

A. Cover Page

Executive Summary:

North Coast Land Conservancy is requesting \$200,000.00 from the Water Resources Department to implement place-based, integrated water resource plans that holistically address water quality and quantity issues within the North Coast Basin. Like many areas in Oregon, our watersheds support a wide range of benefits for both human uses and the environment – including water for drinking, agriculture, forestry and recreation, and are the source of essential habitat for fish and wildlife (Oregon’s Integrated Water Resources Strategy/WRD 2012). Over time, we realized that potential solutions are not only complex but require the involvement of all water users within a basin to find equitable solutions.

We have a significant opportunity to mesh the place-based water resource plans with DEQ’s pending release of Oregon Coast *Drinking Water Protection Planning: A Resource Guide* and updated Source Water Assessments. Each community will have technical data to identify water quality and quantity risks within their drinking watersheds. Despite spending millions on infrastructure, water districts in small coastal communities have not achieved needed protections of drinking water sources, as identified in the 2001 DEQ assessment. While drinking water source protection is the driver, we now understand that we need to look holistically at the many issues that are affecting water quality and quantity within our basins to find lasting solutions.

To secure clean, abundant drinking water, and ensure all water users of our basins may move toward water security, we intend to follow the Water Resources Department model of place-based integrated water resources planning. We will explore effective solutions that focus, through a facilitated process, on achieving accountable, cost-effective and enforceable actions.

Location:

North Coast Basin drinking water, surface watersheds in Clatsop and Tillamook Counties which will soon receive DEQ Source Water Assessments: Neskowin, Tierra del Mar, Beaver, Tillamook, Netarts, Oceanside/Cape Meares, Rockaway Beach, Nehalem, Manzanita, Arch Cape, Falcon Cove, Cannon Beach, Seaside, Warrenton, Youngs River, Astoria, and Wickiup.

Key Project Partners:

North Coast Basin Coalition citizens group, Northwest Region Water Commissioner and Watermaster, owners of surface drinking watersheds, industrial timber companies, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Oregon Water Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Oregon Shores Coalition, Eco-trust, Oregon Wild, Lower Nehalem Watershed Council, Lower Nehalem Community Trust, Ecola Creek Watershed Council, NW Community Forest Coalition, Oceanside Clean Water Committee, Rockaway Citizens for Water Protection, City and County Officials, Representatives David Gomberg and Deborah Boone, Senator Betsy Johnson and EQC Commissioner Ed Armstrong (in his role as Tillamook County citizen).

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B. Description of the Co-Conveners

The North Coast Land Conservancy (NCLC) will serve as Co-Convener and Fiscal Sponsor. Since 1986, NCLC's goal has been to promote a fully functioning coastal landscape where healthy communities of people, plants and wildlife thrive. NCLC has a diverse array of partners invested in conservation of our coastal watersheds, and has extensively worked with private industrial timber owners on the coast.

Oregon Representative David Gomberg has agreed to serve as Co-Convener for the duration of this project in order to ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to fully participate in the process. He also has the capacity to liaison with our state and federal partners. Representative Gomberg has served District 10 since 2012. He was unopposed in his 2014 re-election bid, having earned nominations of the Democrat, Independent, Working Families, and Republican parties. He currently serves on the Joint Ways & Means Committee, is co-chair for the Ways & Means Transportation & Economic Development subcommittee, sits on the Ways & Means Agriculture & Natural Resources subcommittee, and serves on the House Rural Communities, Land Use, and Water committee. In addition he is a member of the Small Business Task Force and the Governor's Commission on Senior Services. His legislative efforts have focused on environmental sustainability and conservation, among others.

Our place-based planning target population is the North Coast Basin, which stretches from Astoria to Netarts, focusing on the entirety of drinking watersheds, from the source to sea. We will specifically ask for input from all water users, including the citizens, landowners, agencies and industries that rely on abundant, clean water on the north coast. The North Coast Basin includes Neskowin, Tierra del Mar, Beaver, Tillamook, Netarts, Oceanside/Cape Meares, Rockaway Beach, Nehalem, Manzanita, Arch Cape, Falcon Cove, Cannon Beach, Seaside, Warrenton, Youngs River, Astoria, and Wickiup. Over the next year the NCLC will collaborate with the DEQ Regional Solutions Team on roll-out of their *Oregon Coastal Drinking Water Protection Planning: A Resource Guide*. We will network with water districts and public officials to use the DEQ Source Water Assessment data. North Coast water systems, water treatment plant upgrades, and watersheds will benefit from informed planning to avoid, mitigate and prepare for risks from storms, landslides, earthquakes, climate change, land use practices, development, etc.

