

2021

Granting Practices Impacts to Tribes

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE OREGON WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT
BOARD

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Executive Summary

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) provides grants to help Oregonians take care of local streams, rivers, wetlands, and natural areas. OWEB's primary focus when administering grants is to fund grant projects that restore, conserve, and sustain healthy watersheds that best serve all Oregonians. Effective and equitable grant-making is difficult to achieve and is an ongoing, ever-adapting process. The watershed ecosystems of the land that is now Oregon has been stewarded and cared for by Native Americans since time immemorial. As a state agency, OWEB is responsible for creating inclusive opportunities for the community to support their watersheds using the best available science supported by local knowledge and involving Tribes and stakeholders broadly and in partnership.

The staff who participated in this assessment and were interviewed from the ten federally recognized Tribes that are eligible for OWEB grants had positive feedback for OWEB's current granting practices. For most, OWEB was consistently meeting and exceeding expectations as a funding agency. Interviewees said, "OWEB's continuous improvement mentality is wonderful and we really appreciate it.", and, "Overall, I have been satisfied with OWEB as an agency, and appreciate their work and hope they continue to be clear and transparent."

While there was positive feedback and insightful data captured from OWEB's internal database in regards to OWEB's granting practices, there are still certain challenges and barriers facing Tribes.

Background

In 2018, OWEB's strategic plan asserted that their mission is "to help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies". One of the agency priorities used to achieve this mission is to have a "broad awareness of the relationship between people and watersheds". This priority complements one of the many principles that make up traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK is part of the worldview that indigenous people and Native American Tribes have been practicing for millennia. This body of knowledge, practice, spiritual belief system is a way of understanding the environment that is passed down through generations via cultural transmission about the relationships between humans and non-humans within ecosystems.

Partnering with Tribes goes beyond justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives. OWEB's Tribal Policy "recognizes and respects the sovereign status of the Tribes and their respective authorities on reservation, Tribal, ceded lands and established usual and accustomed areas and their co-management authorities over certain resources on non-Tribal lands." Interest in this assessment is motivated by OWEB's ongoing commitment to this policy and the agency's recognition of the importance of equity, inclusion, diversity, and justice in natural resource management.

Legally, OWEB as a state agency is required to work with Tribes. In 1996 Executive Order 96-30, established a process for state agencies to "assist in resolving potential conflicts, maximize key inter-governmental relations, and enhance an exchange of ideas and resources for the greater

good of all of Oregon's citizens.” In 2001, the Oregon Legislature institutionalized this Executive Order by enacting SB 770 (ORS 182.162-168) to formalize the government-to-government relationship that exists between federally recognized Native American Tribes in Oregon and the State of Oregon. This bill mandates that state agencies develop and implement policies on tribal relations.

It is important that OWEB staff and board acknowledge the individual and unique circumstances each Tribe has as a sovereign nation. As sovereign nations, all Tribes’ have a key role in co-managing land and watershed stewardship and conservation with regional partners. Each Tribe that works with OWEB also differ in their internal capacity to oversee or implement grant projects, and these differences between Tribes can help OWEB understand how to improve their granting practices towards each Tribe. Some Tribes have protected Treaty Rights, rights that are guaranteed in the establishment of their reservations, access to resources, protected hunting and fishing rights, religious freedom, and other qualities inherent to a sovereign nation, while other Tribes do not. These differences impact the ways in which Tribes can access, use, develop, steward, and protect their traditional and culturally significant homelands.

Collaboration is a key component of natural resource and watershed management. OWEB recognizes that through harmonious partnerships and cooperation sustaining healthy and resilient watersheds can be possible.

This assessment intends to review the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)’s granting practices to understand if there are existing barriers that impact federally recognized Tribes’ ability to apply for and receive funds that meet their watershed enhancement goals and objectives.

Assessment Process and Findings

To approach this research, a new framework for understanding tribal engagement in OWEB grant programs was developed: The Tiers of Engagement Model. This model challenges the conventional understanding of grantee engagement. In the Tiers of Engagement Model, receiving grants directly is only one type of engagement. Tribes can engage with OWEB in the following ways: as a grant applicant and recipient, a grant partner, as a grant technical review team member, or some combination of these. The assessment focused on three OWEB grant programs and considered the level of engagement in these offerings by each Tribe. The three grant programs examined are Open Solicitation (also known in OGMS as Regular), Small Grant, and Focused Investment Partnership (FIP). Using the OWEB Grant Management System (OGMS) database, every single grant on the systems dating back as far as 1996 through March 2021 was analyzed.

The data showed that Tribes as an aggregate have a success rate greater than the mean success rate between all grantee types for the Open Solicitation grant program. Watershed Councils, Soil and Watershed Conservation Districts, and Tribes all have a 66% success rate. The average success rate for OWEB grant applications across all grantees is 65%. Counties have submitted the same number of applications as Tribes (83) and have a slightly lower success rate (64%),

while Universities have submitted 68 applications and have a 57% success rate when applying for Open Solicitation grants.

When looking at the data in OGMS it became apparent that there are drastic and distinct differences between which grant programs Tribes chose to pursue OWEB funding. It is critical to not consolidate all ten of the Tribes into one entity. Some Tribes have not applied for any OWEB grants directly. There are some Tribes who have only applied for Small Grants, and there are Tribes who have been involved in FIPs and Tribes that have not. By looking at the OGMS data alone, it is difficult to determine if barriers are coming from OWEB grant practices because of the differences between how each Tribe pursues grant funding. Review teams offer another way for Tribes to engage with OWEB grants. All Tribes participate on Small Grant review teams and some Tribes participate in FIP and Open Solicitation technical review teams. Therefore, additional information was needed to better understand the differences between the Tribes to explain why some Tribes engage more frequently with OWEB than other Tribes.

This realization led to the development of a qualitative data collection component. Tribal staff who are familiar with OWEB grant programs were interviewed to ask more detailed questions about OWEB's grant practices. The intent of these interviews was to better understand if aspects of OWEB's grant-making may create a disadvantage for tribes when applying for or receiving OWEB funding and to learn if there are any recommendations to address them.

The report's appendix includes responses from the interviews but does not attribute comments to individuals or Tribes to maintain confidentiality. Interviews with Tribes offered insight into how Tribes manage internal capacity capabilities, strategize about how they pursue grant funding, manage regional partnerships, utilize other funding resources, and the importance of history and geography.

Key themes that emerged from the interviews included the following:

- **Quantity is not an indicator of grant practices quality.** Infrequent engagement as a lead applicant is not indicative of barriers within OWEB's granting practices. Tribes are more selective about the frequency with which they apply for grant funding.
- **Each Tribe is selective about the type of OWEB grant they pursue.** The process to apply for and receive OWEB grants can be rigorous with stringent requirements. For Tribes with a smaller staff, this additional work is challenging to complete, and because the grant process is competitive, there is no guarantee that the time and effort put into the application will deliver a desirable outcome.
- **Each Tribe is selective about the source of funding they pursue.** The overall consensus is that even if they are not utilizing OWEB funds directly, OWEB funding impacts the funding field available for watershed enhancement projects and helps Tribes collaborate on larger projects with more partners. As describe by one of the interviewees, *"OWEB funds work to complement federal or BPA funding and OWEB funding helps to increase the scale and scope of projects."*
- **Strategize first, then find grant funding- it's primarily about location.** Strategy alignment, relationship to existing work, tribal leadership prioritization, and timing are common factors for pursuing a grant program and project. This is usually predetermined

by each Tribe's government or council's strategic direction and priorities. One interviewee responded, *"I would say the majority of project proposals are not opportunistic."*

- **Collaboration rather than competition.** Many interviewees expressed that by limiting their applications for OWEB grants, they create opportunities for their partners and other organizations to pursue a much-needed funding source without creating competition. All Tribes are represented in engaging and accessing OWEB grant funds when taking a closer look at the partners involved in Open Solicitation grant projects. One interviewee stated, *"We feel OWEB is one of the more progressive state agencies. Yes, we feel involved in other organizations' projects funded by OWEB and we think other organizations reach out to work with us. Our region's projects are strong and well-developed because we are selective about which grant applications are submitted to OWEB."*
- **Resilient partnerships develop through reciprocity and early engagement.** There have also been some partnerships that can feel forced or mandated due to the partner's efforts to push for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI), but the JEDI push has helped keep Tribes involved. Most Tribes said that they do not feel as though they are regarded as a second thought or hindrance to projects, their partners respect and appreciate the knowledge and information they have. Participants in the interviews, felt as though the Tribes have a considerable influence in their region, and the overall consensus is that efforts to improve JEDI have been astoundingly beneficial for each Tribe.
- **Time, effort, and organizational capacity is needed to apply for OWEB grants.** Partners that Tribes collaborate with on OWEB funded projects often have more time and infrastructure devoted to grant-writing than they do. Interviewees believed tribal contribution comes in the form of technical expertise, setting overall strategic goals, writing letters of support, and reviewing and improving existing grant applications.
- **Influence and oversight as powerful ways to shape projects and goals.** Each of the interviewees considers their physical and spiritual connection to a project location, and their Tribes' capability to successfully executive deliverables within a project scope. Interviewees said that there are times where the best organization to carry out the work is not them, and they will work to support another organization's leadership if their strengths are best suited for implementing the project.
- **History and geography matter.** The ceded lands and retained rights from treaties are binding, but often difficult for non-tribal partners to grasp and comprehend the significance of these treaties and the importance of the Tribes' spiritual and moral commitment to care for the water, land, plants, and animals. Tribes have to educate landowners, organizations, state and federal agencies about their historical claims to ceded lands, clarify their reserved and protected rights, and ensure minimum instream flows. It can be difficult to ensure that Tribes are included in areas where they are not always physically present.
- **The impact of termination.** The impacts of The Western Oregon Termination Act are visible in the data. Tribes that went through termination and restoration of federal

recognition faced difficulties that have altered their Tribes' internal capacity to execute natural resource management. Many of these Tribes, in addition to losing federal recognition, lost access and control of their treaty protected lands and access to their ceded lands and reserved treaty rights including where they were allowed to gather foods, hunt, fish, and access water. During the time between losing federal status and regaining it, many Tribes either sold their land to help their economies or their land was once again taken, making their current land base noncontiguous.

