



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

775 Summer Street NE, Suite 360

Salem, OR 97301-1290

(503) 986-0178

FAX (503) 986-0199

[www.oregon.gov/OWEB](http://www.oregon.gov/OWEB)



March 5, 2009

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

**FROM:** Carolyn Devine, Communications Coordinator

**SUBJECT:** **Agenda Item P: Communications Strategy Implementation  
March 18-19, 2009 OWEB Board Meeting**

### I. Introduction

This report provides an update on continuing efforts under the OWEB Strategic Communications Implementation Plan. The report is for informational purposes only.

### II. Background

Since December 2007, the Board Communications Subcommittee, composed of members Jim Johnson, Meta Loftsgaarden, and Patricia Smith, and OWEB lead staff Carolyn Devine and Tom Byler have met six times. Discussions have focused on the statutory guidance to the Board regarding OWEB's communications. Building upon this direction, the Subcommittee began drafting the following goals and outcomes:

#### *Goal*

*OWEB serves as the infrastructure that supports and catalyzes sustained voluntary, incentive-based watershed enhancement activities in Oregon.*

#### *Outcomes*

- *Increased participation in voluntary on-the-ground watershed improvement activities.*
- *Increased awareness of Oregon's watershed enhancement accomplishments.*
- *Increased involvement in a wide-range of community-based watershed conservation and restoration activities.*

The Subcommittee recognized that utilizing all communications tools (Education and Outreach grants, the web site, press releases, publications, etc.) will be essential to support the larger agency mission of creating and maintaining healthy watersheds and natural habitats. The challenge is to design a plan that strategically uses these tools, funding, and staff resources toward these outcomes.

### III. Education/Outreach Grants

The Education/Outreach Review Team (EORT) reviewed each Education and Outreach grant application. They met in Bend on December 4, 2008. Their review comments were passed along to the Regional Review Teams for their consideration and use in recommending funding

and ranking. Their comments were also used by OWEB's Director and Grant Program Manager in making the funding recommendations contained in Agenda Item G.

#### **IV. Communications Implementation Plan Progress**

Since the last Board meeting, staff contracted with Gard Communications to help create this plan. Gard Communications has a long track record in creating and implementing statewide communications plans, and significant experience in communicating successfully on natural resources issues.

To maximize efficiency, Gard will begin with a discovery process that involves interviewing a few key stakeholders representing a variety of perspectives from every corner of the state. The goal of these interviews is to assess the current communications program and to understand the opportunities and needs for future communications. They are also reviewing existing communications materials and available public opinion research regarding the awareness and perceptions of watershed enhancement efforts around the state. The initial findings from this discovery process will be discussed at the Board meeting.

During and after the discovery process, Gard will draft goals and objectives, a message platform, key messages and a message delivery strategy. These will be reviewed and revised based on input from key staff, stakeholders, and the Board Subcommittee.

#### **V. Recommendation**

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