Representative Gomberg brings knowledge, accountability and respect for diverse interests. He will bring multiple perspectives and partners to the table. NCLC brings considerable experience in building broad alliances and promoting community solutions. In addition to our in-kind efforts, the grant will enable us to hire a professional mediator to expertly steer the planning process, and access technical data from our partners.

C. Integration, Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Over the past several years, the North Coast Basin Coalition (NCBC), a supporting partner, has reached out to a large and diverse array of state and federal agencies, city and county governments, state and federal legislators, environmental organizations, business interests, and concerned citizens to help solve our water issues. (**Attachment C1:** list of NCBC water planning activities) These efforts have had some successes, but have not resulted in any specific pathways to long-term solutions. We have found that real solutions must come from comprehensive consensus across the stakeholder continuum. This funding opportunity represents a genuine mechanism whereby pertinent stakeholders can discuss, evaluate, and develop viable solutions for north coast water concerns.

Our partner, the North Coast Basin Coalition (NCBC) is a citizens group connecting the drinking watersheds of Tillamook and Clatsop County. Its mission is to provide public education and promote agency collaboration to achieve protection of our drinking water. NCBC has organized well-attended town hall type meetings in Rockaway Beach, Astoria, Nehalem, Bay City and Tillamook with agency, university and non-profit experts in the fields of public health, forestry and environmental protection. Representative Gomberg and Senator Arnie Roblan came to Oceanside for a water safety town hall meeting. NCBC confers with neighborhood associations, water commissioners, county commissioners, legislators, the Oregon Board of Forestry and the Environmental Quality Commission (EQC). NCBC sponsored film festivals and authors inform our communities about watershed health and pesticide risks. Our work has gained the support of EQC Commissioner Ed Armstrong and DEQ Director Dick Pedersen and numerous agency staff.

Dovetailing with the release of the Source Water Risk Assessments, DEQ Director Dick Pederson has committed technical support and staff time: 1) Joshua Seeds will provide risk data for each surface drinking watershed; 2) Jennifer Purcell of the DEQ Regional Solutions team will bring together water masters, water commissioners, public officials and agencies to educate them about resources and funding opportunities, identify needs and collaborate on resource development; 3) York Johnson is working on pesticide monitoring with the Oceanside Water District and can advise other districts on measurement issues; and 4) Jennifer Flynt, DEQ Public Affairs, has offered to assist with public information.

Other individuals and groups who have come forward to aid our efforts include Kate Skinner, Tillamook Region Forester for the Oregon Department of Forestry, who will continue to provide expertise on forest management practices and liaison to private forestry groups; Oregon Coastal Alliance director Cameron La Follette will continue to identify land-use conflicts; and EQC Commissioner Ed Armstrong, in his role as a long-time Tillamook County citizen, can help our planning-process remain inclusive, well vetted, and transparent.

Our Place-Based Planning Project will benefit from an existing complex of local citizens' groups who have initiated joint, localized projects with state agencies and non-profit organizations. In addition, our past activities have relied on a large group of citizen volunteers who, in conjunction with several non-profits, and will continue to educate the public on water issues and the progress of this planning process via town hall meetings and other educational endeavors. Continued

public education and outreach will be integral to the success of this project. Transparency, citizen involvement and community commitment to healthy watersheds and cost-effective solutions all depend upon successful engagement. (**Attachment C2: Outreach Strategy**)

To ensure the participation of a balanced representation of regional water interests, State Representative David Gomberg (District 10) will serve as convener for this project using his trusted relationships with citizens, agencies, business, and public officials; Rep. Gomberg will insure the appropriate mix of stakeholders. To engage and collaborate with our stakeholders, we will work with the Oregon Water Resources Department and hire an experienced and impartial facilitator to manage this project and oversee communications and work products.

Our planning process will build on Jennifer Purcell's DEQ Regional Solutions meeting launching the release of *Oregon Coast Drinking Water Protection Planning: A Resource Guide* to engage civic officials, water districts and agency experts. North Coast Basin Coalition members will continue to engage their communities in this planning process by speaking to neighborhood associations, public meetings, and town halls. And we will welcome the industrial-forest landowners who manage our watersheds. (**Attachment C3: list of partners**)

Under the leadership of Representative Gomberg we will request that our partners commit to a multi-year involvement in the planning process to secure achievable results.

D. Statement of Need

Like many areas in Oregon, our watersheds support a wide range of benefits for both human uses and the environment – including water for drinking, agriculture, industry, and recreation and sources of essential habitat for fish and wildlife (*Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy/WRD 2012*). Several publications have detailed the status of our North Coast Basin water and watersheds: The 2011 *The Health of Oregon Waters, Water Quality Status and Action Plan: North Coast Basin* at <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/watershed/Docs/NorthCoastPlan.pdf>. and 2) the pending *Oregon Coastal Drinking Water Protection Planning: A Resource Guide*.

Actions in our watersheds have affected water quality and quantity by increasing temperature, turbidity and sedimentation resulting in increased water treatment costs, contamination alerts and limiting access to clean water for fish, drinking water, agriculture and recreation (*Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy/WRD 2012*). Although legal, many of these practices have, at times, diminished both water quantity and quality throughout the region and raised awareness among coastal citizens. Small coastal communities have spent millions on water treatment upgrades to mitigate some of these effects. Localized efforts are often inconsequential because true solutions require a comprehensive, systemic approach whereby all parties are included in the solutions.

Making some of these issues more pressing, is the impending climate change projections for Oregon. Climate models are predicting an average warming of approximately 0.1 – 0.6 Celsius per decade through the 2050's (*Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy/WRD 2012*), which will pose several challenges for the North Coast Basin, including decreased summertime run off, less marine fog and reduced recharge to groundwater aquifers. Climate change also brings stronger winter storms that can cause extensive landslides, mudslides, and other hazards impacting water quality, intake capacity, and our forests' natural storage capacity. Continued loss of natural storage means less available water during the summer and spring months, when water demands are at their height. We must work together to ensure our watersheds are resilient and can adapt to a changing climate and continue to affect water quality and quantity positively.

We know the North Coast Basin surface drinking watersheds can provide abundant wildlife, efficient water filtration and natural water storage capacity, while balancing economic returns. However, to do this we must work together to develop common goals and equitable solutions for the people of Oregon.

E. Proposed Approach

Our proposed methodology is based on Appendix D of the OWRD Draft Guidelines: A Tool for Conducting Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning in Oregon (February 2015). The primary components of our approach are consultant services for facilitation, research, and solution development, and stakeholder processing of consultant findings into viable solutions. Agency and in-kind resources will be maximally used. We assume that our planning project will emphasize surface water issues within watersheds, but all water aspects will be integrated into the process. We have combined our proposed actions and time line in the following table.

ACTIONS	DATES
OWRC grant selection and notification; next steps.	Feb - March 2016
Determine consultant services; publish RFP for services; let contract.	March - May
Planning Step 1: Build a Collaborative and Integrated Process	May - June 2016
1.1 With Rep. Gomberg and OWRD, review our list of partners; contact those necessary to complete our list. We will invite "representatives of all levels of government, private, and non- profit sectors, tribes, stakeholders, and the public" and "collaborate in ways that help agencies cut across silos."	May
1.2 Rep. Gomberg and facilitator will convene partners to review the planning process, identify common goals, develop an inclusive and transparent process, seek consensus, develop our communication strategy/plan, determine our governance agreement to assure commitment throughout the two-year process to achieve implementation of the plan, and follow the Public Meetings law.	June
1.3 Continue our ongoing public education process; inform and request citizen involvement in decision-making via town halls and other public meetings.	Ongoing
Planning Step 2: Water Quantity & Quality and Ecological Issues	June - Oct 2016
2.1 Technical consultant, in conjunction with state agencies, will develop, assess, and describe the physical, biological, social, economic, and cultural characteristics of the North Coast Basin landscape. Data needs will be determined.	June - August
2.2 Technical consultant, in conjunction with state agencies and local entities, will characterize the surface and groundwater quality and quantity. Data needs will be determined.	May - August
2.3 Technical consultant, in conjunction with state agencies and local entities, will characterize the ecological health of the region's watersheds. Data needs will be determined. Special consideration will be given to the interrelationships among industrial timberlands, recreational endeavors, regional economies, and public health.	May - September
2.4 Technical consultant, in conjunction with state agencies and local entities, will assess successful resource-management plans as templates for solutions.	May - September
2.5 Rep. Gomberg and facilitator will convene partners to assess these findings.	October
Planning Step 3: Quantify Existing & Future Needs/Demands	Sept - Dec 2016
3.1 Technical consultant, in conjunction with state agencies and local entities, will characterize water needs and demands per the Guidelines. Integrate with Step 2 data.	October - November
3.2 Rep. Gomberg & facilitator will convene partners to assess these findings relative to Step 2.	December
Planning Step 4: Develop Integrated Solutions for Meeting Long-term Water Needs	
4.1 Technical consultant, in conjunction with state agencies and local entities, will develop integrated solutions per the Guidelines.	January - April 2017
4.2 Rep. Gomberg and facilitator will convene partners to assess these findings relative to Steps 2 and 3.	May
Planning Step 5: Plan Adoption and Implementation	May - August 2017
5.1 Stakeholders and consultants will develop necessary workplans and strategies.	May - August