- **Geography can lead to differences in available funding opportunities.** Due to various funding opportunities, Tribes with land within the Columbia River Basin have access to additional funding sources helping to enhance their Tribes' influence in their region. Additionally, there are Tribes closer to public lands and are able to co-manage watershed projects with federal agencies and these opportunities lead to consistent partnerships and project continuity. One interviewee commented that, "Along the Columbia River using a combination of OWEB and BPA funding ensures projects can be well managed and well executed. OWEB funds are a significant help. They help to scale and enhance the scope of projects."
- **Resource distribution and regional population impact potential for watershed management.** Tribes within largely populated areas have unique watershed challenges when it comes to finding the space to accomplish project work as well as potential contamination and pollution. While Tribes in more rural parts of the state may have difficulties recruiting or retaining qualified staff, but they also have closer access to public lands managed by Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service or other federal or state agencies.

Challenges and Barriers

The interviews also provided Tribes the opportunity to describe challenges and barriers they face when applying for or pursuing OWEB grants. The following challenges and barriers were collated based on their feedback:

1. Some Tribes are hesitant to pursue land acquisition grants for habitat protection because of language in OWEB conservation easements.
2. Match funding requirements can be challenging and burdensome to meet.
3. There is confusion and uncertainty about applying the federally negotiated indirect rate to estimate grant administration expenses when developing budgets in grant applications.
4. Reporting on projects that are jointly funded by OWEB and Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) can be confusing and cumbersome.
5. There are Measure 76 requirements that have not been well articulated to Tribes, and it can be difficult to get a complete and accurate understanding of the State's constitutional requirements and definitions of what can and cannot be funded regarding natural resource management and cultural preservation.

Recommendations

Recommendations to improve OWEB's granting practices emerged from these interviews and fell into four broad categories:

Administrative

- Clarify eligible expenses included in grant funds and clarify that staff time is allowed to be included in grants.
- Incorporate tribal participation in evaluation and project ranking criteria.
- Include project ranking criteria that is meaningful to the Tribes and honors tribal knowledge and expertise
- Increase the amount of funds that can be requested in the Small Grant Program.

Communication

- Host and fund more opportunities for staff from both Tribes and OWEB at all levels to connect and have discussions together at annual meetings.
- Pursue opportunities to help OWEB staff and review team members be aware there are locations that hold significance to multiple Tribes.
- Reflect upon and recognize the impacts of history and geography on federally recognized Tribes' strategic plans.
- Utilize OWEB's position, influence, and resources to discuss re-occurring natural resources and watershed issues that are important to Tribes with other state agencies.
- Provide regular communication with OWEB staff and Tribes to discuss grant program eligibility and application timelines.
- Look to other states for ideas about innovative ways of offering grants.

Legal

- Make a portion of the grant funds available specifically for Tribes.
- Provide funding opportunities specifically encouraging the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge to help revive and continue cultural connection to specific locations.
- Include language in the grant agreements that is specific for Tribes to make it easier for Tribal council and leadership to confidently sign the agreement.

Capacity

- Provide grant writing training for the Tribes specifically or pay for staff to attend training sessions on grant writing and using specific systems like OGMS.
- Provide staff from Tribes additional time to work with their leadership to approve grant applications before being submitted.

Opportunities for Future Investigation

Throughout this project additional ideas surfaced that were outside the scope of this project and were not pursued. Below is a list of recommendations for additional opportunities to investigate in the future:

- Develop a place in the grant application to identify a tribal partner on a project so it can be easily queried in the database.
- Examine match, both cash and in-kind, that Tribes contribute to OWEB grants to better understand how Tribes participate as partners on grants that other grantees manage.
- Further explore the discrepancies of tribal participation in OWEB grant programs to understand how they are related to capacity of all partners and how that varies across OWEB's six regions.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for everyone who helped with this assessment. I truly value and appreciate the time and effort you all took to support this work. Foremost, thank you, Ken Fetcho, for leading and developing this project, providing me with access and data from the OGMS database, guiding and overseeing my progress throughout the duration of the project, and for your excellent management.

I want to thank my advisor at Portland State University, Dr. Jennifer Allen, for your guidance and assistance as I navigated this summative project. Thank you, Meta Loftsgaarden, for your support and counsel as Ken and I strategized how to best approach this work. A tremendous thank you to the OWEB staff who gave advice, participated in the initial round of interviews, laid the groundwork for the qualitative assessment, and made recommendations on whom to contact from Tribes: Liz Redon, Katie Duzik, Mark Grenbemer, Greg Ciannella, Coby Menton, Sue Greer, Miriam Forney, Kathy Leopold, and Andrew Dutterer.

I also want to extend my sincerest gratitude to the staff from the federally recognized Tribes who took time from their busy schedules to speak with me at the request of a funding agency. There is already a complicated power dynamic between potential funders and those who receive funding, and this potentially fraught situation does not go unnoticed. The information gained during these interviews is the foundation of the assessment, without which the findings and recommendations could not have been possible.

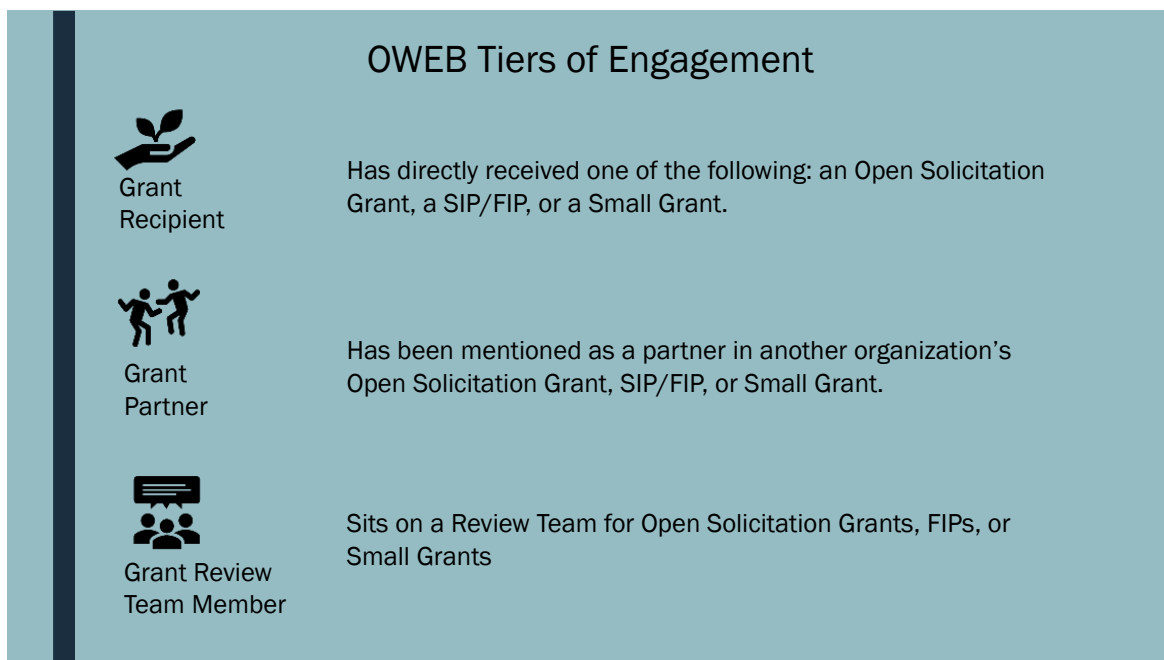
I appreciate everyone who participated in these interviews: Roselynn Lwyena, Brandy Humphreys, Lawrence Schwabe, Lindsay McClary, Stan Van de Wetering, Margaret Corvi, Jason Robison, Kelly Coates, Travis Mackie, Helena Linnell, Darin Jarnaghan, Kathryn Frenyea, Emmitt Taylor, Carter Crouch, Jason Fenton, Amy Charette, Scott Turo, Mike Lambert, Allen Childs, and Mark Buettner. Each of you provided valuable information for this assessment, but I personally learned and grew through my conversations with you all. Thank you. Additionally, several people I interviewed went above and beyond in sending me more detailed insights and additional resources after we spoke. I also want to recognize the folks who provided their edits, comments, and feedback when reviewing the draft report. To these individuals, thank you, I am so grateful for the help you provided.

Introduction

This assessment intends to review the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)'s granting practices to understand if there are existing barriers that impact federally recognized Tribes' ability to apply for and receive funds that meet their watershed enhancement goals and objectives.

To help guide this research, three broad categories of tribal engagement with OWEB grants have been identified:

1. Tribes directly receiving an OWEB grant as the primary applicant.
 - a. OWEB grants are further categorized into Open Solicitation (also known in OGMS as Regular), Focused Investment Partnerships (FIPs) previously known as Special Investment Partnerships (SIPs), and Small Grants.
2. Tribes specifically mentioned as a contributing partner on another organization's grant project.
3. Tribes participating on a technical review team that reviews and makes recommendations regarding grant applications.



By looking at how Tribes participate in each of the various opportunities OWEB offers, OWEB can identify and learn how each Tribe participates in their program. Additionally, representatives from the Tribes can participate on grant review teams for each grant program, offering the Tribes an opportunity to influence and oversee their region's overall watershed restoration strategy.

Table 1. Tiers of Tribal engagement in OWEB grant programs and processes

Tiers of OWEB Engagement

| Tribes | OWEB Region | Received Open Solicitation Grant | Received FIP Grant | Participate in Partnership Technical Assistance (TA) Grant | Received Small Grant | Partner on Open Solicitation Grants | Partner on FIP Grants | Partner on Small Grants | Small Grant Review Team (currently) | FIP/Open Solicitation Grant Review Team Member (currently) |
|--|--------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|----------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Burns Paiute Tribe | 3, 4, 5, & 6 | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw Indians | 1 & 2 | | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde | 2,3,& 4 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians | 1, 2, & 3 | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation | 5 & 6 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs | 3, 4, & 6 | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Coquille Indian Tribe | 2 | | | | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | |
| Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians | 2 | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Nez Perce Tribe | 5 | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| The Klamath Tribes | 4 | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| TOTAL | | 8 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 3 | 10 | 6 |

Purpose

Through this assessment, OWEB will be able to understand where there are leverage points in their grantmaking to be more inclusive of Tribes, how to better support tribal grant applications, and in what ways Tribes want to utilize OWEB funding to meet their overall watershed enhancement needs.

As a result of this assessment, the intentionality and strategy behind how federally recognized Tribes apply for funding are articulated and demonstrated.

Background

Agency Information

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency that provides grants towards the conservation, restoration, protection, and enhancement of Oregon’s natural areas, streams, rivers, lakes, and wetlands to support local communities and economies. In 1996 Executive Order EO-96-30, established a process for state agencies to “assist in resolving potential conflicts, maximize key inter-governmental relations, and enhance an exchange of ideas and resources for the greater good of all of Oregon's citizens.” In 2001, the Oregon Legislature institutionalized this Executive Order by enacting SB 770 (ORS 182.162-168) to

formalize the government-to-government relationship that exists between federally recognized Native American Tribes in Oregon and the State of Oregon. This bill mandates that state agencies develop and implement policies on tribal relations. Agency managers and other staff who communicate with the Tribes are to be trained in tribal matters, participate in annual meetings, and prepare annual reports.

OWEB revised their Tribal Relations Policy in 2018 which “recognizes and respects the sovereign status of the Tribes and their respective authorities on reservation, Tribal, ceded lands and established usual and accustomed areas and their co-management authorities over certain resources on non- Tribal lands.” The interest in this assessment is motivated by OWEB’s ongoing commitment to this policy and the agency’s recognition of the importance of equity, inclusion, diversity, and justice in natural resource management.

Tribes Eligible for OWEB Grants

OWEB consults and engages with Oregon State’s nine federally recognized Tribes:

- Burns Paiute Tribe;
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians;
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde;
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians;
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation;
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon;
- Coquille Indian Tribe;
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians; and
- Klamath Tribes.

OWEB also engages with the federally recognized Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho based on that Tribe’s ceded lands in Northeast Oregon.

Assessment Approach

To better understand how to better serve and collaborate with Tribes, OWEB began in late 2020, the recruitment process of a third-party research coordinator to lead this assessment. A number of graduate student candidates from Portland State University were interviewed for this position. A successful candidate was selected to carry out this assessment and who is utilizing this research experience as part of the required capstone project for the Masters of Public Policy program. The qualifications of the selected candidate include: previous experience reviewing and managing philanthropic private foundation grants and other non-profit grants, a strong commitment towards supporting the development of policies that are more inclusive of indigenous voices, particularly in the policy arena of sustainable ecosystems and natural resource management. Also, the candidate is interested in better understanding how groups of people can work in cooperation to reach political compromise, ecosystem protection and conservation, and ensure that there is equity in the distribution of and access to natural resources.

Methods

Beginning in early 2021, Ken Fetcho, OWEB's Tribal Liaison, assisted in the development of a two-part research plan consisting of quantitative and qualitative assessments to gather and analyze granting data.

Quantitative Portion

The first part of the assessment utilized OWEB's Grant Management System (OGMS) to gather grantmaking data that counted the number of grants Tribes have participated in either as a lead applicant or as a partner. The data captured from OGMS spans from 1996 until March 2021.

This data was collected across all grantee types, different grant programs, and grant types. The assessment broadens the definitions of engagement to include the various ways Tribes can indirectly shape the stakeholder network through review team participation. Grant types refer to the specific nature of the proposed grant project and includes:

- Land Acquisition
- Monitoring
- Restoration
- Stakeholder Engagement (formerly known as Outreach)
- Technical Assistance
- Water Acquisition

Data Management and Analysis

The data gathered from OGMS was organized to follow the first two tiers of engagement identified in the introduction: grant recipient and grant partner. The quantitative portion did a deep dive into what grant programs Tribes apply for: Open Solicitation, FIP/SIP grants, or Small Grants.

To sort, organize, and analyze the data, Microsoft Excel was used to create a series of Pivot tables. The total number of grants Tribes submitted as lead for Open Solicitation Grants, FIP/SIP grants, and Small Grants were calculated and compared to the quantity of grants other types of OWEB grantees submitted. Part of the OGMS search involved the number of grants submitted by individual Tribes. To find information about partnerships, an OGMS search was conducted for the word "Tribes" in the summary field as a way to identify Tribes that were mentioned as a partner in another applicant's grant application. This information was tallied, and other Pivot tables analyzed the relationship between Tribes and types of grants.

The success rate for all grant applications was calculated by filtering the grant status across all grantee types. Grants that had a status listed in OGMS as complete, open, and monitoring, are considered to be successful, while grants that have a status of not awarded, withdrawn, cancelled, ineligible were considered to be unsuccessful. For some of the searches there were a small number of grants in the pending status and these were not counted as either successful or unsuccessful.

The number of times Tribes were mentioned in a grant project summary, and which Tribe was mentioned were disaggregated and calculated. It was during this process it became clear that level of Tribal participation and engagement with OWEB grants could not be extracted from just the OGMS database. Through interviews we learned more about how Tribes choose to participate and engage with OWEB funding opportunities. Indirect involvement with OWEB grants is difficult to capture in the current database, applicants and recipients do not have a universally standardized way of describing the work Tribes do before, during, and after a grant project. This was noticeable while reviewing data about contributing or match funds Tribes made towards grant projects. However, due to time limitations, matching funds that were contributed by Tribes was not quantified to describe additional projects where they were a contributing partner on a grant.

In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data was collected in order to have a better, more accurate sense of how OWEB funding and grant practices impacts Tribes.

Qualitative Portion

In the qualitative component of the assessment, targeted questions were developed to allow OWEB staff and Tribes the opportunity to speak confidentially and openly about their experiences with OWEB grants, articulate the strategies and conditions that impact how they pursue grants, and allow Tribes the opportunity to offer suggestions on how OWEB can make improvements that will better support the Tribes. One-on-one interviews with OWEB staff and tribal staff were performed to better understand the following:

- if there is anything inherent in OWEB's granting practices (applicant eligibility, application review process, grant administration and reporting requirements) that creates a disadvantage for Tribes to receive OWEB funding
- the approach taken to decide if they should pursue OWEB funding
- if they prefer to be the lead applicant or partner with another organization when applying for OWEB funds.
- how the different OWEB grant program influences the decisions to participate based on the role the Tribes want to have (Open Solicitation grant, Small Grant and FIPs)
- additional administrative or technical obstacles that create barriers or challenges to apply for and receive OWEB funds.

Interviews were conducted either by Zoom meeting or phone call and lasted approximately one hour. From the interview notes, a number of themes and findings were developed. Dispersed throughout the report are quotes from the interviews with Tribal staff. The questions and the responses gathered from Tribes are outlined in the appendix. It is important to note that while the report's appendix includes information from the interviews it does not attribute comments to individuals or Tribes to maintain confidentiality.

Interviews with OWEB Staff

The first part of the qualitative portion of the assessment began with OWEB staff interviews. I spoke with OWEB staff who oversee Open Solicitation, FIP, and Small Grant programs.

The answers provided by OWEB staff contained invaluable information, and educated me about the terminology and language used in watershed management, foundational concepts in natural resource management, clarity around state specific and regional watershed concerns and goals, and provided me with an overview of the other types of project funding available for tribal governments, non-profits, local governments, and institutes for higher learning. From OWEB staff, I gained insight into possible and potential regional differences as well as learned how each grant program operates. These interviews served as a means to provide in-depth context around how the grant-making process at OWEB is conducted and gave me the chance to learn who would be the best point of contact from Tribes to speak with regarding OWEB grants.

Once the OWEB staff interviews were completed, I conducted interviews with the recommended contacts of people who work for the Tribes and are familiar with OWEB grants. For some Tribes I was able to speak with multiple staff whereas for others, I was only able to speak with one staff member. Speaking with staff from the Tribes provided a more complete understanding of how Tribes choose to engage with OWEB, rather than the focus of OWEB's granting practices impacting Tribes in a one-way manner, the answers I received from staff clarified how autonomous the Tribes are and how their participation and engagement with OWEB is deliberate and methodical.

Interviews with Staff from the Tribes

After receiving the contact information for various staff from the Tribes familiar with OWEB grants, I had all interviewees interested in participating sign a consent form as part of the Portland State University student research guidelines to ensure their responses would remain confidential and non-attributable. I also received permission from the interviewees to record the conversation before conducting the interview, allowing me the ability to listen to their responses and accurately document and capture their responses.

A PowerPoint displaying the Excel pivot tables and some early observational notes from the quantitative portion of the assessment were shared with Tribes prior to their interviews. This data helped to shape and direct the conversation. This information provided a framework allowing participants to understand the goals of this assessment and allow them the opportunity to share their thoughts and reflections on the data and use their experiences and the data to guide their responses.

To analyze the responses from Tribes, OWEB staff shared the training they received from Steve Patty Ph.D. and his consulting firm, Dialogues in Action, titled "Project Impact", to develop a technique for consolidating, categorizing, and interpreting the qualitative and quantitative data. This training is designed to help execute practical program evaluation strategy and design.



During each interview, all responses were documented. All respondents answered nine interview questions. After conducting the final interview, the responses for each question were organized by common trends, pervasive qualities, patterns, and differences. These answers were coded on a continuum of similarity and the answer themes that were most commonly expressed were considered significant. This data was mapped based on what from the data appeared to be significant, how issues were discussed, and why there are certain elements enhancing or preventing engagement with OWEB grants.

Listed in the Appendix of the report are the nine questions asked during the interviews and the summarized responses from each interviewee. These responses in the appendix have been randomized to ensure integrity and maintain confidentiality.



The response data was synthesized and sorted into technical, descriptive themes that unified respondents' answers for each question. The themes were generated based upon the dominant features, ideas, and patterns that emerged during the interviews. Themes are considered to be pervasive qualities that tend to permeate and unify situations and objects. However, the representatives from the various Tribes articulated and described their own experiences, which varied dramatically based on their Tribe's watershed management priorities, geographic location, and overall organizational capacity to carry out grant projects. It is important that OWEB staff and board acknowledge individual and unique circumstances each Tribes has as a sovereign nation. A range of two to six themes were developed for each of the questions in the qualitative assessment.



Themes were then synthesized into findings, going from a technical scientific description towards more evocative, memorable lessons, that OWEB staff and board will hopefully be able to utilize in their work moving forward.



The last phase involves incorporating the findings from this assessment into recommendations for OWEB to change or alter their granting practices, or hone in on specific findings and continue to investigate if these are leverage points to improve grant practices or what type of accommodations can be made to avoid, or minimize any difficulties that the Tribes described.

Results

The driving question behind this assessment is to see if there are specific challenges and barriers in OWEB's granting practices that disproportionately prevent Tribes from applying for and receiving grant funds. The first step in the evaluation was to see if there are any

discernable patterns, discrepancies, or irregularities with the amount of grants federally recognized Tribes receive through the OGMS grant database.

The findings below were developed directly from the data gathered from the OGMS database and the shared themes found across the interviews conducted with staff from each of the ten Tribes OWEB works with.

It is important to emphasize that each Tribe has their own perspective and their own unique relationship with OWEB. During this assessment, each tribe's unique thoughts were expressed and recorded accurately, and these results are categorized by similar ideas and themes. These similarities are noted within the findings described below, and they are intended to reflect the individual perspectives of the tribal staff interviewed. In the appendix, all interviewee responses have been documented, and are organized by question.

NOTE: All quotes used in this report came directly from the tribal interviewees and are not directly attributed to the individual or Tribe to retain confidentiality. These quotes are shared in this report to reinforce what was learned and can better articulate what was heard rather than summarizing their words.

Quantity is Not Necessarily an Indicator of Granting Practices Quality



Grant
Recipient

As part of OWEB's granting practices, all applications are reviewed in a highly competitive process that include a large field of eligible applicants: local governments, institutions for higher education, non-profit organizations, city, county and tribal governments. Combing through and analyzing the OGMS data did not reveal conclusive information about specific barriers that impacted

Tribes more than other grantee applicants. Instead, data showed that **Tribes as an aggregate entity have a success rate greater than the mean success rate between all grantee types for the Open Solicitation grant program (see table 2 below).**

- Success is defined as the status = complete, awarded, monitoring, open
- Not successful is defined as the status = cancelled, not awarded or withdrawn
- Watershed Councils, Soil and Watershed Conservation Districts, and Tribes all have a **66% success rate**
- The average success rate for OWEB grant applications is **65%**
- Counties have submitted the same number of applications as Tribes (83) and have a slightly lower success rate (64%)

Rather than viewing infrequent or less engagement as a lead applicant for grants to be indicative of barriers within OWEB's granting practices, it appears as though Tribes as grantees are more selective about the frequency with which they apply for grant funding. It is critical to not consolidate all ten of these Tribes into one entity. Each Tribe is a sovereign, indigenous nation with their own government, and their own strategies and plans for natural resource management and protecting and enhancing water ecosystems.

Table 2. Tribes' success rate when lead applicant for Open Solicitation Grants compared to other OWEB grantee types

| Grantee | Complete | Funded | Monitoring | Open | Pending | Not Awarded | Withdrawn | Cancelled | Ineligible | Total Grant Applications | Successful Grants | Success Rate |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|----------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| City | 45 | | 11 | 4 | | 39 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 109 | 60 | 55% |
| Corporation / Partnership | 423 | 1 | 126 | 111 | 4 | 337 | 41 | 16 | 9 | 1068 | 661 | 62% |
| County | 42 | | 8 | 3 | | 24 | 2 | 4 | | 83 | 53 | 64% |
| Soil & Water Conservation Districts | 945 | | 101 | 119 | | 542 | 22 | 44 | 3 | 1776 | 1165 | 66% |
| Special District | 40 | | 7 | 4 | | 41 | 2 | 1 | | 95 | 51 | 54% |
| Tribes | 35 | | 11 | 9 | | 23 | 1 | 4 | | 83 | 55 | 66% |
| University / School District | 35 | | 3 | 1 | | 29 | | | | 68 | 39 | 57% |
| Watershed Council | 1599 | | 159 | 288 | | 1004 | 25 | 30 | 8 | 3113 | 2046 | 66% |
| Total | 3164 | 1 | 426 | 538 | 4 | 2040 | 99 | 102 | 21 | 6395 | 4129 | 65% |

From looking at this data alone it is difficult to say if barriers towards grants funds are coming from OWEB procedures and requirements. Therefore, using the information from this table, interviewees were asked to think of reasons why Tribes choose to participate or engage with OWEB with less frequency than other grantee types.

Each Tribe is Selective about the Type of OWEB Grants they Pursue

When considering the Tribes individually, there are very stark contrasts between the ten federally recognized Tribes OWEB works with regarding the number of applications submitted and the types of grant programs of interest to Tribes. Noticeably, there have not been any grants where the ***Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians*** or the ***Coquille Indian Nation*** were the lead applicant for an Open Solicitation grant because they have never applied to be the lead for these types of grants. The process for OWEB grants can be rigorous with stringent guidelines. For Tribes with a smaller staff, this additional work is challenging to complete, and because the grant process is competitive, there is no guarantee that the time and effort put into the application will deliver a desirable outcome and get awarded the grant.

Another pattern revealed while analyzing the OGMS data was that Tribes who have applied as the lead applicant for Small Grants are not applying as frequently for Open Solicitation grants, and the Tribes applying for open solicitation grants are not always the same that are applying for small grants, see tables 3 and 5. For example, the Coquille Indian Tribe did not apply as a lead applicant for Open Solicitation grants, but have applied for Small Grants and received that funding. The Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians have only received funding when applying as the lead applicant for Small Grants across all types of grant opportunities, as they were not successful when they applied once for an Open Solicitation Grant. Interestingly, all the Tribes that applied as the lead applicant for a FIP (formerly SIP) Grant, have also applied as a lead applicant for an Open Solicitation Grant, see tables 3 and 7, which may demonstrate a need for increased capacity to pursue these grants.

Technical assistance, monitoring and restoration are the most pursued grant types in the Open Solicitation Grant Program, see table 3. It is important to note that to date, none of the Tribes have applied for water acquisition or stakeholder engagement (formerly known as outreach) grants. Some interviewees noted that land acquisitions would be more appealing without conservation easements as that would provide Tribes more autonomy and self-determination to have the opportunity to convert this land from “fee” to “trust” status with the federal government.

