

September 18-19, 2007 OWEB Board Meeting Executive Director Update #C5: Board Planning Session Report

Background

The Board met on July 17-19, 2007, in Maupin at the Imperial River Company. Tom Byler and the Board Co-Chairs started the planning session off with a brief overview of OWEB's goals, objectives, and mandates. A key focus area for the Board was to discuss, at the midpoint of the 15-year term of Ballot Measure 66, whether OWEB was focusing its grant investments in the most effective and strategic manner possible. The Board then had a visioning exercise about what success for OWEB might look like in 2014 and what outcomes OWEB is working toward. Tom Byler concluded the first day with an update on OWEB's legislatively adopted budget.

The Board toured projects in the Bakeoven and Buck Hollow watersheds on Wednesday morning, including a visit to the Imperial Stock Ranch, and then spent the afternoon discussing OWEB's different grant programs and types of investments and how those might be improved or made more strategic. The session concluded on Thursday morning with discussions about strategic investments, expectations for watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts, and an evaluation of Board processes.

This staff report updates the Board on the follow-up assignments not included in other staff reports on the September agenda. These items may be part of future Board meeting presentations or discussions.

Strategic Grants and Investments

The staff report on grant cycles recommends "regular" grant offerings for October 2007. Over the next couple of meetings, staff anticipate further discussion with the Board about potential strategic approaches to different grant program areas and/or direct investments if additional federal funding is available. Staff intend to develop ideas for strategic grant offerings for research, monitoring, and education and outreach.

Parks Partnership

Board members directed staff to continue exploring Measure 66 funding partnerships with staff from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. Staff will report to the Board on our progress in these discussions at upcoming meetings.

Small Grant Program

At the planning session, Board members discussed potentially increasing the per project limit for small grants and making additional funding available for small grants teams who have spent their allocation and still have a list of pending applications. The \$10,000 limit for small grants is established in administrative rule and would require rulemaking to make the change. Staff are also currently evaluating how the small grant program assists in implementation of Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans ("SB1010 plans"). Staff plan to return at a future Board meeting with a full discussion of the program and alternatives for funding.

Local Innovation Fund

The Board discussed conducting an assessment of how the program worked, and reporting progress and accomplishments for previously funded projects. Projects funded through the Local

Innovation Fund (LIF) are still in progress, and staff anticipate a future report to the Board on the program.

The LIF grants were one element of OWEB's 2004 Sustainability Plan. The Sustainability Board was reauthorized by the 2007 Legislature. OWEB anticipates that it will continue to work with the Sustainability Board as it moves forward and will report back to the Board on future developments.

Board Processes

Board members recommended that staff provide hard copies of PowerPoint presentations and requested that staff work more with presenters (and on room logistics) to improve presentations given to the Board. Board members also asked staff to assist them by providing more context on controversial issues or when they are asked to fund projects that aren't recommended for funding. Board members expressed an interest in scheduling tours as part of Board meetings and having staff create opportunities for the Board to better interact with the public. There was general support for continuing to have co-chairs.

Board Subcommittees

The Board discussed establishing subcommittees for the Local Innovation Fund, Monitoring and Research, and Education and Outreach, in addition to existing subcommittees for the Strategic Investment Partnerships, Land Acquisition, and Council Support.

For Education and Outreach, formation of the subcommittee(s) will wait until the Communications Coordinator position is hired. Diane Snyder and Jim Johnson were identified as potential members of this subcommittee.

Staff Request

This staff report is provided as a summary of the discussion and follow-up items identified at the Board Planning Session. If you have questions or need additional information about the Planning Session, please contact Tom Byler, at tom.byler@state.or.us or 503-986-0180.