



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Ashley Seim, GIS and Web Site Specialist
Greg Sieglitz, Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager

SUBJECT: Agenda Item M: Investment and Outcome Reporting
June 2-3, 2010 OWEB Board Meeting

I. Introduction

This report provides an update on the implementation of various actions related to the reporting and communication about OWEB investments and outcomes achieved as described in the OWEB 2010 Strategic Plan. Staff will demonstrate investment and outcome reporting additions to the OWEB web site at the June meeting.

II. Background

During the summer and fall of 2009, the OWEB Board developed a Strategic Plan, which was adopted in January 2010. At the same time, the Board was developing a Communications Strategy, which was approved in September 2009 as a working draft. The recommendations of the Communications Strategy are incorporated into the public awareness and involvement goal (Goal 3) of the Strategic Plan. Staff are also moving forward with the Communication Strategy's recommendation to "create and enhance an ongoing information infrastructure" to guide the implementation of the agency's communications tactics.

At the January Board Meeting, staff updated the Board on the Strategic Plan immediate action items and communication products. Part of that update focused on implementation of Goal 3, Strategy 1, Action 4 of the Strategic Plan, which proposes to compile a history of OWEB investments and ecological outcomes ("Decade of Investments"). As reported in January, staff do not view this as a single document or publication; this compilation consists of maps, stories, web site narratives, data, and information about OWEB investments and outcomes.

The January presentation also demonstrated proposed changes to the OWEB web site (www.oregon.gov/OWEB) and presented other investment and outcome reporting tools, including the OWEB Investment Tracking Tool in development by the Department of Administrative Services/Geospatial Enterprise (DAS/GEO) office and a Fish Passage Project Viewer in development by the InfoGraphics Lab at University of Oregon. Other investment reporting tools that were presented included the Conservation Registry, the Oregon Explorer, and Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund data viewer.

III. Web Sites as Information Vehicles

OWEB now has two web sites providing information about the agency, our investments, outcomes and other program areas. Staff will present the improvements made to the main OWEB web site and opportunities for linkages between the OWEB site and www.healthywatersheds.org site.

A. Web Site Updates and Enhancements

Since January, staff have implemented the planned improvements to the OWEB web site (www.oregon.gov/OWEB) presented to the Board. At the end of March, several improvements were made “live,” including the addition of a ‘Resources’ web page that compiles links to OWEB resources (e.g., grant applications, data, forms, contacts, publications, etc.) on one page. New content was added, including a page for ecosystem services coordination and a clickable map with a summary of 2007-2009 lottery funding by county.

In May, the Watersheds home page (once a page for general watershed resources) was removed because it’s no longer needed with the Resources page providing for more intuitive linkages to the same information. These changes reflect the goals to eliminate redundancies, add new content, and begin changing the structural organization of the site from programmatic (e.g., internal OWEB sections) to thematic (e.g., Resources, which compile web pages from multiple internal OWEB sections).

B. Investment and Outcome Linkages

With the public release of the www.healthywatersheds.org site, OWEB has another means to reach the public and create awareness. Staff have been developing potential linkages between the www.oregon.gov/OWEB site and www.healthywatersheds.org site. (See Agenda Item C-8 for more information about the www.healthywatersheds.org site and web communications.)

One potential area for linking the two sites is to provide more information about the jobs and local economies research funded by OWEB. (See Agenda Item G.) The www.healthywatersheds.org site provides high level information and messages about the new ‘restoration economy’ and how OWEB’s grant funding supports jobs and local businesses. OWEB staff have developed a web page for the www.oregon.gov/OWEB site that provides more detail about the research that was done, defines the new ‘restoration economy,’ and provides the results of the research. The new page also provides a direct link to the Ecosystem Workforce Program at the University of Oregon and the briefing papers developed with the research funding.

IV. Investment Reporting

OWEB staff have been participating in collaborative processes, prioritizing Board investments, and establishing the foundation for reporting on the summation of agency investments for the last few years. Several of these efforts are maturing and will be featured for the Board.

A. Conservation Registry

At the January Board meeting, staff provided an overview of the ongoing collaboration with the Defenders of Wildlife on the recently developed Oregon Conservation Registry. This on-line tool can be found at: (<http://blog.conservationregistry.org/2010/04/oregons-new-dataset/>)

In late April, the remaining issues of data quality and representation were resolved between OWEB and the Defenders of Wildlife. A new set of information was provided by OWEB from the Oregon Watershed Restoration Inventory (OWRI) that now is 'live' on the Conservation Registry with a user interface that provides access to complete project information through the Oregon Explorer. The OWRI tracks voluntary watershed restoration actions in Oregon since 1995 and is maintained by OWEB.

B. OWEB Investment Tracking Tool

OWEB staff have been working on an OWEB Investment Tracking Tool with the DAS/GEO office. The targeted audience for this new tool is the general public who desire more information about OWEB grants. The OWEB Investment Tracking Tool is a web mapping application that combines the location of projects with an abbreviated set of high-level project data (e.g. project name, grantee, project cost, grant type) from OWEB's Grant Management System (OGMS). A user will be able to sort by different grant types, zoom to their physical address to view projects nearby, and view a table providing OWEB project information grant.