Table 3. The number of Open Solicitation grant applications that Tribes have submitted as the lead applicant by grant type

| Grantee | Type of Grant | | | | Total |
|---|------------------|------------|-------------|----------------------|-----------|
| | Land Acquisition | Monitoring | Restoration | Technical Assistance | |
| Burns Paiute Tribe | | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 |
| Confederated Tribes Warm Springs | | 2 | 27 | 2 | 31 |
| Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde | 3 | | 3 | 2 | 8 |
| Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Confederated Tribes Umatilla Indian Reservation | | 1 | 8 | 4 | 13 |
| Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Nez Perce Tribe | | 3 | 4 | 4 | 11 |
| The Klamath Tribes | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 6 |
| Grand Total | 5 | 12 | 49 | 17 | 83 |

Based on the interviews some Tribes stated that Small Grants may not be worth the administrative requirements for limited funds, but these grants can be useful if there is a very specific project and no other funding available. Small Grants can be easier to handle and implement. A salient proposal from Tribes about the Small Grants program was to increase the amount of funding for this category so that it can be worthwhile for Tribes to apply to Small Grants to implement identified projects or supplement funding from other sources for restoration efforts.

Table 4. Grantee types as the lead applicant for Small Grants

| Grantee Type | Cancelled | Complete | Monitoring | Open | Pending | Total |
|--------------------------------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| City | | 2 | | | | 2 |
| Corporation / Partnership | 1 | 73 | | 1 | | 75 |
| County | | 6 | | | | 6 |
| Landowner | 6 | 392 | | | | 398 |
| Soil and Water Conservation District | 160 | 1232 | 136 | 87 | 1 | 1617 |
| Special District | | 10 | | | | 10 |
| Tribe | | 12 | | 3 | | 15 |
| University / School District | | 7 | | | | 7 |
| Watershed Council | 66 | 927 | 103 | 78 | | 1174 |
| Grand Total | 234 | 2661 | 239 | 167 | 1 | 3304 |

Table 5. Specific Tribes that have applied for Small Grants as the lead applicant

| Tribe | Complete | Open | Total |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Burns Paiute Tribe | 1 | | 1 |
| Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Coquille Indian Tribe | 4 | | 4 |
| Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians | 5 | | 5 |
| The Klamath Tribes | 1 | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 12 | 3 | 15 |

Conversely, Tribes noted that FIPs are attractive because of the size and scale of the projects and how great the impact can be. FIPs can be difficult to manage and have all the partners cooperate, but if facilitated correctly, they are a great funding opportunity. FIP grants can help to build engagement with stakeholders from the ground up.

Table 6. Grantee Types that have submitted applications as the lead applicant in a FIP/SIP

| Grantee Type | Complete | Funded | Monitoring | Open | Not Awarded | Pending | Withdrawn | Cancelled | Total |
|---|------------|----------|------------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| City Corporation / Partnership | 3 | | | 5 | | | | 2 | 10 |
| County | 61 | 3 | 33 | 60 | | 3 | 2 | 32 | 193 |
| Individual Soil and Water Conservation District | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 3 |
| Special District | 13 | | 9 | 38 | | 1 | | 5 | 66 |
| Tribe | | | | 4 | | 1 | | 2 | 10 |
| University / School District Watershed Council | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | 104 | 1 | 17 | 73 | 2 | 3 | | 43 | 243 |
| Grand Total | 186 | 4 | 60 | 184 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 89 | 535 |

Table 7. Specific Tribes that have applied for a grant as the lead applicant in a FIP/SIP

| Tribe | Cancelled | Complete | Open | Pending | Total |
|--|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Confederated Tribes Warm Springs | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation | | | 1 | | 1 |
| The Klamath Tribes | | 3 | | | 3 |
| Grand Total | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 10 |

Each Tribe is Selective about the Source of Funding they Pursue

In both the quantitative and qualitative portions of the assessment, the emphasis of strategic, thoughtful, and deliberate funding strategies was emphasized. OWEB funding is pursued when it aligns with Tribes' strategic goals, if there are no other funding opportunities available, or if administrative capacities are not well-suited for pursuing OWEB grant funding. Federal funds and Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) funds that Tribes are eligible to receive are generally thought to be more consistent, less competitive, award larger dollar amounts, be less onerous, and these funds are more readily available for Tribes than OWEB funds.

All interviewees reported that OWEB funding fills a variety of important needs in the watershed restoration funding field, even if they are not directly applying to OWEB for grants.

Interviewees states that OWEB funding helps provide for match funds for larger projects. OWEB funding is critical towards supporting regional partnerships that Tribes enter by directly funding watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, and other stakeholders. Interviewees believe OWEB funds supplement niche strategy goals especially when federal funding opportunities are tied to specific species, habitats, or geographic location.

Many interviewees felt that working with OWEB helps to establish relationships with private landowners, and allows for greater collaboration in the field with other watershed partners. OWEB is also one of the few non-federal grant programs available, which is important for ensuring that there are a variety of funding sources available to help with watershed enhancement projects across the state.

"OWEB funds work to complement federal or BPA funding and OWEB funding helps to increase the scale and scope of projects."

Tribes reported they often write letters of support for OWEB grant applications that their partners apply for and these grants allow for partners to be in ongoing communication with Tribes.

The overall consensus is that even if they are not utilizing OWEB funds directly, OWEB funding impacts the funding field available for watershed enhancement projects and helps Tribes collaborate on larger projects with more partners.

Strategize First, then Find Grant Funding - It's Primarily about Location

Between all participating Tribes the desire to be the lead applicant on a grant is dependent on where the project is located- if it is on tribal lands or if the area has a high cultural or historical significance to them, they will try to be the lead applicant. A fundamental factor in determining whether Tribes applied as lead applicant is dependent upon where the project is located. If the project is located on tribal land, ceded lands, or any land that has a particular cultural or spiritual significance to the Tribe, each Tribe will be the lead applicant and take on the administrative and technical work to oversee the project.

Another key factor is if the project has a high likelihood of success. Each Tribe has their own unique watershed enhancement strategic plans, goals, and priorities and if the project is critical to those pre-determined strategies, they will apply for the funding and the grant type that best suits their needs.

Other key factors that determine if a Tribe will be the lead applicant for an OWEB grant include:

- Staff time,
- Organizational capacity,
- Project fit,
- Direction from Tribal leadership,
- Species or groups of species involved,
- Ecosystem or habitat of intended project
- and the ability for smooth coordination between collaborators and partners

Throughout the state, Tribes participate with regional stakeholders to plan and conceptualize watershed enhancement framework, goals, and projects. Some Tribes lead these efforts to convene interested stakeholders and others mention actively being recruited to participate in regional planning efforts. Once this happens, different organizations determine and assign projects leads and supporting roles at this early stage of conception and strategy development.

"I would say the majority of project proposals are not opportunistic."

Strategy alignment, relationship to existing work, tribal leadership prioritization, and timing are common factors for pursuing a grant program and project, and this too is usually predetermined by each Tribe's government or council's strategic direction and priorities.

Collaboration Rather than Competition



Grant
Partner

As part of the strategic grant-seeking approach, the staff working for the Tribes recognize that there are funding sources from federal agencies that better suit their needs and are less competitive. Interviewees stated that BPA funding, Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery (PCSRF) funds and other Tribe-specific grant opportunities are often more enticing, consistent, and the application process for these funds is not as onerous on Tribes. Therefore, many interviewees expressed that by limiting their applications for OWEB grants, they create opportunities for their partners and other organizations to pursue a much-needed funding source without creating competition. This allows for regional partners to plan out and align which proposed project ideas should seek out a particular funding source, creating a dynamic and interactive network of projects, partners, and funders.



“We feel OWEB is one of the more progressive state agencies. Yes, we feel involved in other organizations’ projects funded by OWEB and we think other organizations reach out to work with us. Our region’s projects are strong and well-developed because we are selective about which grant applications are submitted to OWEB.”

Another tier of engagement is reflected in how Tribes’ partner with other OWEB grantees. **All Tribes are represented in engaging and accessing OWEB grant funds when taking a closer look at the partners involved in grant projects.** Tribes are mentioned as partners on Open Solicitation grants, Small Grants, and FIP grants. There is full representation of all federally recognized Tribes eligible for OWEB grants when looking into the occurrences where Tribes are specifically mentioned in the Project Summary. However, there is a wide range in the number of grants each Tribe is mentioned.

Table 8. Grant applications where Tribes are listed as a partner in the project summary of another organization’s Open Solicitation Grant application

| Tribes Mentioned as Partners | Count of Project ID |
|---|----------------------------|
| Burns Paiute Tribe | 6 |
| Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs | 106 |
| Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians | 18 |
| Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde | 16 |
| Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians | 22 |
| Confederated Tribes Umatilla Indian Reservation | 44 |
| Coquille Indian Tribe | 4 |
| Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians | 4 |
| Nez Perce Tribe | 35 |
| No Specific Tribe Named | 14 |
| The Klamath Tribes | 11 |
| Grand Total | 280 |

Partnerships are essential in watershed and natural resource management, and strong collaboration and coordination between stakeholder and user groups are necessary for impactful projects. Generally, Tribes will encourage or support other partners to apply for OWEB funds for a variety of reasons. Responses from Tribes described that the applications

deadlines are hard to meet, the grant programs are highly competitive, and this is not guaranteed, and Tribes have limited staff capacity to prepare a competitive grant application. These funds increase engagement, involvement, and collaboration across their regions. OWEB funds encourage other organizations to reach out to Tribes earlier in the project development phase and it serves as an opportunity for Tribes to understand big picture projects happening in their region. OWEB applicants are required in the grant application to indicate when and how they plan to reach out to a partner on a project. This also provides Tribes the opportunity to teach their partners about the importance of cultural resources and culturally significant areas.

