what is the map telling us?
- Ron Alvarado: commented that the drytype forest may have commonality with oak woodland and prairies – maps overlaying these two items would be helpful

Question: Any new information or clarification needed on Oregon Coastal Coho Habitat and Populations

- Renee Davis: Work with experts to identify areas that are particularly important for making impacts to de-listing the species
- Morgan Rider: Involve DEQ for regulatory and TMDL information – include where appropriate (not necessarily across all)
- Lisa Phipps: Clarity on fish passage issues – are there areas that this needs to be looked at?

Question: Any new information or clarification needed on Inland Aquatic Habitat for Native Fish Species

- Renee Davis, would you like to have similar maps with the overlay of different areas and priorities

Renee Davis: we will bring you two options on Estuaries within each of the categories and one that is a stand alone

Question: Is the Board comfortable with these options to move forward with draft priorities to bring in April

- Executive Director, Meta Loftsgaarden, noted the items that the staff will bring to the board in April to be able to approve the focused investment priorities:
 - Clear about criteria for application
 - Pre-consultation requirement
 - Option with and without estuary maps wherever possible
 - Prioritize limiting factors and hot spots
 - Add additional experts
 - Additional list of specific questions
 - Edits from this morning

C. Other Business

1. Greg Sieglitz, Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager, provided an update on the Upper Middle Fork John Day River Intensively Monitored Watershed (IMW). The Board was asked to consider funding for the IMW from the Effectiveness Monitoring line item in the 2013-15 spending plan.

Lisa Phipps moved to award \$65,342 to the North Fork John Day Watershed Council and \$7,114 to Washington State University in support of the Intensively Monitored Watershed from the Effectiveness Monitoring line item in the spending plan and delegate authority to the Executive Director to enter into appropriate agreements with an award date of March 18, 2015 to be used for any grant agreements, seconded by Doug Kraemer, the motion was unanimously approved.

C. Other Business

2. Richard Whitman, Governor's Natural Resources Policy Director, spoke to the Board regarding the Sage Con effort. He asked the Board to consider funding \$45,000 from the Oregon Plan/Governor's Priorities spending plan line item to support the final development of Oregon's Sage-Grouse Action Plan and begin implementation of Oregon's comprehensive All-Lands, All-Threats approach to Sage-Grouse Habitat Protection.

Bob Webber moved to award \$45,000 from the Oregon Plan/Governor's Priorities spending plan line item in support of Sage Grouse Conservation, and delegate authority to the Executive Director to enter into appropriate agreements, with an award date of March 18, 2015 to be used for any grant agreement(s). Funds will be used for the final development of Oregon's Sage-Grouse Action Plan and to begin implementation of Oregon's comprehensive All-Lands, All-Threats approach to Sage-Grouse Habitat Protection, seconded by John Roberts, the motion was unanimously approved.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned.