

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Strategic Plan Comments

December 2009

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
775 Summer Street NE #360
Salem, Oregon 97301

Melissa Leoni

From: Bob Zybach [ZybachB@NWMapsCo.com]
Sent: Thursday, October 08, 2009 11:15 AM
To: Melissa LEONI
Subject: Strategic Plan Comment
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Yellow

Hello Melissa:

I have read the 5 "Plan Goals" on the website and the instructions for responding, but could not bring myself to spend any more time on this document. The tip of the iceberg was warning enough.

Here are my comments:

Goal 1: To "restore" a "resilient ecosystem" is a political statement, not a scientific statement. Who measured the "resiliency" in the first place? Who decided it wasn't good enough? How did they do it? My concern is that "plans" need measurable objectives, and this is such a vague phrase as to be meaningless. Money will be spent on political posturing and favoritism, rather than actual meaningful employment. Same with "ecosystem functions." Everybody acts like they know what that means, but biologically it is meaningless. At best, this phrase smacks of pseudo science. To assign "functions" to an ecosystem is to give it human meaning, but it is not a human or a human construct. What is there to measure? Who decides what it's "functions" are supposed to be, whether they've actually been degraded, and when "restoration" has been achieved? Politicians. No one else is qualified or has the time.

Goal 1 is full of meaningless phrases which may may not be achievable, depending upon who decides to fund what programs catering to these phrases.

Goal 2. What the heck is a "high capacity local infrastructure?" I don't know, either. Watershed "restoration" is probably talking about some kind of "functions," rather than restoration to an actual condition that can be documented and measured, and "conservation" is probably not talking about the wise use of resources. Who knows? These terms have been misused and abused by politicians and ivory tower theorists so much in the past 15 years as to lose virtually all meaning. How to make a "plan" to achieve vague theoretical terms? And why? "Job security" is the only answer that readily comes to mind. Can't be done, so will never be finished.

Goal 3: Would have been good to stop after "providing information to Oregonians." Maybe if we had more information, we wouldn't see a "need." And what the heck is a "healthy" watershed, and why could it possible need my "support?" These are political calls for consensus and action, needing a

community organizer, not a scientist or a results-oriented worker.

Goal 4: Would have been good to stop after "build strong partnerships." The phrase "for watershed health" sounds like a lot of meaningless meetings and memos and workshops just trying to figure out what "health" means. One more excuse for bureaucrats to get together to "conduct business" that goes nowhere, but costs money.

Goal 5: Yes. With the hope that any "investments" into the first 4 goals would be looked at with extreme caution.

The "goal" of the original GWEB was to "restore" fish runs. Fish can be counted. The runs have apparently increased since then; whether through changed ocean conditions, altered fishing quotas, OWEB activities, or some combination thereof is not known.

OWEB is now openly fishing for a rationale to continue its existence. The bait looks a lot more like artificial plastic than actual substance. This document is almost entirely politics, full of meaningless phrases, "outreach" and consensus building. It is the design for a bureaucracy with an unlimited budgetary need, a perpetually unfinished "mission," and no possible way to be held accountable.

I won't bother to comment on the "spirit" of the "core purpose," because the goals make it clear that the primary purpose of OWEB at this point is to create and maintain a perpetual bureaucracy that postures as representing the public "good" and is "working" toward a more "healthy" environment, but will (and can) do nothing of the sort because those are political goals, and not goals that can be achieved in an environmental setting.

The objective seems to be justification for future meetings that maintain the jobs of the current employees of OWEB. If that is truly the "core purpose" of OWEB at this time in its existence, then that "spirit" is reflected in these goals. Politics and bureaucrats.

Melissa Leoni

From: Bruce Taylor [BTAYLOR@defenders.org]
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2009 5:18 PM
To: Melissa LEONI
Cc: Sara Vickerman
Subject: Strategic Plan comment
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Yellow
Attachments: Defenders comments OWEB strategic plan 10-28-09.doc

Melissa:

Thanks for the opportunity to comment on OWEB's draft Strategic Plan. I am attaching a Word document with our specific suggestions for language changes incorporated into the draft. Our major general comments include:

- The plan should more explicitly reflect OWEB's movement away from its perceived traditional focus on salmon and water quality toward a broader role in funding the state's overarching conservation strategies. The board's recent decision to move forward with work to align and integrate OWEB's restoration and acquisition priorities with the Oregon Conservation Strategy, salmon recovery plans, and climate change considerations is an important step in that direction that needs to be recognized in the plan. We have also suggested some other language changes to make it clear that habitat conservation, for wildlife as well as for fish, will be a central focus for OWEB's investment program.
- The plan should give more explicit recognition to the role of land conservation as an important element of the state's overall conservation strategies. Acquisition of lands, conservation easements and other mechanisms help ensure that the conservation purposes of OWEB's investments will be sustained over time. OWEB has funded a number of these projects over the years but has never fully addressed how land conservation fits into its overall conservation funding strategy. Oregon's land trusts are one of the primary vehicles for addressing land conservation needs. Collectively, they face many of the same capacity issues as watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts. The strategic plan should recognize these issues and set the stage for a more thorough consideration of the role of land conservation in OWEB's future investment strategies.
- Lessons learned from programmatic monitoring and evaluation efforts need to feed back into restoration and acquisition priorities and criteria for review of grants.
- Makeup of regional review teams may need to be re-evaluated to reflect the broader purposes of OWEB's grant programs.
- The plan should include provisions for OWEB's work with partners to develop standardized metrics for quantifying ecosystem services generated through OWEB's investments.

The attached document includes suggested language to address these issues. Please let me know if you have questions about any of this or need additional information. I would be happy to help in any way I can.

10/29/2009

BRUCE TAYLOR
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Defenders of Wildlife comments: OWEB draft strategic plan

October 28, 2009

Contact: Bruce Taylor (btaylor@defenders.org; 503-697-3222)

Specific suggested changes are incorporated into OWEB's September 25, 2009 draft as indicated below:

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Mission and Vision

OWEB has been working from a mission statement since 2001. This strategic plan aligns that mission statement with statutory language and expands that mission statement with a vision statement. The vision statement was developed from discussions between Board members and management staff, input from staff and stakeholders, and OWEB's experience in implementing its mission over the past 10 years.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is a brief description of an organization's fundamental purpose. OWEB's mission is:

To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

Vision Statement

A vision statement articulates the dreams and hopes for an organization. OWEB's vision is: *OWEB is recognized as a leader plays a leading role in the conservation of Oregon's vast natural resources and enjoys strong public support for its contributions to community-based conservation and local economies.*

The vision calls for ~~Oregon's watersheds to include healthy river systems and well managed upland healthy~~ landscapes ~~across Oregon~~ capable of sustaining and enriching ~~Oregon's the state's~~ biological diversity, ecosystems, fish and wildlife habitat, and agricultural, forest and human communities.

Watersheds have three primary functions with regard to water. They capture, store and release water. The entire watershed, ridgetop to ridgetop, is essential to these processes. Floodplains of rivers are complex systems that evolved over time, shaped by the soils, topography, vegetation and other natural forces. In addition to water related functions, watersheds are also landscapes that ~~create provide~~ fish and wildlife habitats essential to the natural functioning of entire ecosystems.

OWEB's vision will guide future decisions about programs and funding priorities. This vision requires:

- *Integrated investments in projects that emphasize protection and/or restoration of watershed processes and ecosystem functions required by Oregon's native fish and wildlife;*
- *A ridgetop to ridgetop approach to achieving healthy watersheds;*
- *Dynamic river and floodplain systems that interact with physical and ecological*

processes;

- High water quality that supports Oregon's native fish and wildlife species and meets human ~~requirements~~needs;
- Involved community members including both public and private interests that build and sustain a watershed stewardship ethic;
- Monitoring to support adaptive management ~~and~~and efficient investments ~~efficiencies of the resource~~.

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Goals, Strategies and Implementation Actions

The OWEB Board has established the following goals, strategies and actions in support of OWEB's vision. In order to effectively consider and implement the strategies and actions identified below OWEB staff will develop work plans and realign staff workload to achieve vision-driven priorities. Measures of progress and success will be developed and aligned with currently required reporting measures.

Goals

OWEB's goals are to:

Goal 1: Restore and sustain resilient ecosystems through program and project investments that ~~incorporate~~enhance watershed and ecosystem functions and processes ~~and~~in ways that address community needs.

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

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

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

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

These goals are further described below, including strategies and actions.

Strategies and Actions

Adaptive Investment

Goal 1: Restore and sustain resilient ecosystems through program and project investments that ~~incorporate~~enhance watershed and ecosystem functions and processes ~~and~~in ways that address community needs.

OWEB faces the challenge of funding a mix of programs and projects across the state with many partners to build a broad restoration and monitoring infrastructure. Population growth and climate change will affect communities around the state and the watershed processes and functions upon which those communities and fish and wildlife depend. These driving forces are significant and their impact is uncertain. The key to achieving OWEB's vision is an adaptive, principled, and well structured investment strategy that incorporates monitoring and evaluation

into local project ~~development-implementation~~ and program evaluation. Monitoring information is the basis for adapting investment and management activities to achieve the most effective and resilient outcomes.

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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.

Where are we now?

OWEB has worked for 10 years to enhance and maintain healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies. OWEB achieves this by working closely with local partners to provide watershed enhancement grants; providing funding to support the capacity of watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts; partnering with other agencies and organizations; monitoring and managing information; and reporting on implementation of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. OWEB's mission and work also support and complement governmental climate change policy and priorities through locally based, on-the-ground work to improve watershed health and resilience, which will become increasingly important to address the effects of climate change.

OWEB has developed tools to assist partners in the strategic development of restoration or conservation projects. OWEB adopted priorities for land acquisition grants in 2004. OWEB has also developed and begun to implement a framework, known as Restoration Priorities, that establishes priorities at regional geographic scales to assist in the evaluation of proposed improvement projects at the local watershed level. The framework was developed to categorize actions by the effect they will have on ecosystem function and process. Five general types of activities have been identified to address watershed function improvement:

- Actions that restore habitat connectivity;
- Actions that address impaired watershed processes that affect the aquatic system or water quality;
- Actions that address key habitats and water quality for at-risk and ESA-listed species;
- Actions that reduce human impacts and inputs to the watershed; and,
- Actions that address symptoms of impaired watershed processes and functions that impact fish and wildlife habitat or water quality, ~~or affect specific wildlife concerns.~~

OWEB's Restoration grant applications require applicants to address how their proposal fits with the Restoration Priorities; this is one of the factors evaluated by OWEB's Regional Review Teams when developing funding recommendations for OWEB consideration. The Review Teams also consider technical merit, feasibility, likelihood of success, experience of the applicant, and the budget.

Where are we going?

Action 1: Work with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to align and integrate OWEB's restoration and acquisition priorities with the Oregon Conservation Strategy, salmon recovery plans, and climate change considerations.

Action ~~1~~2: ~~Re-examine~~Revise the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities ~~making-to make~~ them consistent with the vision and incorporate climate change strategies as they emerge from international, national,

state and local sources.

Action 23: Board adopts final set of Restoration and Acquisition Priorities.

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Action 3: OWEB enhances access to, and knowledge of, adopted Restoration and Acquisition Priorities.

Action 4: OWEB enhances the grant application development and review processes, including the makeup of Regional Review Teams, to incorporate the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities to ensure projects are strategic and deliver watershed and ecological function and process outcomes consistent with the vision.

Action 5: Continue investment in the Willamette and Deschutes Special Investment Programs (SIPs) and work with partners to explore additional SIPs and other partnerships.

Action 6: Encourage and support programs that result in positive long-term economic outcomes for landowners while achieving habitat conservation objectives and sustainable watershed improvements.

Action 7: Work with partners to develop, and adopt and apply standardized metrics for use in quantifying the ecosystem services generated through OWEB's investments.

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.

Where are we now?

The Board adopted a far-reaching and long-term strategy to guide coordinated monitoring efforts under the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds in 2003. From this strategy, OWEB initiated an effectiveness monitoring program in 2005. To date, effectiveness monitoring has been initiated on many of the top 25 restoration program areas funded cumulatively since 1999. These monitoring projects include detailed evaluations of riparian planting and fencing, fish barrier removal, irrigation efficiency, western juniper removal, dam removal, in-stream large wood placement, road removal and rehabilitation, wetland restoration, tide gate replacement, and others.

While OWEB has funded research since 2002, it is only within the last two years that OWEB has developed a research program. One competitive grant process and one targeted research opportunity occurred in 2008 and 2009 respectively. Reports and results are made available on the OWEB website. A coordinated effort with external monitoring experts and stakeholders is the grounded approach OWEB takes with its monitoring and research activities.

OWEB manages the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI), which has tracked completed restoration work since 1995. Except for projects funded by OWEB or implemented under certain permits, all reporting to this database is voluntary. OWEB also contributes information from its restoration database to other conservation tracking systems, including the Conservation Registry.

The actions under Strategy 2 provide the building blocks for understanding the results of OWEB investments from the project level to the cumulative impact of all investments. The data

collected through the implementation of this strategy will be assembled into information that will be shared under the Goal 3, Strategy 1, for the purpose of building awareness, success and support for OWEB actions.

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Where are we going?

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 successfully implement this strategy. [Update acquisition and restoration priorities to reflect lessons learned.](#)

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.

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.

Action 4: Continue to work with partners through collaborative workgroups and by providing funding through grants to high priority monitoring activities.

Action 5: Continue to establish and maintain databases internally and through grants used to store, analyze, and provide the backbone of information delivery through electronic and traditional forms of communication.

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.

Local infrastructure development

Goal 2: Support an enduring, high capacity local infrastructure for conducting watershed restoration and [habitat](#) conservation.

Watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, [land trusts](#) and [other](#) nongovernmental organizations are key partners in implementing OWEB's [habitat conservation and](#) watershed enhancement program. Councils and districts account for roughly two-thirds of OWEB grants. They play a critical role in working with interested landowners to design projects, apply for grants, implement restoration projects, monitor project results, and provide local watershed education. [Land trusts and other partners play a key role in delivering the land conservation element of the state's conservation strategies, which help ensure that the benefits of the state's conservation investments are sustained over time.](#) The work of [all](#) these ~~local~~ partners also provides significant community and economic benefits. Success of OWEB's mission and vision requires these partners to have sufficient capacity and funding to continue and enhance their work. In addition, watershed restoration and protection needs are so great, that more partners at the local level are needed.