“There are very few funding sources outside of federal funds and BPA grants, so OWEB serves as such an asset to provide additional funds for partners like Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Watershed Councils. Plus, OWEB offers grants for certain opportunities that we might also be interested in and then we will apply for the grants directly.”

Resilient Partnerships Develop through Reciprocity and Early Engagement

Most Tribes responded they feel involved to some extent in OWEB projects and feel that other organizations reach out to include them. The engagement from partners works best when it occurs at the onset of a project idea, not part-way through implementation. Partnership engagement that is reciprocal works best. Other organizations need to support the Tribes in their region with their endeavors: offer letters of support, staff time, knowledge, and cash and in-kind match. These high-quality partnerships take time to develop. The ability to collaborate, and co-manage projects are related to being influential in the direction of their region’s watershed management plans.

Engagement can be a double-sided sword. Sometimes partners reach out too frequently and do not recognize that many of the Tribes do not have the capacity or ability to be highly involved in every project, but they also still appreciate being informed. Many Tribes that participated in the interviews felt that it could be difficult to convey to partners the spiritual or cultural meaning behind certain motivations or interests.

There have also been some partnerships that can feel forced or mandated due to the push for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI), but the JEDI push has helped keep Tribes involved. From the responses during the interview process, most Tribes do not feel as though they are regarded as a second thought or hindrance to projects, but feels as though their partners respect and appreciate the knowledge and information they have. Participants in the interviews, felt as though the Tribes have a considerable influence in their region, and the overall consensus is that efforts to improve JEDI have been astoundingly beneficial for each Tribe.

Time, Effort, and Organizational Capacity is Needed to Apply for OWEB Grants

Applying for and managing grants can be time consuming. Many interviewees stated the partners they collaborate with on grant projects often have more time and infrastructure devoted to the act of grant-writing than their Tribe does. Interviewees said that partner

organizations have the resources and have staff dedicated to apply for and secure grant funds. Interviewees also felt that their project partners had the ability to apply and acquire the additional permits needed for large watershed restoration projects.

Interviewees believed their contribution to their partners comes in the form of technical expertise, setting overall strategic goals, writing letters of support, and reviewing and improving existing grant applications.

Influence and Oversight as Powerful Ways to Shape Projects and Goals



Grant Review
Team Member

While speaking with staff from the Tribes, they enthusiastically felt their Tribe’s influence in their region came from their leadership and ability to review other grant proposals, applications, and work collaboratively with partners in an advisory role. There is full representation of all ten Tribes as part of the Small Grants Review Teams. This type of leadership allows each Tribe to offer their opinions, share their knowledge and expertise with others, and understand the full scope of their region’s shared water and ecosystem goals without having to be responsible for the day-to-day management.

Tribal participation is strongly promoted in OWEB’s administrative rules. For example, the Small Grant Program Oregon State Administrative Rules, 695-035-0020 (4), states that “Small Grant Teams, in coordination with OWEB, will invite in writing each soil and water conservation district and watershed council located partially or entirely within the Small Grant Area, and each federally recognized tribe in Oregon, and the Nez Perce Tribe, with reservation, tribal, ceded lands, or usual and accustom areas located partially or entirely within the Small Grant Area to appoint one representative to a Small Grant Team. Participation on a Team is voluntary.”

This advisory and consulting capability is seen as a more ubiquitous influence, and allows Tribes to engage with OWEB and other stakeholders in a more powerful way.

Many of the interviewees felt that their Tribe’s involvement in shaping ideas, guiding and directing regional goals, and agenda setting helped to off-set some of the limitations their Tribe may have in implementing projects such as limited staff capacity, a lack of financial resources to commit to projects, and other perceived hindrances.

“We are knowledgeable leaders in our region and help design, strategize, and prioritize region-wide projects. We review and oversee projects as well. It feels as though the tribal perspective is embedded across projects throughout the region.”

Building resilient and adaptive networks is tantamount for collective action and cooperation. Engagement with OWEB grants can be viewed in a more holistic manner, rather than solely seeing engagement with OWEB through the lens of applying directly for and receiving grants. Engagement is also linked to how OWEB helps facilitate partnerships and maximize resource distribution and access. After speaking with Tribes, each of the interviewees considers their

Tribes' positionality, meaning their Tribes physical and spiritual connection to the project location, and their Tribes' capability to successfully execute deliverables within a project scope. Interviewees said that there are times where the best organization to carry out the work is not them, and they will work to support another organization's leadership if their strengths are best suited for implementing the project.

By strengthening networks, working in partnerships, and considering their strengths and the strengths of their partners, each Tribe serves as regional leaders and conveners while strategically utilizing their funds and funding sources. There is an incentive towards allowing partners to access OWEB as a funding source and for Tribes to help oversee and contribute towards OWEB projects through writing letters of support and offering match contributions, technical assistance and expertise, and other types work.

This does not, however, eliminate OWEB's responsibility to proactively engage with Tribes and continue to improve internal grant making processes and change practices. There are still leverage points in OWEB's granting practice to be more inclusive of Tribes, and ensure that when Tribes submit grant proposals, they are competitive.

History and Geography Matter

The most predominant and pervasive theme from the interview discussions with Tribal staff was how critical it is that history and geography be considered in watershed and natural resource management work. Environmental justice needs to be at the center of this work. The impact of history and geography is constantly being felt and is always relevant in the context of watershed management. The ceded lands and retained rights from the treaties are binding, but often difficult for non-tribal partners to grasp and comprehend the significance of these treaties and the importance of the Tribes' spiritual and moral commitment to care for the water, land, plants and animals. Treaties are not upheld if Tribes are unable to hunt, gather foods, and fish as specified in the treaties, which includes ensuring the ecosystems are supported and healthy in perpetuity.

The history of genocide and displacement is felt and acknowledged by all of the staff working for the ten Tribes eligible for OWEB grants. Many federally recognized Tribes are composed of different bands of people who were displaced and relocated. The genocide of indigenous people has led to a loss of cultural knowledge and connection to the places from where they originally came from. Place based trauma impacts how traditional ecological knowledge is practiced which directly affects conservation and protection.

Tribes have to educate landowners, organizations, state and federal agencies about their historical claims to ceded lands, clarify their reserved and protected rights, and ensure minimum instream flows. This justification can be an additional hurdle and impede field work and prevent projects being done on time. It can be difficult to ensure that Tribes are included in regions where they are not always physically present. There is a strong desire shared between respondents for their Tribe to have a pulse on key areas outside of reservation on ceded lands or just lands with historical significance.

Interviewees note that there has been improvement over the past several years to be more open-minded and understanding about cultural preservation, but it can still be difficult for

Tribes to convince partners to support land acquisitions or other types of water and land management for primarily cultural reasons rather than straightforward restoration and/or conservation.

Compared to other types of OWEB grantees, Tribes have an additional need for due diligence to inspect properties and land that falls outside of their immediate purview and require additional consultation during the grant proposal process to their Tribal councils and government leaders. While this is not necessarily a limitation for Tribes, many interviewees felt this aspect differentiated them from other grantee types and impacts the speed and manner Tribes implement watershed projects.

Part of the services Tribes offer their members, includes participating in cultural practices and events. People can be affiliated with multiple Tribes and be living all across the state and still need to access critical areas for cultural ceremonies and activities and the Tribes utilize and need resources to provide these members with access to particular places and overcome certain restrictions by federal, state or private owners. Many Tribes' historical and cultural heritage sites might span across jurisdictions adding complexity around the availability and ease of access. These additional responsibilities are not typical of other OWEB grantee types, such as watershed councils, but they are significant land management considerations interviewees stated directly impact their internal land management plans, budgets, and bandwidth to carry out other watershed management work.

The Impact of Termination

The ramifications of the Western Oregon Termination Act are ongoing and directly impact the ability of the Tribes that went through termination the ability to influence, manage, and steward lands. Several participants noted during the interview that the granting data that was shared with them was fascinating but not terribly surprising. When probed as to why this data was not revelatory, respondents noted that the impacts of The Western Oregon Termination Act are visible in the data. Tribes that went through termination and restoration of federal recognition faced difficulties that have altered their Tribes' internal capacity to execute natural resource management. Many of these Tribes, in addition to losing federal recognition, lost access and control of their treaty protected lands and access to their ceded lands and reserved treaty rights including where they were allowed to gather foods, hunt, fish, and access water. During the time between losing federal status and regaining it, many Tribes either sold their land to help their economies or their land was once again taken, making their current land base noncontiguous.

It is difficult to manage noncontiguous lands and have the same impact as watershed projects on contiguous lands. Within divided land parcels there may be upstream issues that can lead to more issues downstream and Tribes on noncontiguous land may be unable to access headwaters for conservation work. Termination of federal recognition left some Tribes without their reservation lands and had to gain them back, leading to burdensome controversies with private landowners or other federal entities when trying to hunt, fish, and gather foods in traditional and accustomed ways.

When working with Tribes, OWEB staff need to be aware that there are places that hold deep, spiritual connections for more than one Tribe. Boundaries regarding notable cultural places are not always clear. There are certain areas that hold significance to multiple Tribes and it is often difficult to agree on who gets to steward and manage watersheds in these regions. This knowledge can help ensure OWEB staff and review team members engage in conversations with Tribes across regions before awarding a grant to fund a project that may impact the management of a culturally significant site.