F. Anticipated Results

Although several local citizens' groups have pursued solutions to our water issues by reaching out to legislators, county officials, state agencies, and other organizations, we have found no long-term solutions for holistically addressing our water needs. The WRD's Place-Based Planning Grant provides the opportunity to implement a professionally-managed, scientifically-based project that incorporates input from all relevant parties. By bringing these entities together, we anticipate that this planning process will result in viable work plans that lead to real solutions. Although specifics are difficult to forecast due to the nature of the collaborative process, we hope that coastal communities will be guaranteed realistic opportunities for sustainable sources of abundant, clean water throughout the region. By bringing together private landowners, concerned citizens, agencies, non-profits and businesses, we hope to create a sense of shared responsibility and build community that effectively recognizes the many important uses of water within our basins and works to cooperatively find solutions that can balance the social, economic and ecological benefits our watersheds provide.

Our approach is to begin with a comprehensive assessment of North Coast Basin watersheds, then evolve our thinking and work to arrive at focused, place-based integrated water plans. For communities and water districts ready to act we will choose illustrative watersheds that can serve as models for all of our communities.

Illustrative, model watersheds might include:

- 1) A watershed mainly managed for industrial timber;
- 2) A watershed largely owned by its city; and/or
- 3) A watershed in an unincorporated, highly sensitive area with high conservation value.

By creating viable plans for a few illustrative watersheds, we will have models for our partner watersheds to implement throughout the North Coast Basin. These plans will deliver accountable and enforceable actions and serve as templates for additional actions. Thus, our short-term outcome will be the watershed-specific work plans, and our long-term goal will be to apply the basics of these plans to other watersheds throughout the region. We recognize the integrity of our watersheds is directly related to the health of communities. Our watersheds must be able to produce abundant, clean water for myriad of uses, well into the future.

We envision our communities, empowered by our partners and the planning process, will develop a shared vision for North Coast Basin watersheds that embraces future needs and a variety of uses, including for forestry, agriculture, and recreation, and ensures ecosystem health and resilience.

G. Request for Department Resources

North Coast Land Conservancy and the North Coast Basin Coalition are requesting \$200,000.00 from the Water Resources Department to complete a place-based integrated water resources planning grant. The group anticipates completing the planning process within 2 ½ years. It is believed this timeframe will allow for the coalition to complete its work, keep the partners engaged and allow the Water Resources Department adequate time to report back to the legislature.

We anticipate the process will be managed by a professional facilitator with the help of the Water Resources Department. We believe that in order to ensure a non-biased approach using an outside facilitator is the best course of action, and thus, a majority of our overall costs are focused on this aspect of the project. The plan calls for 10 quarterly meetings, which would be hosted in neutral, central locations and be managed by the facilitator. The group forecasts hiring a skilled facilitator for the duration of the project to cost roughly \$100,000.00. This would allow the facilitator to dedicate time outside of regular meetings to help propel the group forward, prepare materials for our quarterly meetings and prepare a final report.

The next substantial section of the proposed budget is dedicated to technical information and report writing that will help identify and close data gaps. We anticipate a large portion of the needed data already exists within state and federal departments, but also acknowledge watershed specific information may have to be further investigated to close data gaps. The types of reports and information we would consider gathering include, but are not limited to, water quality data, wildlife inventories, climate adaptation recommendations, basin hydrologic data and modeling, GIS mapping, etc. Because some of this information is currently unknown or will need to be researched we anticipate spending \$75,000.00 over the course of 2 ½ years for technical assistance and research that will allow us to close important data gaps across the entire North Coast Basin.

The remaining portion of our budget is dedicated to fiscal management. The North Coast Land Conservancy will be the fiscal sponsor for the grant and is requesting \$6,000.00 to provide this service. North Coast Land Conservancy forecasts spending 150 hours, at \$40.00 per hour, over the course of 2 ½ years to provide adequate fiscal management.

With a proposed budget of \$200,000.00, North Coast Land Conservancy will provide \$50,000.00 to meet the 25% match requirement. NCLC is proposing to meet this requirement by providing in-kind match in the form of donated time from nonprofits, agencies and volunteers. North Coast Land Conservancy has already pledged \$15,000.00 of in-kind staff time towards the project. DEQ will provide \$1,000 of in-kind support, through staff time, and we anticipate citizens to provide, at the low end, nearly 600 hours of volunteer participation. The City of Seaside was recently granted a Department of Environmental Quality Grant for \$30,000.00, which we are proposing to use as match, as it will help provide a better understanding of drinking watersheds in our basin and will inform our process. We are also proposing to seek other types of funding, including other grants and foundations to continue to leverage Water Resources Department funds. (**Attachment G4:** budget outline)