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

Where are we now?

OWEB is exploring a diverse approach to building local infrastructure to support restoration and conservation. This includes watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts,

[land trusts and other](#) nongovernmental organizations, and landowners. Partnerships are encouraged to organize at a scale that can be sustained over the long term. OWEB continues to explore issues related to the number of councils and the best ways to manage and fund a high capacity infrastructure.

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Where are we going?

Action 1: Work with watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, [land trusts](#), public and private foundations, tribes, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations to identify needs and funding partners to strengthen their ability to build capacity and develop a diverse and enduring local infrastructure.

Action 2: Identify and evaluate alternative organizational structures to achieve more stable local infrastructure.

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

Where are we now?

The legislature currently provides councils and districts with a base level of funding of \$5 million each, every two years. During the 2007-2009 biennium, OWEB supplemented this base funding with an additional \$1 million each. Councils and districts work to supplement OWEB's funding by seeking other funding such as foundation grants, memberships, donations, business contributions, and, for some districts, local taxes. The level of support and resources varies based on the leadership, capacity and geographic location of these organizations. OWEB recognizes that more support needs to be provided to help build sustainable local organizations to carry on watershed restoration work.

This strategy only addresses the support grants for watershed councils. Soil and water conservation district support funding is provided by OWEB through the Oregon Department of Agriculture, which runs its own distribution and accountability processes.

Where are we going?

Action 1: Develop funding policy guidelines for achieving sustainable council support.

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.

Action 3: Work with applicants, reviewers and others to explore options regarding how OWEB funds councils, including looking at new applicant funding, base funding, partnership incentives, outcomes from OWEB funding, and other issues.

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

Where are we now?

OWEB has provided funding to support capacity building for watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts through the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils (Network) and Oregon Association of Conservation Districts (OACD). OWEB's funding also supports coordination and cooperation between OACD and the Network to the benefit of councils,

districts, and OWEB. The work of these organizations directly complements the funding for

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councils and districts and helps their respective groups perform at a high level and communicate their successes.

Where are we going?

Action 1: Require specific capacity building products and expectations as deliverables for the funding provided to the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils and Association of Oregon Conservation Districts.

Action 2: Reserve noncapital funds to contract with one or more organizations to deliver additional capacity building services in 2009-2011.

Action 3: Continue working with partners and exploring possibilities to develop tools and strategies for ecosystem service market participation that may diversify revenue streams for local infrastructure and leverage and diversify project and maintenance/monitoring funding.

Action 4: Work with the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts and other partners to identify options for strengthening capacity for land conservation to support OWEB's long-term investment strategies.

Public Support

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

All Oregonians appreciate and recognize the value of clean, abundant water. Fewer Oregonians recognize that clean, abundant water depends on functioning watersheds. Still fewer Oregonians identify the critical link between investments in watershed restoration and protection and clean, abundant water and healthy populations of fish and wildlife. It is important to expand the awareness that land and water management actions can improve and/or protect water quality. Healthy watersheds require an informed public that supports fish and wildlife habitat protection, well managed river corridors, agricultural and forest land stewardship and urban land and water management.

Strategy 1: Engage Oregonians on a broad level, reminding them 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.

Where are we now?

OWEB was created in 1999 and now has over a decade of projects and programs that illustrate the linkages between ecosystem health and community and economic sustainability. Every two years, OWEB develops a biennial report on the progress of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds that highlights implemented projects, local community efforts, and agency program accomplishments.

After 10 years it is important to compile a history of investments and ecological outcomes to help the public understand the value received. The more people know about the public investments in watershed health and the benefits of those investments, the more they will value them and support continued funding of these efforts.

Where are we going?

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Action 1: Develop and implement simple, effective and strategic awareness messages and messaging tools aligned with OWEB's strategic plan.

Action 2: Develop a range of tools for OWEB grant recipients to use to further the Strategy and implement Action 1.

Action 3: Coordinate and develop specific plans with other agencies and partners to deliver consistent messages.

Action 4: Compile a history of OWEB investments and ecological outcomes ("Decade of Investment") to describe how OWEB has invested on behalf of Oregonians to improve and protect watersheds and the ecosystems they support.

Action 5: Review and enhance ~~the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed~~ OWEB's Biennial Report to further the goals of the Strategic Plan and Strategic Communications Plan.

Strategy 2: Encourage and facilitate greater exploration, knowledge and appreciation of OWEB's accomplishments for those Oregonians who seek greater involvement.

Where are we now?

OWEB administers a competitive grant program that invests approximately one million dollars a biennium in watershed education and outreach grants across Oregon. In 2005, OWEB developed an Education and Outreach Strategy to connect and support OWEB's education and outreach functions and investments. The strategy included three elements that build upon each other: enhance awareness, improve knowledge and develop skills.

Where are we going?

Action 1: Develop and implement simple, effective and strategic education and involvement messages and messaging tools aligned with OWEB's strategic plan.

Action 2: Use the Strategic Communication Plan to guide education and outreach grant offerings.

Action 3: Work with partners to develop and implement the Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan ("No Child Left Inside").

Partnership development

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

OWEB combines the regulatory and land management programs of state and federal agencies and local governments with voluntary watershed restoration by private landowners and others. Over the years, solutions to address water quality, watershed health, native salmon habitat, and wildlife conservation have been achieved by building partnerships between government agencies, tribes, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, land trusts and other nonprofit

organizations, landowners and citizens.

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OWEB is charged with being the central organization for managing Measure 66 and federal funds for watershed enhancement and habitat conservation. This is a grant based, non-regulatory program to improve watershed and ecosystem health that requires a high level of coordination and collaboration with local, state and federal agencies and organizations. OWEB dollars can be leveraged and partners can help inform the public about the successful watershed restoration work underway. There is clearly opportunity to expand the nature of current partnerships and create new partnerships.

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

Where are we now?

Partnerships are a required element for all OWEB investments. Partnerships range from the matching funds for individual grants to institutional arrangements to implement federally developed programs. OWEB maintains a portfolio of investments with different kinds of partners and at different levels of formal relationships. Criteria for evaluating formal partnerships has been developed and adopted by the Board.

OWEB has successful partnerships with local watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, state and federal agencies, tribes, local government, land trusts, private foundations, and other nongovernmental organizations.

Where are we going?

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.

Action 2: OWEB key messages will be developed and shared with partners. Specific plans will be developed for distribution of messages by partners.

Efficient and Accountable Administration

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

OWEB's core function is the administration of a competitive grant program, which has experienced significant growth in the number of grants and funding award amounts over the past ten years. The timely, accurate and transparent administration of all aspects of the program is an everyday activity for all employees. This approach benefits the agency and its partners by providing streamlined processes and necessary resources to carry out watershed enhancement in an expeditious and responsible manner. OWEB will continue to focus on this important goal and continue to look for opportunities for advancement and improvement.

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

Where are we now?

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OWEB is in constant communication with staff to determine the most efficient ways to carry out its business. A staff review is conducted following each grant cycle to develop recommended improvements. OWEB has a full time information technology person on staff who has begun to develop digital processes for the organization, including a grant administration system and online reporting. Staff members in other program areas are working with partners to improve agency processes in order to better facilitate on-the-ground actions.

