



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360

Salem, OR 97301-1290

(503) 986-0178

FAX (503) 986-0199

www.oregon.gov/OWEB



January 5, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: **Tom Byler, Executive Director**
Melissa Leoni, Senior Policy Coordinator
Ken Bierly, Deputy Director
Lauri Aunan, Grant Program Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item F: Strategic Plan Implementation
January 20-21, 2010 OWEB Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This report provides an update on implementation of immediate actions under the Final Draft Strategic Plan. Agenda Item H reports more specifically about the implementation of actions under goal three of the plan, which addresses communications related issues.

II. Background

At the September 2009 Board meeting, staff presented the five goals, nine strategies, and 33 actions in the draft final Strategic Plan and recommended specific actions needing immediate attention. Staff also identified the actions that could be carried forward, in whole or part, under ongoing programs, resources and staffing. Staff recommended and the Board approved funding allocations to facilitate staff moving forward with implementation of immediate action items.

III. Immediate Actions

Attachment A contains an updated table showing the five goals, nine strategies, and 35 actions associated with the proposed final Strategic Plan (Agenda Item E). In addition to this report, staff will update the Board on the implementation of other plan priorities, including Ecosystem Services (Agenda Item O) and Partnership Investments (Agenda Item N). The following sections focus on three high priority action items. Staff will describe these efforts and provide updates on the progress of other actions at the January Board meeting.

A. Restoration and Acquisition Priorities

Action 1 of Goal 1, Strategy 1 of the proposed final Strategic Plan is to

“Work with partners to update OWEB’s restoration and acquisition priorities and align them with the Oregon Conservation Strategy, species conservation and recovery plans, water quality management plans, local watershed assessments, and climate change strategies as they emerge from international, national, state and local sources.”

Staff plan to implement this action in partnership with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) update of the Oregon Conservation Strategy. The OWEB and ODFW directors and program managers met on December 21, 2009, to discuss how to best move forward with this collaborative effort. The agencies agreed to work toward the goal of making a more explicit and understandable connection between the various state and federal plans and strategies related to watershed restoration and species recovery in Oregon. The desired outcome is greater clarity of ecological needs and priorities for stakeholders and the public at large.

ODFW has ambitious plans to update its Conservation Strategy in a number of areas, including climate change adaptation. ODFW is targeting June 2011 to complete these updates. Initially, OWEB will contribute to this effort by helping complete updates on freshwater and estuarine habitat priorities and through coordination and information sharing on climate change adaptation. OWEB's goal for its restoration and acquisition priorities is not only to more effectively integrate the priorities with existing plans and strategies, but also to make the priorities a useful tool for stakeholders, review team members and staff. A framework for OWEB tasks for the action item is as follows:

1. Compile restoration priorities in a consistent database (contract for services).
2. Compile aquatic species recovery plan implementation actions; draft narrative on freshwater and estuarine aquatic habitat priorities (contract for services).
3. Develop a cross-walk between restoration and protection priorities and Conservation Strategy conservation opportunity areas and/or principles (contractor, staff, ODFW).
4. Develop a clear mechanism for identifying and using priorities (contractor, staff, ODFW).
5. Develop and implement an outreach and training program to provide access to the tools developed.

Tasks A-C may be completed by the fall of 2010. Discussion will continue with ODFW and may lead to including additional partners in the effort.

B. Watershed Council Listening Sessions

Goal 2 of the Strategic Plan is to

“Support an enduring, high capacity local infrastructure for conducting watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.” Strategy 2 under Goal 2 is to “Evaluate and adjust watershed council support grant review and funding processes to build local capacity, provide base funding and promote strategic partnerships.”

In October 2009, OWEB's Director met with the Board of the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils and appeared at the Network's Annual Meeting. The discussion included the importance of engaging watershed councils in a deeper dialogue about what makes watershed councils successful and how OWEB's council funding and processes might be changed in order to build local capacity, provide base funding and promote strategic partnerships. It was agreed that there should be a series of “listening sessions” with watershed councils in order to have this deeper dialogue, and to communicate the goals and thoughts of OWEB's Board regarding council support.

Because of the importance of watershed council support funding to more than 60 council organizations across the state, it will take time and continued dialogue to do a good job developing proposed changes and understanding how councils might be affected by those changes. As a result, OWEB is not currently planning to make significant changes to watershed council support for the 2011-2013 watershed council support grant cycle. It is currently contemplated that any significant changes would occur for the 2013-2015 cycle.

