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Partnership for Coastal Watersheds receives State Land Board Award

Partners commended for community involvement and outreach

Salem – The State Land Board on April 8 honored the Coos Bay-area Partnership for Coastal Watersheds with the 2013 Land Board Partnership Award.

State Treasurer Ted Wheeler, a member of the Land Board, praised the partnership for their inclusive efforts to develop a locally-driven blueprint for responsible development, and to help the Coos Bay community prepare for climate-related changes on Oregon’s south coast.

“The Coos Bay partnership is a perfect example of Oregonians doing things right,” said Wheeler. “What they’ve been able to accomplish in four years is impressive, and they did it by bringing together a cross-section of people from the private and public sectors to collaborate on far-reaching issues.”

In the first phase of the partnership, focused on Coos Bay’s Charleston and South Slough areas, members developed a 20-year Community Vision; a State of the Watersheds assessment; and an Action Plan to help chart a course for their vision. The second phase includes developing an environmental and socio-economic inventory for the Coos estuary and additional collaborative monitoring tools.

“Our goals are to provide community access to the latest data to help our community plan projects, monitor the estuary, and understand the potential effects of rising sea levels,” said Don Ivy, one of the project participants and a former cultural resource coordinator with the Coquille Tribe.

Chris Hood, another project participant and a planner with Stuntzner Engineering and Forestry, LLC said he’s pleased the project is making scientific information more freely available to local decision makers. “We’re compiling in one easily accessible place technical information that’s normally found only by searching through many different reports and journals. These data are too important not to make more accessible to everyone.”

The partnership was launched in 2009 by the South Slough Reserve and the Coos Watershed Association. Funds have been provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, and the Laird Norton Family Foundation.

Their list of past and present collaborators includes local tribes, economic development organizations, local businesses, the local community college, and a wide variety of government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

The State Land Board is marking their tenth year of giving awards for projects and efforts that promote responsible, sustainable stewardship of state resources or that benefit Department of State Lands-related programs. The Department serves as the South Slough Reserve's administrative partner.

Since 2004, 25 projects have been honored, representing all regions of Oregon.

The State Land Board consists of Governor John Kitzhaber, Secretary of State Kate Brown and State Treasurer Ted Wheeler. The Department of State Lands administers diverse natural and fiscal resources. Many of the resources generate revenue for the Common School Fund, such as state-owned rangelands and timberlands, waterway leases, estates for which no will or heirs exist, and unclaimed property. Twice a year, the agency distributes fund investment earnings to support K-12 public schools. The agency also administers Oregon's Removal-Fill Law, which requires people removing or filling certain amounts of material in waters of the state to obtain a permit.

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