In addition to internal processes, OWEB benefits from third party reviews of its work. OWEB's grant process, files and expenditures are audited every other year by the Secretary of State and OWEB has received a favorable audit each time. OWEB also conducts an annual customer service survey.

Where are we going?

Action 1: Conduct an independent review of OWEB's business processes to identify ways to improve communications and streamline and simplify the processes for staff, applicants and grantees, without compromising accountability and legal requirements.

Action 2: Prioritize and implement business process recommendations.

Action 3: Explore options and develop information technology tools to increase efficiencies and meet the needs of stakeholders and staff.

Melissa Leoni

From: Tom Byler
Sent: Wednesday, October 21, 2009 1:01 PM
To: Cyndi
Cc: Melissa Leoni
Subject: RE: OWEB's Strategic Final Draft Plan
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Yellow

Thank you for your comments and interest in OWEB, Cyndi. I am forwarding them to Melissa Leoni, our staff person who will coordinate our review and response to public comments.

Tom Byler, Executive Director
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
503.986.0180
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From: Cyndi [mailto:cyndikarp@peak.org]
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2009 8:23 PM
To: Tom BYLER
Subject: OWEB's Strategic Final Draft Plan

Dear OWEB Board Members and Staff,

I would like to Thank You for all of the hard work that you and many others have put into OWEB's Strategic Plan. Planning for all the variables has always been a challenging process. That is only part of the reason why this process of so important.

I would like to address several areas of concerns regarding the Final Strategic Draft. Those concerns would include Education and Research, Watershed Council's Support, and the support of Ecosystem Watershed OWEB Grants.

First, and foremost is Education and Research. I would like to add a Goal 6 to Page 5. Education and Research. There is not enough emphasis put into OWEB's Strategic Plan that Stresses the Importance of Education and Research. A separate goal for Education and Research would be appropriate.

To accomplish all the Strategic Conservation Goals of the State of Oregon, all aspects of Education should be considered as solutions to current and future issues. Only through the Education of Humans are we able to meet National goals for all watershed's.

Everything that happens in a watershed effects the whole. What my neighbors put into their drains or on their lands affects the whole watershed and everything that lives in the watershed. What humans put down their drains upstream is what the downstream occupants drink. The EPA is well on the way of proving that humans are poisoning ourselves with our own waste. There have been National News reports about Pharmaceuticals in our drinking water.

What are pharmaceuticals doing to the watershed? What are pesticides/herbicides doing to the watershed? What are the chemical that we clean our homes, offices and cars doing to the watershed? How much damage have the Transportation systems of Oregon affected the watershed? I have lists of thousands of what is happening to the Watershed questions. The answer to all of these question is received from education. Good Scientific Research and Education. I believe that every OWEB grant should have some connection with education or research. What are we going to learn or do to help education should be written into every grant, somehow. There are many ways to do that. Many of the grants that I have read have education and research already written into the grant. I would like to see the support of education and research in every grant. One of these grant projects could be based in Education and Research with all K-12 School Districts in the State of Oregon. This would be

unprecedented, but an Basic K-12 Education Goal could be amazing. All Oregon School children being Educated about Watershed's. The General Public is in need of Education about watershed's. There are Public Education funds directly set aside for Gambling Addiction. Why not funds set aside for Watershed Education and Research. Goal 6 - Education and Research would support Goals 1 through 5. Please Support Education and Research in all of Oregon Watershed's. Education and Research will help guide Oregon's and maybe the World's path to Watershed Recovery.

The second concern that I have is related to the Fair and Equitable Support of Watershed Councils across the State of Oregon. OWEB needs to find and set aside a Permanent Funding Source for Support Systems for Watershed Councils.

A Watershed Councils requires a base budget to support Coordinator's and Office Salaries. There are Liability Insurance expenses. I believe that OWEB needs to support each Watershed Council to have a good Web Page. The more successful the Watershed Council, the more Financial Support of the Council is going to require. The more grants that are proposed and written up, the higher the Fixed Cost of Support will be. Watershed Councils are currently competing for Funding. There has been in the past trouble caused between Watershed Council's fighting for the funding for the Watershed Council to Survive. Some Watershed Councils in the state have not survived. Some continue to fight for survival. Just having Volunteers does not solve the Financial Support problems of a Watershed Council. A permanent funding source for a fair and equitable Watershed Council Support System needs to be addresses in the Final OWEB Strategic Plan. The world of fighting for Grant funding among each other is against the basic principles of the OWEB Strategic Plan. There is never enough money to go around to do all of the Watershed Projects that need to be done. The system of Grant selection is very competitive. What concerns me is that Grants are so competitive that the Grant System pits Watershed Councils against each other for funding. Can Cooperation among Watershed Councils solve the fighting for grants? Maybe, but it is not always easy to bring people together that have to fight each other for survival. I believe to my core that Cooperation can Accomplish Common Goals.

In the State of Oregon the last 13 years, I have witness and participated in a Eco-System Based Cooperation among Oregonian's that is drawing World wide attention. More funding sources for Watershed Basin Cooperation Projects is sorely needed. I believe Oregonian's can, will and do make a difference to the Watershed's of Oregon. Education, Research and Cooperation has served our Communities of Watershed's well. I look forward to doing more volunteer work for the cooperation of all parties involved in Watershed work and support the well being of the Watershed.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these complicated and important matters.

Cyndi Karp
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541-563-2773

Comments on OWEB's draft strategy Oct 27, 2009

I have worked with OWEB staff and experienced their support while employed by an SWC District, Watershed Councils and Non-Profits. I have also been denied OWEB grants twice trying to protect endangered steelhead on my property.

OWEB support and work has had mixed results. I understand and recognize the challenges of a state government trying to restore watersheds and build local capacity. I support most of the items and the proposed actions within the Draft Strategic Plan.

My suggestions are pretty specific and would fall into multiple categories however I will try to lump them up under the draft outline.

Strategies, Missions, Goals:

Admirable as drafted...I would suggest adding a couple of more goals.. Goal 6 - OWEB will work to support increased water availability through natural storage and consumptive water conservation strategies in all watersheds.

Goal 7-OWEB will work to become the regional, national and international model and example of effective utilization of public and private investments to restore and sustain natural functions to watersheds.

Local Infrastructure:

OWEB needs to be more responsible and accountable for funds given to other organizations to carry out the mission of OWEB. Funds given to ODA and/or federal partners to implement related programs (ie CREP) need to be critically evaluated. If investments are not providing good returns...take the political heat and move those funds to more effective investments.

Councils, Districts, non-profits and other governments receiving OWEB funds need to be evaluated with clear and consistent methods. And if OWEB wants to meet many of the goals implemented in the draft strategy it seems there may be a benefit to requiring everybody that gets support to do at least one of the actions identified...For example...every organization that receives OWEB support is required to have at least two stories written highlighting a successful project supported by OWEB, and/or every organization receiving funds has a prioritized strategy and a monitoring program that provides feedback on their success. Every OWEB funded project will have a sign stating who and where the partners are, every landowner that receives a capitol grant agrees to an annual tour for the public.

OWEB should consider reducing support for SWCD's that have secured large tax bases. Organizations with more staff are able to produce more and better grant applications. Theoretically they can build their own capacity more easily now and rural districts (and Councils) will continue to struggle.

Ecosystem Services:

OWEB needs to develop a system that can account and track ecosystem services. Carbon sequestering, increasing water availability and increasing the number of redds are valuable commodities. The future value could be great as ecosystem markets mature, but there is an immediate value for a systematic accounting system that can tell us what our public investments are buying. A system that allows the state of Oregon and the local partner maintaining the ecosystem to realize real value would prepare Oregon to be a sustained leader in this field.

Public Support:

More work needs to be done in this area...how about underwriting a series with Oregon Field Guide that looks at 10 years worth of OWEB's supervision of the public's investment. See above also.

Acquisitions need to require permanent transfer of the majority of any consumptive surface water right permanently in-stream.

Partnerships:

OWEB should consider letting out some restoration contracts to some for-profit private and public companies. This may show that it is more effective to have non-governmental organizations do watershed restoration. See above for more partner accountability.

Efficiency and Accountability:

OWEB has to improve this or OWEB will go away. And OWEB has to put strong, clear, consistent mechanisms in place to make sure organizations that receive public investments are efficient and accountable.

OWEB staff has always been great to work with, and it might be a great goal to state that OWEB wants to have the best and the brightest of the conservation community and will continue to invest in their continued growth. A job trade between OWEB staff and organizations that receive OWEB funds might bear additional effectiveness and efficiency.

Thanks for the opportunity and the important work all the OWEB staff and their leaders do!

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Action Through Understanding



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Jim Pendergrass, *Treasurer*
Chad Stroda

Upper Long Tom

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November 6, 2009

Melissa Leoni
OWEB
775 Summer Street NE #360
Salem, OR 97301-1290

RE: Comments on OWEB's Draft Strategic Plan

Dear Melissa;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on OWEB's Draft Strategic Plan. Please call or email us with any clarifications or questions.

The OWEB Board's questions were:

- Do the Mission Statement and Vision Statement capture the spirit of OWEB's core purposes and its future direction?
- Do the Goals and Strategies link effectively to the Mission and Vision?
- Are there issues of concern that you do not see addressed in the Final Draft Strategic Plan?

Vision:

We strongly disagree that the vision statement would not only mention OWEB by name, but have its recognition and support as the central focus. If worded this way, it may be a vision that only OWEB and friends of OWEB can get behind, instead of a broad generous vision that every Oregonian can't argue with.

The focus instead should be for *healthy watersheds throughout Oregon with strong public support for significant public investment in managing healthy river and upland systems with local community engagement, support, and direct relationships with vibrant local economies.*

The methodologies and pathways for that - OWEB, local groups, and more - are less important.

Goals:

Goal 2: Support an enduring, high capacity local infrastructure for conducting watershed restoration, conservation, and long-term stewardship.

Goal 5: Ensure efficient and accountable administration of all

investments in balance with supporting a spirit of local volunteerism and the ability to support innovation and adaptive management.

Overall, well crafted with two small but important exceptions - Goal 5 and the use of “highly”, a word which we think should be removed, and the lack of language that balances that goal, and Goal 2 and the concept of stewardship we’d like to see added. Please note we’ve included language above as a sample.

Goal 3. When working with a conservation focus, we frequently run into moments of strategic panic that we can’t “save enough”. A key component of the long-term strategy that we’re all counting on is that our work will include restoration, conservation, *and* demonstrating methods for long-term stewardship.

Goal 5. I spoke with Tom Byler at our recent conference and we agreed - What does “highly” really mean? Either we’re efficient and accountable or we’re not. The Long Tom Watershed Council’s concern is the danger of the pursuit of this goal getting out of balance in relation to the pursuit of the other goals, perhaps even being used to thwart the others. Of particular concern is the emphasis on “highly” because this suggests that just being efficient and accountable either isn’t enough or those words don’t mean anything anymore.

“Highly” suggests that something close to perfection is the goal and that the importance is fear-based or we’re trying to convince someone we’re not lying. If the efficiency and accountability is taken too far we are concerned it can impede smaller, community-based organizations from being part of the picture. In our area, we have already seen grantees with good reputations suffer under increasing forms, paperwork, and extra administrative procedures communicated as rules to local grantees. “Accountability” is paperwork and staff time, and we need enough to be satisfactory, reasonable, and impressive but not perfect.

As important is the need to remain flexible enough to *support the spirit of local volunteerism and the ability to support innovation and adaptive management.* These are methods and techniques we’re counting on for success of the Oregon Plan and they need to be specifically enabled in the broader mission and goal language.

Issues of Concern

We can’t stress enough the need to include balancing language that supports a reasonable and flexible approach. The Oregon Plan and OWEB’s Strategic Plan is a long-term endeavor born of a crisis in fish stocks and water quality conditions. We must always balance the urgent need and fear of doing it wrong (or spending inappropriately) with the embracing support of the reality about what it takes to achieve these goals throughout every watershed and community of Oregon.

We read but did not analyze the Actions and hope that there will be further opportunity to comment, given the focus of the Board's questions now at a "higher" level or mission, goals, and major issues.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and for your hard work in compiling and communicating the responses.

Sincerely,

Dana Dedrick

Executive Director and Watershed Coordinator
Long Tom Watershed Council

MidCoast Watersheds Council Comments on OWEB's draft Strategic Plan.

This draft plan has a lot in it that appears good, useful, helpful, and we commend OWEB for undertaking this effort. We do have a few comments that we think can improve the plan. Please accept these in the spirit they are offered, as friendly suggestions offered in a sincere effort to improve the Plan.

COMMENT 1: Introduction.

We think the introductory passage about Oregon's Conservation Legacy is incomplete. In particular, it should not shy away from describing the metaphor of a three-legged stool, and the development of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds as the critical third leg of that stool, complementing the existing two legs. This passage should also reference the critical contribution to the legacy from the other "two" legs:

- Agencies continuing to adapt their processes to help implement the plan, working to incorporate new information as it becomes available (e.g. policies that reflect the importance of beavers) and
- The importance of effective enforcement of existing rules (e.g. leveling the playing field so good "actors" are not at a competitive disadvantage and so that existing work, e.g. to protect wetlands is not undermined by their continued loss by rule violators).

COMMENT 2. The Vision Statement

OWEB is recognized as a leader in the conservation of Oregon's vast natural resources and enjoys strong public support for its contributions to community-based conservation and local economies.

This statement frames your whole document and could use additional work to clarify your intent. Is the intention to be *a leader*, or to be *recognized as a leader*? Unfortunately it is possible to be the latter without being the former, which we think is not really OWEB's intention. Is the goal public support for its operations or public support for the difference OWEB's efforts make on the ground in the communities? It's also important that the vision doesn't imply that support for local economies is direct, but comes indirectly from having healthy resources. This point may be better made elsewhere (as it isn't what OWEB directly does or measures).

Proposed alternate wording:

OWEB provides continuing strong leadership and funding that leads to effective community-based conservation of Oregon's natural resources.

COMMENT 3. Explanatory text for the Vision Statement:

The requirements of the vision are good, but incomplete (though these points are captured in your strategies and actions). It seems essential to set out as the big picture here (and then to assure they are

also captured in the Goals and actions below.) We therefore propose adding a new first bullet, and expanding on the “ridgetop to ridgetop” bullet (both underlined below):

OWEB’s vision will guide future decisions about programs and funding priorities. This vision requires:

- **A continuing commitment to utilizing the best available science to steer its priorities, projects, and assessments.**
- ***Integrated investments in projects that emphasize protection and/or restoration of watershed processes and ecosystem function required by Oregon’s native fish and wildlife;***
- **A ridgetop to ridgetop approach to achieving healthy watersheds, with emphasis on maintaining and expanding functioning systems to maintain resiliency in light of climate change, population growth and other ecological stressors;**
- ***Dynamic river and floodplain systems that interact with physical and ecological processes;***
- ***High water quality that supports Oregon’s native fish and wildlife species and human requirements;***
- ***Involved community members including both public and private interests that build and sustain a watershed stewardship ethic;***
- ***Monitoring to support adaptive management and investment efficiencies of the resource.***

COMMENT 4. Goal 1 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.

A focus on “watershed and ecosystem functions and processes” is like mom and apple pie: everybody supports this. However, over the past 10 years we have seen much disagreement about which restoration actions actually do this, versus “just treating symptoms.”

In the second paragraph of the *Where are we now?* explanation, the list of 5 bullets appears to be a list presented by a consultant to OWEB several years ago as a priority list with the first bullet (connectivity) being highest priority, and the fifth (addressing symptoms) being lowest priority. Presenting this list now as a set of equal-priority “types of activities have been identified to address watershed function improvement” is not appropriate. The fifth – addressing symptoms – was explicitly described as lowest priority, and probably should stay low-priority. The point is, treating symptoms does not by itself “address watershed function improvement.” But in fact, the restoration projects you fund tend to do both, and it is often hard to categorize particular projects as primarily doing one or the other.

Happily, the list of 6 Actions following this strategy point to a solution. These actions are more about addressing Limiting Factors than about restoring functions and processes, and a Strategy based more on Limiting Factors would fit better with these 6 Actions. Accordingly, we recommend rewriting the Strategy 1 language to capture that point.

Proposed language:

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

COMMENT 5. **Goal 1 Strategy 1 Action 1**

Re-examine the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities making them consistent with the vision and incorporate climate change strategies as they emerge from international, national, state and local sources.

While we think that re-examination of priorities in light of climate change is a good thing to do, as the Draft Vision Statement is currently written, we do not see much that would warrant much re-examination of priorities. Our suggested language above in our Comment 5 on what actions “the vision requires” (mentioning climate change, population growth and other stressors and emphasizing continuing guidance based on the best technical knowledge) would provide the link to consistency with the vision that this Action requires..

COMMENT 6. **4. Goal 1 Strategy 1 Action 3:**

OWEB enhances access to, and knowledge of, adopted Restoration and Acquisition Priorities.

This proposed action is important, and we strongly support it. OWEB also needs to provide/improve access to the databases supporting the priorities, and streamline processes for updating priorities by incorporating new information. Linkage to science and technical documents supporting such priorities is also key.

COMMENT 7. **5. Goal 1 Strategy 1 Action 4:**

OWEB enhances the grant application development and review processes to incorporate the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities to ensure projects are strategic and deliver watershed and ecological function and process outcomes consistent with the vision.

As we recommended above for Strategy 1, Action 4 should also reference limiting factors and should mention expansion of healthy functioning areas (from the suggested vision requirements).

Proposed language:

OWEB enhances the grant application development and review processes to incorporate the Restoration and Acquisition Priorities to ensure projects are strategic, address limiting factors, maintain and expand areas of high functionality, or otherwise deliver watershed and ecological function and process outcomes consistent with the vision.

COMMENT 8. Goal 1 Strategy 1 Action 6:

Encourage and support programs that result in positive long-term economic outcomes for landowners while achieving sustainable watershed improvements.

This is good. At the September 2009 Board Meeting our coordinator, Wayne Hoffman, commented on the use of the word “sustainable.” The current language solves the problems with its use in the previous draft.

COMMENT 9. Goal 2, Strategy 1.

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

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

We cannot argue with these proposed actions, but we had hopes that this Strategic Plan would have gone farther in addressing the issues of infrastructure support and the grant review and funding processes. We have known for a while that these actions are necessary, and just promising (again) to take them is not a lot of progress. Missing from Strategy 2 is the commitment to evaluate the effectiveness of the work being done by watershed councils and to prioritize and award funding based on effectiveness.

COMMENT 10. Goal 2, Strategy 3.

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

We support very much the 3 actions listed, but propose a fourth, which would explore additional direct assistance to councils and SWCDs, and possibly others, for particular tasks that might increase local organizational resilience and capacity. OWEB has one model already in place for this: the use of PCSRF funds to help defray costs of participating in recovery planning efforts. Additional, comparable opportunities could include OWEB using or brokering PCSRF and/or BPA funds to enhance local organizations' roles in recovery plan implementation teams, and OWEB working with WRD on processes for improving local groups' capacities to take part in WRD's current efforts to develop a statewide Integrated Water Resource Strategy. Likely additional opportunities exist, as yet unrecognized.

Proposed, very rough language:

Action 4: Explore opportunities to partner with other agencies in enhancing local groups' capacities for contributing positively to those agencies' actions relevant to this Strategic Plan's Mission Statement and Goals.

COMMENT 11. Goal 3.

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

We appreciate the language in Goal 3 regarding the importance of public information to increasing understanding and we read it to say that OWEB will provide information that will help people know how to effectively engage in action. We support this goal and the text that goes with it, but think the strategies need work, particularly to emphasize the importance of information that influences individual actions and attitudes and information that fosters a deeper understanding of process and function of watersheds and ecological interdependence as a whole. Furthermore, Actions need to be added that help Oregonians engage in activities that support healthy watersheds (the second part of Goal 3).

Strategy 1 reads: *Engage Oregonians on a broad level, reminding them 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.*

The main goal of Strategy 1 and the text that follows seems to reference a publicity campaign to promote OWEB and its work rather than to promote effective education programs through its investments that engage more people in effective work and support that work.

Perhaps the compiling of the investments and outcomes needs to be a separate strategy than one that promotes effective education programs and helps support effective education by local partner investments.

Proposed language:

Strategy 1. Help build and support effective outreach and education by local partners.

Strategy 2. Help promote awareness of the ecological outcomes of OWEB investments.

The Actions under these would be as follows:

For Strategy 1: **Help build and support effective outreach and education by local partners.**

Action 1: Develop and implement simple, effective and strategic awareness messages and messaging tools aligned with OWEB's strategic plan.

Action 2: Develop a range of tools for OWEB grant recipients to use to further the Strategy and implement Action 1.

Action 3: Coordinate and develop specific plans with other agencies and partners to deliver consistent messages.

Action 4: [RE-NUMBERED] Work with partners to develop and implement the Oregon Environmental Literacy Plan ("No Child Left Inside").

Action 5. [NEW] Increase knowledge of effective education and engagement strategies, programs, and tools through detailed descriptions of projects from around the state through the OWEB website and at conferences.