OWEB and the Network have worked together to select dates and locations. We plan to hold six meetings around the state in February and March as follows:

Willamette Basin, Region 3: Hillsboro – February 22
Southwest Oregon, Region 2: Roseburg – February 24
North Coast, Region 1: Newport – February 25
Willamette Basin, Region 3: Salem – March 1
Central Oregon, Region 4: Redmond – March 2
Eastern Oregon & Mid-Columbia, Regions 5, 6: La Grande – March 4

OWEB issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to retain a third party facilitator. The RFP closed December 8, 2009, and OWEB received six responses to the RFP. The top candidates will be interviewed on January 6, 2010, and we hope to have a facilitator hired by January 11, 2010.

Following the listening sessions, staff are planning to convene a work group of council support applicants and reviewers to develop improvements to the existing application and review process, based on feedback from the 2009-2011 process. Staff will also look at whether to make any policy recommendations to the OWEB Board for the 2011-2013 cycle, regarding the current OWEB rules that attempt to discourage “splitting” of umbrella councils, and how OWEB should approach funding for new councils or applicants.

C. Working Lands Conservation Easements

Action 7 of Goal 1, Strategy 1 is to

“Encourage and support programs that result in positive long-term economic outcomes for landowners while achieving watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.”

OWEB staff have been working with the Board Acquisition Subcommittee on the question of how working lands conservation easements – those land conservation projects that include continued private ownership and economic use of a property – are evaluated for funding. OWEB’s current administrative rules focus on habitat, plant community, and species ecological priorities and whether applications meet one or more conservation principles to protect those priorities. In contrast, a number of working lands easement proponents have argued that protection from land division and intensification of use should be sufficient for OWEB funding.

As part of the strategic plan implementation, staff are seeking an independent contractor to analyze programs that fund “working lands” conservation easements and interview interested parties to seek opinions about what working lands easements can contribute to watershed and habitat restoration and conservation in Oregon. The purpose of the project is to compile

policy and program information and stakeholder perspectives to help OWEB better determine how its funding can be used for working lands conservation easements that provide long-term economic benefits for landowners in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution and OWEB's mission and statutes.

OWEB issued an RFP on November 6, 2009 to hire a contractor to perform these tasks. The initial RFP received no interest. Staff extended the RFP deadline until January 6, 2010, and are hoping to secure the services of a contractor in January with a goal of presenting findings to the Board at the September 2010 or January 2011 meeting.

IV. Recommendation

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

Attachment

- A. Strategic Plan Immediate Action Table

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

Attachment A

Goal 1: Restore and sustain resilient ecosystems through program and project investments that enhance watershed and ecosystem functions and processes support community needs.

Strategy 1: Maintain and enhance restoration and protection programs that focus on watershed and ecosystem functions and processes, support sustainable working landscapes, and empower community-based conservation to address economic, social and environmental health.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to update OWEB's restoration and acquisition priorities and align them with the Oregon Conservation Strategy, salmon conservation and recovery plans, water quality management plans, and climate change strategies...	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Numerous phone calls and meetings with ODFW in November and December 2009. Statement of Work drafted. • RFPs targeted in January 2010. 	Ken Bierly
Action 2: Periodically review and update the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities... <i>(NEW in December 2009 Strategic Plan)</i>	No		
Action 3: Board adopts final set of Restoration and Acquisition Priorities.	No		
Action 4: OWEB enhances access to, and knowledge of, adopted Restoration and Acquisition Priorities.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Review Team discussions of process and function during application evaluations. Information will be included in evaluation summaries. • Developing more explicit "process and function" question for April 2010 Restoration application, replacing current process and function questions. • Developing website updates to make Restoration Priorities more visible and highlight process and function importance to OWEB Board. 	Lauri Aunan Courtney Shaff Miriam Hulst
Action 5: OWEB enhances the grant application development and review processes to incorporate the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities...	No		
Action 6: Continue investment in the Willamette and Deschutes Special Investment Partnerships (SIPs) and work with partners to explore additional SIPs and other partnerships.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing, Deschutes likely to soon utilize its full allocation of funding. • Willamette moving forward on slower track. • Continued interest in the Lower John Day and Sandy River basins for new SIPs. 	Ken Bierly
Action 7: Encourage and support programs that result in positive long-term economic outcomes for landowners while	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB 513 Ecosystem Services Markets Work Group launched. 	Renee Davis-Born