Geography Can Lead to Differences in Available Funding Opportunities

Due to various funding opportunities, Tribes with land along the Columbia River Basin have access to additional funding sources helping to enhance their Tribes' influence in their region. The Tribes who live in the Columbia River Basin have additional capacity because of BPA funding, in coastal basins, and other locations where there are salmon. Locations further away from the Columbia River Basin and areas without salmon runs are not able to access the same types of federal grants.

"Access to BPA dollars can be tricky, but through tributaries we can make it work, but due to the geographic boundaries it can be tricky to find funders for specific work"

"Along the Columbia River using a combination of OWEB and BPA funding ensures projects can be well managed and well executed. OWEB funds are a significant help. They help to scale and enhance the scope of projects."

Additionally, there are Tribes closer to public lands and are able to co-manage watershed projects with federal agencies and these opportunities lead to consistent partnerships and project continuity.

Resource Distribution and Regional Population Impact Potential for Watershed Management

The intersection of geography and history is felt regularly, but hard to capture through quantitative data. For some tribes their office location and field offices may be very far from area of cultural and historical significance because they are located on ceded lands. The drive time and capacity needed to properly oversee certain properties can be taxing on staff. Even though it is part of their cultural and historical territories, Tribes may not be able to directly manage those lands because of logistics.

Tribes within largely populated areas have unique watershed challenges when it comes to finding the space to accomplish project work as well as potential contamination and pollution, but with more people comes additional opportunities for partnerships, financial resources, and staffing availability. Tribes in more rural parts of the state may have difficulties recruiting or retaining qualified staff, having the financial resources available on hand to address complex issues, and encounter challenges with consumptive water or vegetation issues. Tribes in more rural regions have closer access to public lands managed by BLM, the National Forest Service or other federal or state agencies.

Opportunities for Future Investigation

While conducting the quantitative portion of this research, the tiers of engagement model challenged the conventional approach OWEB had for assessing their granting practices impacts on Tribes. In trying to gather data around ways the Tribes participate as partners, it was difficult to pull reports that showed partnerships; for example, details of the grant summaries were inconsistent. The word “Tribe” was sometimes mentioned in a project summary, but there was no specific Tribe listed as a partner. It was also challenging to query the OGMS database to find information regarding the frequency with which Tribes contribute or serve as a match for project funds.

Capturing this type of data could be useful for future research to see the partnerships formed within OWEB’s grantee network. Tracking the way partners write letters of support or match funds would allow there to be more data on how reciprocal the partnerships between organizations are. Additionally, OWEB could examine match, both cash and in-kind, and have this information documented on grants in OGMS so that the contributions Tribes make towards other grantee projects can be documented and this type of Tribal participation can be added as another tier of engagement.

Another avenue to explore around the discrepancies in tribal participation in OWEB grant programs would be to examine how Tribal capacity and other grantees’ capacity varies across each of the six OWEB regions.

Existing Barriers on Tribes’ Engagement with OWEB Grants

During the interview, when asked about specific barriers or challenges, interviewees expressed several concerns about where there are issues in OWEB’s current granting practices:

1. OWEB’s language used in conservation easements can hinder placing land from “fee” into federal “trust” status. Which would allow greater sovereign management of a parcel of land. This language can signal a lack of confidence towards the Tribes to manage these lands over the long term and can feel paternalistic. Tribes would like to access land acquisition funds for habitat protection without OWEB holding a conservation easement on those lands.
2. Match funding requirements can be challenging and burdensome to meet.
3. There is confusion and uncertainty about applying the federally negotiated indirect rate to estimate grant administration expenses when developing budgets in grant applications. Some Tribes are under the impression that federally negotiated indirect rates for Tribes are above what OWEB allows for grant agreements. OWEB can’t accept outdated indirect rates and it takes time for Tribes to negotiate a new indirect rate with the federal government, so many Tribes have an outdated indirect rate.
4. Reporting on OWEB, PCSRF, and ODFW funds can be confusing and cumbersome.
 - a. When issues have occurred, Tribes impacted by this dilemma felt that OWEB had unduly placed the responsibility onto Tribes to revise the reporting metrics despite Tribes not being aware of the specific reporting issues.

5. There are Measure 76 requirements that have not been well articulated to Tribes, and it can be difficult to get a complete and accurate understanding of the State's constitutional requirements and definitions of what can and cannot be funded regarding natural resource management and cultural preservation.
6. Staff from Tribes need additional time to work with their leadership. Interviewees are uncertain if OWEB staff factor this consideration into their work.

These six areas warrant additional investigation and ongoing conversation between OWEB and Tribal staff and leadership.

Recommendations from the Staff Working at the Tribes Eligible for Funding on Ways to Improve

Below are the most salient recommendations from the qualitative interviews with Tribes:



Administrative

- Clarify eligible expenses included in grant funds and clarify that staff time is allowed to be included in grants.
- Incorporate tribal participation in grant application evaluation and project ranking criteria.
- Include project ranking criteria that is meaningful to the Tribes and honors tribal knowledge and expertise.
- Increase the amount of funds that can be requested in the Small Grant Program.



Communication

- Host and fund more opportunities for staff from both Tribes and OWEB at all levels to connect and have discussions together at annual meetings.
- Pursue opportunities to help OWEB staff and review team members be aware there are locations that hold significance to multiple Tribes.
- Reflect upon and recognize the impacts of history and geography on federally recognized Tribes' strategic plans.
- Utilize OWEB's position, influence, and resources to discuss re-occurring natural resources and watershed issues that are important to Tribes with other state agencies.
- Provide regular communication with OWEB staff and Tribes to discuss grant program eligibility and application timelines.
- Look to other states for ideas about innovative ways of offering grants.



Legal

- Make a portion of the grant funds available specifically for Tribes
- Provide funding opportunities specifically encouraging the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge to help revive and continue cultural connection to specific locations.
- Include language in the grant agreements that is specific for Tribes to make it easier for Tribal council and leadership to confidently sign the agreement.



Capacity

- Provide grant writing training for the Tribes specifically or pay for staff to attend training sessions on grant writing and using specific systems like OGMS.
- Provide staff from Tribes additional time to work with their leadership to approve grant applications before being submitted.

These recommendations provide ample opportunity for OWEB to consider how they might modify their granting practices to be more inclusive of Tribes. One to consider is the possibility of Tribe-specific grant opportunities. While speaking with staff from Tribes, many interviewees reiterated that the OWEB grant process is highly competitive. Tribes do not want to jeopardize partnerships with other organizations to pursue the same grant funding. Tribes with smaller staff felt pursuing OWEB grants was not the most effective use of their limited resources. As they could directly and indirectly benefit from allocating their time, knowledge, and resources elsewhere and better support their partners.

Interviewees felt that if OWEB were to evaluate and re-examine the laws and policies concerning conservation easements and Measure 76 funding limitations it would help to incentivize more participation from Tribes who are not capable or interested in navigating those legal hurdles. If the practice and implementation of these laws and policies cannot be changed, OWEB could provide at a minimum easy to access information listing how to best support Tribes encountering these challenges and work together closely to find a way to move forward on grants or projects.

Lastly, investigating possible solutions for match funding and federally indirect cost rate requirements could provide an opportunity for OWEB to be a more equitable funder. This is also an opportunity for OWEB to continue to discuss various federal reporting challenges and the best way to work around these reporting requirements.

Final Notes

Throughout the interviews, participants each expressed positive experiences working with OWEB and for staff that have been working in their position for many years. All noted that there have been improvements made over the years. They also noted that OWEB staff is accessible and available for conversations and questions.

“OWEB’s continuous improvement mentality is wonderful and we really appreciate it.”

“Overall, I have been satisfied with OWEB as an agency, and appreciate their work and hope they continue to be clear and transparent.”

Appendix

Below are the questions and responses from the interviews held with staff representatives from the ten Tribes who work with OWEB. All identifiers have been removed to ensure tribal anonymity. All responses will remain anonymous to as part of a confidentiality agreement established with all participants, and any information that would identify either a specific person or Tribe has been redacted. It is important to clarify that each of the ten Tribes interviewed is unique in their watershed restoration management and while similarities have been organized together to develop the themes and guide the results, the goal of this assessment is not to group each Tribe together, this assessment recognizes that no one Tribe can speak for another.