For Strategy 2: **Help promote awareness of the ecological outcomes of OWEB investments.**

Action 1: [RE-NUMBERED] Compile a history of OWEB investments and ecological outcomes (“Decade of Investment”) to describe how OWEB has invested on behalf of Oregonians to improve and protect watersheds and the ecosystems they support.

Action 2: [RE-NUMBERED] Review and enhance the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watershed Biennial Report to further the goals of the Strategic Plan and Strategic Communications Plan.

Action 3: [RE-NUMBERED] Use the Strategic Communication Plan to guide education and outreach grant offerings.

COMMENT 12. Goal 5, *Strategy 1*.

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

We support this goal, and have some specific suggestions for **Action 1: Conduct an independent review of OWEB’s business processes to identify ways to improve communications and streamline and simplify the processes for staff, applicants and grantees, without compromising accountability and legal requirements.**

We would like to see this review to include the following opportunities to possibly simplify processes.

1. Electronic grant application submissions, with further modifications to the application based on analysis if each of the sections of each application is actually a basis for decision making by the grant review team members. If it is not, the application should be simplified accordingly.
2. A detailed review, with grantee participation, of just what information is needed to document expenditures of grant funds, with a goal of reducing requirements for non-essential information.
3. An analysis, with grantee participation, of best ways to honor legitimate privacy and confidentiality concerns of grantees, their partners' and their participating landowners. Because OWEB is a state agency, all paperwork submitted becomes publicly available. We would like to see careful consideration to limit information submissions to that which is truly necessary for OWEB to be effective.
4. Effort to update/produce QuickBooks applications and make them available to grantees for use in managing OWEB grants. We are aware of the past effort to SWCDs in partnership with OACD, and we are also aware that new reporting forms are being developed that are not supported by that computer application, creating additional work. We think that use of this software should be voluntary to grantees, but is very useful to both OWEB and those grantees that participate. We are aware that many Watershed Councils, at least, would welcome an opportunity to streamline processes in this way.

Thank you for your attention to our suggestions.

Sincerely,

MidCoast Watersheds Council

Sam Adams, Board Chair, and Wayne Hoffman, coordinator.



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November 6, 2009

TO: Oregon Water Enhancement Board

FROM: Oregon Cattlemen's Association

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association (OCA) representing nearly 2000 cattle producers actively engaging in livestock and land management in Oregon. The Cattlemen's Association policy "is on record as seeking statistically valid science for the interpretation of data for public and private natural resource monitoring programs to obtain objective results." The Cattlemen's Association is also on record supporting the use of the Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) process when it includes the steps described in the government Technical Reference 1737-9 and 15.

The Oregon Water Enhancement Board strategic plan final draft includes five goals that contain strategies and actions that are important to landowners, Oregon residents, and our environment. The inference or reference to the need of increased funding in Goals 1, 2, and 3 are a concern to us. Since the establishment of OWEB nearly 15 years ago the projects identified and completed have involved public and private partnerships, and we believe this should continue. We would question the need to use present funding levels or increased funding for promotional activities.

The Cattlemen's Association will be supportive of science based decision involving public and private stakeholders in partnerships that have the ability to identify necessary projects to help maintain, repair, protect, restore, and when needed, improve our natural water systems in Oregon. We are concerned with the possible broadening effect of the Vision Statement in the draft plan. The over-reaching effect could include "agency building" for OWEB by moving the project lists further away from the immediate streams needing attention to the "upland landscapes capable of sustaining and enriching Oregon's biological diversity, ecosystems..."

Water quantity and quality are very important to agriculture, all other industries, and our citizens living and visiting Oregon. The Cattlemen's Association can support Goals 4 and 5, and we believe these goals will themselves always help the justification of the OWEB program. We recommend that the Mission Statement and Vision Statement continue to adhere to the importance of supporting "local communities and economies," and that those involved in administering OWEB grants and projects never lose sight of their importance to the program. We also recommend the inclusion of science based decision making "to help protect and restore watersheds..." in the Mission or Vision Statements.

Contact: Jim Welsh, Political Advocate
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OREGON INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL

November 3, 2009

Melissa Leoni
OWEB
775 Summer Street NE #360
Salem, OR 97301-1290

Dear Melissa:

The Oregon Invasive Species Council, a consortium of federal, state, and local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and industry representatives thanks you for the opportunity to comment on OWEB's proposed new strategic plan. Our Council commends OWEB for taking the initiative to revise and update its existing strategic plan to help ensure that future OWEB activities meet the changing and challenging watershed issues in Oregon.

Your organization asked three questions as part of its strategic plan review. The following are the responses of our Council to each of these issues.

1. Do the Mission Statement and Vision Statement capture the spirit of OWEB's core purposes and its future direction?

The proposed mission, *To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies*, acknowledges the importance of communities and economics, important components of strong conservation programs.

However, ORS 695-004-0010 notes that, "The Board may allocate funds to support projects for restoration, monitoring, technical assistance, small grants, education and outreach, watershed council support, land acquisition, instream water leases and transfers, research and other related activities **that advance the purposes of the watershed enhancement program.**"

Recommendation: It may be more technically accurate for the mission statement to read, *To help protect and restore watersheds and their associated native fish and wildlife habitats and sources of high quality water, services provided by healthy watersheds that contribute to thriving communities and strong economies.*" This suggested revision does

three things: (1) it ties the natural habitat statement to watersheds, which is the statutory responsibility of OWEB; (2) it helps to more clearly define “natural,” an often misunderstood statement; and (3) it places an emphasis on native fish and wildlife habitat as a key desired outcome in a healthy watershed.

2. Do the Goals and Strategies link effectively to the Mission and Vision?

3. Are there issues of concern that you do not see addressed in the Final Draft Strategic Plan?

Our Council would like to provide answers to questions 2 and 3 together because there are some overlapping issues and responses to both questions. Before doing so, however, we wish to acknowledge that we appreciate the fact that strategic plans are high level documents for any organization. There are other plans and approaches (annual business plan, e.g.) that tier down from strategic plans and provide more specific levels of detail important for the day-to-day operations of any agency. That said, we believe the following shortcomings to the proposed OWEB strategic plan prevent it from providing adequate direction and guidance to guide the agency:

- 1. Invasive species is not mentioned in this plan, yet invasive species has the potential to significantly alter healthy watershed ecosystem functions.** The following statement from the US Environmental Protection Agency is one of literally thousands that document the effect of invasive species on watersheds:

“It is increasingly important that watershed managers become aware of invasive species in their watersheds, in both the aquatic and terrestrial environments. Aquatic invaders are clearly of concern to a water resources manager, but invasive species in the watershed can have significant effects on water quality and aquatic ecosystem health due to the ways they affect bank stability and the volume and pollution levels in runoff.”¹

In addition, the Oregon Conservation Strategy notes that “Control of invasive species is considered one of six key issues of statewide concern in the Oregon Conservation Strategy.”²

Nine of the 10 of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s 10 Most Unwanted Species³ are aquatic species. The tenth, feral swine, is associated with aquatic habitats and riparian corridors, where facilitation of weed invasion by disturbance is a major concern,

¹ <http://www.epa.gov/watertrain/invasive.html>

² http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/invasive_species.asp

³ http://www.dfw.state.or.us/conservationstrategy/invasive_species/most_unwanted.asp

particularly in Oregon. Rooting in riparian areas may be contributing to the spread of knotweed in Oregon.⁴

Invasive species issues consumed an entire day-long session at the OWEB conference in November of 2008. One of the clinics: **Watershed Councils Building Partnerships to Address Invasive Species** invited participants to weigh in on important questions facing watershed councils and their partners as they attempt to manage invasive species at the watershed scale.