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

achieving watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon ecosystem services contract in progress. • Working Lands RFP pending. 	Ken Bierly
---	--	---	------------

Strategy 2: Implement monitoring and research programs to build knowledge and strengthen feedback about OWEB investments and critical uncertainties to support adaptive management for outcome improvements.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Undertake a monitoring and research program status review to describe the lessons learned, the current use of data and analyses, and the actions needed to implement this strategy.	No		
Action 2: Implement the appropriate compliance and effectiveness monitoring in key investment areas and the remaining one third of OWEB's top restoration investment areas.	Yes	<p>Land Acquisition Hiring assistance for field effort. Anticipate field effort of site inspections in spring-summer.</p> <p>C&E Monitoring: Ongoing – To date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness monitoring position hiring initiated • Wrapped-up initial Grande Ronde/South Coast fish passage and riparian projects • Completed first year of EPA Willamette wetland evaluation • Next steps include: website stories featuring monitoring results, fish passage and water quality evaluation, contracts for riparian, small dam, in-stream, IMW, and irrigation evaluation 	<p>Miriam Hulst Ken Bierly (acquisitions)</p> <p>Greg Sieglitz</p>
Action 3: Assemble data, information, lessons learned, and stories from effectiveness monitoring that will be used to implement Goal 3 to build awareness and understanding.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hired temporary staff to assist in database improvements and data mining • Contracted with I-Ten to map older unmapped projects • Contracted with Lane Community College to map small grant projects • Initiated database organization to align with websites • Initiated website clean-up and mock-up of new features • Drafted agreement with Department of 	Greg Sieglitz

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

		Administrative Services for website project mapping and fish passage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worked with Defender's of Wildlife on Conservation Registry 	
Action 4: Continue to work with partners through collaborative workgroups and by providing funding through grants to high Immediate Action monitoring activities.	Yes	Ongoing – To date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiated coordination with ODFW, DEQ, USFS and NRCS related to Goal 3, Strategy 1, Action 3. Drafted work plan for DEQ participation 	Greg Sieglitz
Action 5: Continue to establish and maintain databases internally and through grants used to store, analyze, and provide the backbone of information delivery...	Yes	Ongoing – To date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed annual upload of 5 years of data to NOAA Made significant adjustments to database and processes to match NOAA requirements Continued work with ODFW on state-wide fish passage database Continued work with OWRD on GIS services and data hosting 	Greg Sieglitz
Action 6: Revise OWEB Research Priorities to align with Board goals related to climate change, Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, and Oregon Conservation Strategy.	No		

Goal 2: Support an enduring, high capacity local infrastructure for conducting watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.

Strategy 1: Establish and articulate policies related to the support and development of a diverse local infrastructure for watershed restoration.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Work with watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, et al to identify needs and funding partners to build capacity and develop diverse/enduring local infrastructure.	Yes	Listening Sessions with councils planned for February/March 2010	Lauri Aunan Courtney Shaff
Action 2: Identify and evaluate alternative organizational structures to achieve more stable local infrastructure.	No		

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

Strategy 2: Evaluate and adjust watershed council support grant review and funding processes to build local capacity, provide base funding and promote strategic partnerships.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Develop funding policy guidelines for achieving sustainable council support.	Yes	Listening Sessions with councils planned for February/March 2010	Lauri Aunan Courtney Shaff
Action 2: Develop policy guidance for the Board on council requests for solo funding (“splitting” from umbrella councils) for the 2011-2013 council support grant awards.	Yes	Listening Sessions with councils planned for February/March 2010	Lauri Aunan Courtney Shaff
Action 3: Work with applicants, reviewers and others to explore options regarding how OWEB funds councils...	No		

Strategy 3: Provide technical assistance to build capacity, secure additional funding and increase local organizational resilience.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Require specific capacity building products and expectations as deliverables for the funding provided to the Network and OACD.	Yes	Network GA drafted - – Working with the Network to develop council training opportunities under this funding. Waiting for OACD application.	Melissa Leoni Courtney Shaff
Action 2: Reserve noncapital funds to contract with one or more organizations to deliver additional capacity building services in 2009-2011.	Yes	Ongoing. To date: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded travel scholarships for councils to attend the Network Gathering • Funded “excellent” councils to provide training for Needs Improvement and Satisfactory councils at the Network Gathering • Funding “Connect 2010” training for SWCD employees • Developing follow up training and mentoring ideas for Needs Improvement councils 	Lauri Aunan Courtney Shaff
Action 3: Continue working with partners and exploring possibilities to develop tools and strategies for ecosystem service market participation...	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SB 513 Working Group effort launched. • Ecosystem Services contract in progress. 	Renee Davis-Born

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

Goal 3: Provide information to help Oregonians understand the need for and engage in activities that support healthy watersheds.