OWEB staff have been working in coordination with the DAS/GEO office to provide direction and feedback on the development of the tool. The public release will be in late June. OWEB staff will continue to work with DAS/GEO to identify new functionality that can be added after the initial release. Staff will display the most current version of the viewer and demonstrate the linkage to OWEB's web sites at the meeting in June.

C. OWRI Visualization Tool

The OWRI Visualization Tool on Oregon Explorer was created to show the locations and information about restoration projects reported to OWRI. OWEB has invested in the Oregon Explorer Program at the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University for various products. The Oregon Explorer team has been working on an OWEB contract since early 2009, with deliverables to include updating OWRI products and enhancing the OWRI Visualization Tool, creating a Lakes Basin Explorer Portal, creating a Deschutes River Basin Explorer, scoping and integrating fish-passage barrier data among Oregon Plan partner agencies, and implementing information sharing between Oregon Explorer and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (ODFW) Natural Resources Information Management Plan.

The latest version of the Visualization Tool organizes OWRI data by basin for user downloads, allows users to overlay additional spatial datasets on restoration project data (e.g. fish distribution), adds other restoration datasets (e.g., U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management), and makes the data available by watershed council boundaries. In addition, the full detail report has been reconfigured to show a funding chart (by participant), and to allow for project photo uploads, among other improvements. Staff will display the enhanced OWRI Visualization Tool at the June Board meeting.

The tool can be viewed at:

- OWRI Visualization Tool – beta
<http://oregonexplorer.info/OregonRestorationVisTool/>
- Full Detail Report – beta
<http://oregonexplorer.info/OregonRestorationVisTool/FullReport.aspx>

V. Reporting Outcomes

In addition to enhancing the exposure of the general public to the information about OWEB investments, staff have been building platforms and compiling information for reporting on the outcomes of those investments. While the reporting on investments is a relatively simple and rapid process, establishing demonstrable results and outcomes is a longer term more complex process. Through the Board's investment in the Effectiveness Monitoring Program and Oregon Plan Products, preliminary results will soon be made available in several formats, in addition to existing information provided through the OWEB web site.

A. "A Decade of Fish Passage Improvements"

As reported to the Board in September 2008, several efforts have been underway to improve fish passage barrier data across several agencies. These efforts lay the foundation for a comprehensive, web-accessible data management system for fish-passage barriers. This web-based system is intended to allow users to depict fish habitat and barriers on maps, assess the level of severity of different barriers, and use decision-support tools to prioritize barrier removal restoration projects at multiple geographic scales around the state.

As mentioned in Section IV.C above, one task of this effort has been taken on by the Oregon Explorer team. The team has developed a reconciliation process for integrating OWRI fish passage project data with the ODFW barriers dataset. Once the full reconciliation task is complete; the result will be a dataset that identifies fish passage barriers and the historical barriers that have been removed or improved for fish passage.

The effort that will be demonstrated to the Board in June is the web-based data viewer being developed by the InfoGraphics Lab at the University of Oregon. The viewer will portray fish habitat made accessible by OWRI projects over the last 10 years in the Coos and Upper John Day sub-basins. It will also display the number of stream miles reported to the OWRI. The viewer is intended to be interactive, allowing the user the capability to explore the cumulative data by project completion year. The viewer will be available on the web site by August 31, 2010.

B. Effectiveness Monitoring Results

OWEB has initiated a variety of effectiveness monitoring efforts in the last three years and one half years. These include:

1. Livestock exclusion riparian work (entering fourth season of monitoring);
2. Western juniper removal (two years of monitoring);
3. Small dam removal (entering third year of monitoring);
4. Irrigation efficiency improvements (four seasons of monitoring in Malheur Basin and three seasons in Deschutes Basin);
5. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) evaluation (two years of monitoring);
6. Intensively Monitored Watersheds (entering third year of John Day monitoring); and
7. Wetland restoration (entering second year of monitoring).

While watershed restoration results can take many years to be realized through monitoring activities, OWEB staff are compiling early indicators of outcomes from a subset of the effectiveness monitoring projects funded to date. Staff will describe for the Board the mock-up web pages that will be used to provide information to the public about what we are learning so far.

VI. Next Steps

At the June meeting, staff will describe the work products and priority reporting and communication areas for the remainder of the calendar year. Key deliverables to watch for:

- The Oregon Explorer - OWRI Visualization Tool Phase II will be live by June 30, 2010.
- The OWEB Investment Viewer will be live by June 30, 2010, with additional phases to be determined by funding availability.
- The Decade of Investments Fish Passage Project Viewer will be live by August 31, 2010.

Additional focus on the necessary linkage between the OWEB web site and www.healthywatersheds.org site will occur between June and the end of the year. Web site based reporting of outcomes will be a continued focus area between June and December.

VII. Recommendation

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