Since 2009, OWEB has funded about \$33.4 million for investments in watershed programs and projects that include work on invasive species. Omission of invasive species-related strategies in this plan, given past funding in this arena, fails to highlight this achievement and overlooks opportunities for OWEB's continued support for invasive species control/eradication/outreach initiatives.

Recommendation: Acknowledge the threat of invasive species to Oregon's watersheds and develop specific objectives and strategies to reduce that threat and align with the objectives of the Oregon Conservation Strategy.

- 2. There is no description of the groups/partners that contributed to the development of this plan, nor is there any mention of the public process used to gain input.** And although partnerships are referenced in more than 40 locations in the new strategic plan, the expected outcomes of these partnerships are not clearly articulated. In addition, Goal 4 on page 5 references the types of partners OWEB wishes to work with, but this list does not include academic institutions or industry representatives. Both of these types of entities play important roles in advancing and communicating sound science (academic institutions) as well as helping to leverage funds and perform other important functions as part of the government/nonprofit/private industry three-legged stool.

Recommendation: Include the list of partners that were involved in the development of OWEB's new strategic plan, including the IMST that provides scientific guidance (organization name and name of individual that participated in planning sessions), consider expanding the types of groups OWEB wishes to work with to include academic institutions and industry representatives, and develop clear, measurable objectives related to work with partners. Consider a futuring workshop with partners focused specifically on long-term strategic initiatives for OWEB.

- 3. Many federal, state, local, and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations, academic institutions, and companies are actively involved in watershed restoration, management,**

⁴ <http://www.clr.pdx.edu/docs/feral%20swine%20action%20plan.pdf>

policy development, research, and monitoring. However, OWEB's strategic plan does not acknowledge the "state of the state." What is the status of watershed restoration in Oregon? How will implementation of this strategic plan address the highest priority weaknesses in watershed restoration, through OWEB's efforts and collaborative efforts with partners? How will what OWEB does help Oregon to achieve the goals in Oregon's Conservation Strategy? Where are the gaps in watershed restoration in Oregon, and does this plan address those gaps?

Recommendation: Add an analysis of the "state of the state" (also termed environmental scans in the strategic planning arena) of watershed restoration in Oregon so that readers will understand how the goals, objectives, and strategies in the strategic plan address gaps in restoration efforts.

- 4. The message from the Executive Director and Board could be greatly strengthened.** For example, one paragraph notes "No matter where you live in Oregon, you're in a watershed." This statement could have a great deal more meaning and empower people to think about the role they can play in contributing to healthy watersheds by stating, "No matter where you live in Oregon, your actions affect a watershed."

The message notes that the plan represents the "best thoughts" of the Board and staff. Should it instead reflect the highest priority actions to protect and conserve Oregon's watersheds based on a statewide analysis of watershed-based management, activities, and funding, and the unique role OWEB can play to fill gaps not currently filled by other entities?

OWEB has been in existence for quite some time. The message should reflect some clear and specific accomplishments during the first 10 years. An entire section of the plan (1-2 pages) could be devoted to helping people understand what OWEB has achieved.

Recommendation: Consider strengthening the "No matter where you live in Oregon, you're in a watershed" statement, consider characterizing the actions of the plan as highest priority strategies versus "best thoughts," and provide a summary of OWEB's key accomplishments in the first 10 years.

- 5. The document lacks some key elements of a strategic plan. There are no "core principles" defined. There is no SWOT analysis - an articulation of OWEB's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. There are no performance metrics.**

Given the role that OWEB plays in advancing watershed health in Oregon, an articulation of core principles would advance an understanding of its mission. Perhaps characterizing the statements at the bottom of page 4 as "core principles" would strengthen this portion of the document.

It is critical that OWEB conduct a SWOT analysis as part of its strategic plan so that it reflects on its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and communicates that SWOT analysis in its strategic plan—with emphasis on how OWEB will respond to the analysis. Only by conducting this activity can OWEB anchor its mission, vision, core principles, goals, objectives, and strategies. Without a SWOT analysis, the public will have difficulty understanding the unique role OWEB plays in watershed restoration in Oregon relative to other agencies and organizations that conduct work in watersheds. The document fails to articulate OWEB's niche in Oregon. Why is OWEB best suited to do what it does, versus another organization or entity managing lottery dollars?

How has OWEB assessed its success over the past 10 years? The short “Where are we now?” sections don’t seem adequate in terms of their depth and breadth. How much money has OWEB distributed/managed in Oregon since 2001? In what geographic areas? At a recent Board meeting, our Council was asked by an OWEB Board member how OWEB can determine its effectiveness. Development of performance metrics will allow OWEB to assess itself and will allow the public to assess OWEB.

Recommendation: Identify OWEB’s core principles, conduct and communicate a SWOT analysis, identify OWEB’s niche, and develop performance metrics as part of the strategic plan.

6. **The strategies and action items for Goal 3 related to outreach and education initiatives could be strengthened by promoting actions that truly engage Oregonians regarding activities they can do to support healthy watersheds.** What does “on a broad level” in strategy 1 mean? This strategy is very OWEB-focused versus achieving the goal of “providing information to Oregonians to help Oregonians understand the need for and engage in activities that support healthy watersheds.” Strategy 2 relates to OWEB accomplishments, as well. Perhaps this goal could be split into 2 separate goals – one to increase awareness of OWEB and its accomplishments, and the other to engage Oregonians in actions that enhance watershed protection and restoration.

Recommendation: If support for OWEB is a desired outcome, perhaps there should be 2 outreach-related goals; one to increase awareness and support for OWEB and the other to engage Oregonians in actions that enhance watershed protection and restoration. The action items for these two goals are different.

Melissa, thank you again for the opportunity to comment on OWEB’s proposed strategic plan. Our Council values OWEB as a partner organization and hopes that these recommendations will further OWEB’s success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa A. DeBruyckere", written in a cursive style.

Lisa A. DeBruyckere
Oregon Invasive Species Council Coordinator

Cc: Oregon Invasive Species Council members
Oregon Invasive Species Council advisory committee members

Melissa Leoni

From: Thomas Stahl [thomas.stahl@state.or.us]
Sent: Friday, November 06, 2009 4:08 PM
To: Melissa LEONI
Cc: Bruce McIntosh; Charles Corrarino
Subject: Strategic Plan Comments

Melissa,

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife supports OWEB's draft Strategic Plan and looks forward to working with OWEB toward its implementation. The only additional comment that I offer is that the Strategic Plan does not specifically mention the potential role that conservation plans (developed under the State's Native Fish Conservation Policy) and recovery plans (developed to address federal listing under the Endangered Species Act) may have in achieving many of the strategies and actions for the five goals. These plans represent significant efforts that provide a more detailed and specific "roadmap" to conservation and recovery of the State's listed fish and wildlife species than the overarching plans that they support, such as the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds and the Oregon Conservation Strategy. We hope that they will be considered as OWEB implements the Strategic Plan.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Tom

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