Strategy 1: Make Oregonians aware of the importance of healthy watersheds and informing them, in broad strokes, of what has been accomplished on their behalf through the work of OWEB and others.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Develop and implement simple, effective and strategic awareness messages and messaging tools aligned with OWEB's strategic plan	Yes	Gard contract in progress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Messages/co-branding strategy in final development • Final Microsite and PowerPoint products due by February 2010 	Tom Byler Carolyn Devine
Action 2: Develop a range of tools for OWEB grant recipients to use to further the Strategy and implement Action 1.	Yes	Gard Co-branding/messages in development.	Carolyn Devine
Action 3: Coordinate and develop specific plans with other agencies and partners to deliver consistent messages.	Yes	Agency partner coordination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October, Melissa discussed issue at Oregon Plan Core Team Meeting. • Ken/Tom will coordinate with the Governor's office. • Staff completing work plan to engage agencies in 2010 to develop consistent messages, stories, and results information to describe achievements over past 10 years. • Work plan for local groups drafted and will be implemented in spring 2010. 	Melissa Leoni Greg Sieglitz Ken Bierly Carolyn Devine
Action 4: Compile a history of OWEB investments and ecological outcomes ("Decade of Investment") to increase awareness of the accomplishments of Oregonians to improve and protect watersheds.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investments – staff have begun developing fact sheets, organizing OWEB grant data, and developing internal protocols to better answer questions about OWEB investments. • Ecological Outcomes –Part of Goal 1, Strategy 2, Action 3 	Melissa Leoni Carolyn Devine Greg Sieglitz
Action 5: Review and enhance the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed Biennial Report to further the goals of the Strategic Plan and Strategic Communications Plan.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal meeting to identify content enhancements on January 13, 2010. • Follow-up discussions with agencies (see Action 3 above) and additional content planning to be complete by April 2010. 	Melissa Leoni

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

Action 6: Use the Strategic Communication Plan to guide outreach grant offerings. <i>(NEW in December 2009 Strategic Plan)</i>	No		
--	----	--	--

Strategy 2: Encourage and facilitate greater exploration and knowledge for those Oregonians who seek greater involvement in watershed restoration and conservation.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Increase knowledge of effective education and engagement strategies, programs, and tools... <i>(NEW in December 2009 Strategic Plan)</i>			
Action 2: Build and support effective education efforts that increase Oregonians knowledge and involvement... <i>(NEW in December 2009 Strategic Plan)</i>			
Action 3: Work with partners to develop and implement the Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan (“No Child Left Inside”).	Yes	Initial organizational meeting of work group held. OWEB staff will participate.	Carolyn Devine

Goal 4: Build and maintain strong partnerships with local, state, tribal and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations and private landowners for watershed and habitat restoration and conservation.

Strategy 1: Identify new and expand existing strategic partnerships that leverage OWEB funds and knowledge to achieve healthy watershed and community outcomes.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Executive Director and partnership subcommittee will identify and prioritize partnership development on behalf of OWEB consistent with the vision and Board adopted partnership criteria.	Yes	Ongoing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Watersheds Restoration Initiative is active and has solicited project proposals. • Tillamook flooding remediation and estuarine wetland restoration through an Oregon Solutions effort has developed to the point of consideration. • Partnership with Jackson County to remove Gold Ray Dam on the Rogue River is fully developed. 	Ken Bierly Tom Byler
Action 2: OWEB key messages will be developed and shared with partners. Specific plans will be developed for distribution of messages by partners.	Yes	Gard contract co-branding work in progress (see Goal 3, Strategy 1, Action 2)	Tom Byler Carolyn Devine

Draft Strategic Plan - Proposed Implementation Actions

Goal 5: Ensure efficient and accountable administration of all investments.

Strategy 1: Continue to evaluate, explore and implement grant administrative processes to maintain and enhance efficiencies at all levels.

Action	Immediate Action	Status	Staff Lead
Action 1: Conduct an independent review of OWEB's business processes...	No		
Action 2: Prioritize and implement business process recommendations.	No		
Action 3: Explore options and develop information technology tools to increase efficiencies and meet needs of stakeholders/staff.	No		