

January 6, 2006

## **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

**FROM:** Louise Solliday, Governor's Natural Resources Office

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item G: Willamette River Legacy Program Update  
January 24-25, 2006 OWEB Board Meeting**

### **I. Introduction**

This staff report provides Board members with an update on the status of the Willamette River Legacy program.

### **II. Background**

On March 5, 2004, Governor Kulongoski announced that his "top environmental priority over the next three years is to clean up the crown jewel of Oregon's river system - the Willamette River." The Governor has identified three priority focus areas and high priority implementation actions for each area:

REPAIR	Cleaning up the industrial pollutants and toxins that have contaminated the river;
RESTORE	Returning the river to its natural state, restoring its abundant wildlife and pristine riverbanks; and
RECREATE	Addressing the incredible role that the Willamette River plays in Oregon's quality of life so Oregonians can enjoy the many activities the river offers, and to do so responsibly so that it will be here for future generations.

Attachment A lists the high priority items developed to address the three priority focus areas and identifies action items, benefits, funding, key partners, the timeline, and targets for performance measures.

### **III. Willamette River Legacy Program Actions**

Since the previous report to the Board in September 2005, the following activities have taken place:

1. Continued discussions with the tribes, land trusts and Bonneville Power Administration about negotiating a Wildlife Mitigation Trust Fund for the Willamette and Columbia hydro projects, which, if successful, could provide matching funds for OWEB funded projects in the Willamette and Columbia basins;

2. Reviewed and ranked 32 grant proposals for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment grant program, along with staff from OWEB, DEQ and ODFW;
3. Helped design and presented at the Environmental Law Education Center's Continuing Law Education Conference on the Willamette;
4. Toured the Lambert Bend site and discussed restoration alternatives with Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and landowners;
5. Worked with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop work plans and identify stakeholders for recovery planning for the Upper Willamette and Lower Columbia Evolutionarily Significant Units (OWEB staff will provide technical assistance during the recovery planning process);
6. Established an interagency steering committee for the Willamette River Legacy Program, which includes staff from OWEB;
7. Discussed with various state (OWEB) and federal agency staff how to report progress on the priority action items in the Governor's Blueprint; and
8. Joined EPA and Willamette Partnership in announcing a Targeted Watershed Grant to establish the Willamette Ecosystem Marketplace with an initial focus on water quality trading for temperature, creating another potential source of funding for protection and restoration projects in the basin.

Work will continue on implementation on the priority actions in the *Governor's Blueprint for Restoring and Enjoying a Healthy Willamette River Basin* over the next year. The Blueprint can be found at [http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/Willamette\\_River\\_Legacy/vision\\_background.shtml](http://governor.oregon.gov/Gov/Willamette_River_Legacy/vision_background.shtml).

#### **IV. Recommendation**

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

#### Attachment

- A. Willamette River Legacy Program High Priority Strategic Actions