Question 1- How would you characterize your Tribe's and other Tribes' influence in your region?

| Tribe | Responses (summarized) |
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| 1. | I think our influence is pretty extensive, it is important that you understand the history and there is a significant impact if you are part of a treaty tribe vs an executive order tribe. Treaty Tribes have protected access to ceded lands to practice traditional ceremonies and hunt and gather in usual and accustomed manners. The reservation and the ceded lands offer us to have influence over this region and there is a lot of collaboration between partners in this area. Being along the Columbia River we are eligible to access to BPA which helps us do large scale restoration work with partners. There are lots of partnerships in the region with districts and councils. |
| 2. | I would say we are influential because we focus on land restoration. We have a long history of managing and stewarding these lands, but the loss of federal recognition impacted our ability to manage the land and access parts of the watershed. We have regained the rights from the original treaty, but it can be difficult to ensure it is upheld and honored. We have reservation lands where our influence is the greatest and we are once again present on the ceded lands and with the re-recognition many partners and other leaders are becoming more and more aware of the knowledge we have and our influence has grown. |
| 3. | The Tribes are an influential partner with land and water management in this basin. We co-manage and work closely with the federal government on federal lands, we receive federal grants that allow this work to move forward. The Tribe was terminated but has since been restored and treaty rights are recognized, this has been hard to overcome but overtime we have developed strong partnerships. |
| 4. | Our influence can be seen in the quality of our partnerships and committee involvements. We work closely with the watershed districts. We are knowledgeable leaders in our region and help design, strategize, and prioritize region-wide projects. We review and oversee projects as well. It feels as though the tribal perspective is embedded across projects throughout the region. |

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| 5. | I think the Tribe has a huge influence, especially on the reservation and the ceded lands. The Tribe's historical territory is throughout the Columbia Basin. I also feel as though the Tribe is heavily involved in partnership projects, not just collaborating, but helping to shape ideas early on. We are also part of review teams. |
| 6. | The first treaty reduced the land base followed by another treaty that also diminished and reduced the Tribes' land, but now there is a process to submit claims and access exclusive use area and retain the fishing and hunting rights outlined in the original treaty. The Tribe has a strong partnership with the Forest Service and have a strong influence as co-managers with lots of partners and other Tribes. |
| 7. | The Tribes have ancestral territory in a basin that is not near our reservation, where we are allowed to oversee and help with managing the area by sitting on boards and through strong partnerships with others in the field like NGOs, federal and state agencies. We get to do work in two basins that are very important for cultural reasons. |
| 8. | We always have a seat at the table when it is time to plan upcoming projects, but we can't always take advantage of that offer. We rely on our partners to keep us aware of things that are happening when we can't be there, but our influence in the region is really strong, it is just we can't always be the ones doing the work. |
| 9. | When the tribe was terminated, our influence in the was small and so was our department of natural resources. Our ancestral lands overlap with other Tribes and when many bands of other Tribes were being re-located, they became part of our nation so there are many folks who have historical ties to land on the other side of the state. We have strong ties to a basin that is not part of our reservation and we have noncontiguous lands which make our influence dispersed, and we rely on our partners to keep us included in the regions where we are not always physically present for, and the partners do an excellent job. Our treaty rights were not consistently recognized for many years, we were terminated and there were issues with restoration of our rights, but we are working to become more active in the region. We have done incredible work and have a lot of knowledge and people in our region respect what we have to say and the direction we may want certain projects to go in. |
| 10. | We have lots of watershed partners and I would say that we are influential in the region along with other Tribes. Culture is so important to how the land is managed. Water is life and I believe that all of us have the same goals, which is to protect and preserve these important places and resources. Deliberate and inclusive measures and efforts are made by our partners but we are small and can't always participate in all of the watershed councils, but federal and state agencies come to Tribes to seek input in planning, sometimes it may be a little, but as people begin to think more about diversity and inclusion, we become more involved earlier on in the process, which is beneficial to everyone. |

Question 2- How do you pursue or utilize OWEB funding to accomplish their long-term watershed restoration strategies?

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | OWEB is a true competitive grant. BPA grants, PCSRF grants are more consistent for us. We are part of a FIP review team and help with strategy development. We need to balance the quantity and the quality of the grant projects we take on. We also want to support other organizations in our region to understand what’s going on in the field. We try to apply for grants that fit with our strategy. BPA funds and Forest Service funds are larger than OWEB funding, but OWEB dollars can be used to tie projects together in the region and spread out the scope of work. Working with partners leads to better projects and OWEB funds help those partners. OWEB could also maybe help work with private landowner cooperation. |
| 2. | Yes, OWEB funding helps with collaboration in the region and can fit into our overall strategy for management plans. We typically support other entities with their OWEB grants. The process can be onerous and if our partners are able to do that work, we can focus on other projects and support their projects as needed and offer counsel. OWEB is an important state agency able to disperse resources, so I would hate to see BPA funding always be used in lieu of BPA funding or something like that. |
| 3. | OWEB is an important source of match funding for other programs like BPA, Fish and Wildlife Services, Bureau of Reclamation. One of the few non-federal grants available. But it’s very competitive with NGOs and other partners. |
| 4. | OWEB funding can help advance goals and help with the goal of having functional floodplains at a technical and program level. The FIP includes monitoring and technical assistance and evaluation work. We fit in OWEB funding based on our need and are not opportunistic when applying for grants. |
| 5. | We use NOAA and PCSRF for the subbasin as a top priority, so OWEB is not our main priority, but being involved at the technical advisory level, the review team, and board levels is more important to us than receiving an OWEB grant directly. We can use the time to write letters of support for partners, contract with the watershed council so they can do the work to get the permits, grants, other logistics and then we can focus on specific projects. |
| 6. | The Tribe has a Department of Natural Resources plan for strategy and implementation funds. OWEB has diverse funding options and a can help with a wide array of projects and very detailed fisheries plan. We use OWEB funds when we need to address all of the fish in the area, right now only some species are tied to funding. |
| 7. | We receive project funding through PCSRF and NOAA. OWEB funds we hope go to our partners and we work with our partners to develop comprehensive strategies early on and try to work together to enhance projects. Tribes in the Western part of the state have a |

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| | smaller land base and so I think we work with more partners and have more partners available. There are differences between treaty and restored Tribes that impacted how we can access important lands. OWEB funds are limited and competitive. PCSRF dollars are easier, so we think it is more strategic and we get a larger return on investment. We are often used as a match for partnership projects with OWEB funding. |
| 8. | OWEB grants help with upland management. BPA funding helps with habitat work, Natural Resources Conservation Service helps to support with properties and we often partner with the National Forest Service for other funds. |
| 9. | More money is available through federal agencies. All grants that we apply for are based on our internal capacity to apply for grants as well as carry the projects. Monitoring money from OWEB is important and we often work with partners to write proposals so they can receive the funds. |
| 10. | We work with watershed councils and help them receive OWEB funds through our letters of support and stay engaged in the FIP. OWEB funds can be utilized for riparian fish restoration and this fulfills an important need. |

Question 3- How do OWEB grants impact the funding field available for Tribes? Does it help implement larger projects or help Tribes collaborate with a larger group of partners?

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | Yes, OWEB offers additional funds for partnership projects, but OWEB grant applications are more competitive. Along the Columbia River using a combination of OWEB and BPA funding ensures projects can be well managed and well executed. OWEB funds are a significant help. They help to scale and enhance the scope of projects. Our FIP is a great example of this and it has unified partners in our region. Really great for restoration. |
| 2. | Yes, existing partnerships are enhanced and applications are done together and planned ahead of time. OWEB applications help build Tribes into the planning process. This can sometimes feel like a checkbox that folks must do, but when partners are engaging sincerely it increases how our region improves. If we give a letter of support, we expect to have ongoing communication regarding the project post award, but it has helped with critical cultural area protection, In the past, organizations didn't reach out to us ahead of time and it cost them. |
| 3. | As our capacity for grant writing increases, we hope to use more OWEB funding. projects. OWEB is one of the few non-federal sources available. Right now, OWEB grants are a little too competitive and we would rather our partners work and apply for them and provide support to their grant projects. When we don't apply for OWEB grants, we are not |

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| | competing with our partners for the same grant funds. OWEB funding helps to prioritize basin-wide work. |
| 4. | OWEB funds help leverage large scale restoration work and can work alongside BPA funding to fill in gaps and have flexibility for meeting budget needs on individual Cost share outside of BPA, especially for projects outside of BPA's interests. |
| 5. | Yes, there is an emphasis on partnerships. OWEB assists with getting to work with private land owners involved with monitoring and restoration. Monitoring is an important part of OWEB funds. It adds another funding source to consider. Funding for technical assistance and restoration can be hard to find. We track all funding sources available and match them to our upcoming, potential projects. Uplands restoration money is hard to find |
| 6. | For ambitious plans there needs to be a whole suite of efforts and funding sources available to do that. |
| 7. | Yes, definitely a core funding source that leverages projects for partners and they are critical funds for drawing in other funds into larger projects. It solidifies the base of partners for example we may use federal funds and partners use OWEB funding. |
| 8. | Yes, for watershed restoration work having more funds and more reasons to work collectively has no downsides. We work often with the Bureau of Land Management and on state lands (cattle rights) through ODFW to re-vegetate and these partnerships are possible through funding options. |
| 9. | Yes, OWEB funding helps partnerships because it adds to the pot available. Funding natural resource work is tough and any funds dedicated to this work is needed. |
| 10. | Yes, I think it helps in the field. The Small Grants help with specific, targeted projects but we generally pursue federal funding because it is more cyclical, consistent and less competitive, but OWEB grants can be used to help build up Tribes' internal capacity. |

Question 4- How are you involved in other grantee projects funded by OWEB? Do you think other grantee organizations are reaching out to Tribes when developing projects- why or why not?

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | We feel OWEB is one of the more progressive state agencies. Yes, we feel involved in other organizations' projects funded by OWEB and we think other organizations reach out to work with us. Our region's projects are strong and well-developed because we are selective about which grant applications are submitted to OWEB. |
| 2. | Yes, and yes, other organizations reach out to work with us and we reach out to other organizations. |

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| 3. | We write letters of support and I feel like we have other organizations reach out to us for good reasons. |
| 4. | OWEB FIPs have helped the sub basin develop strong partnerships. Sometimes lots of partners can be a mixed bag when coming together for a project but generally it provides good structure for long-lasting relationships. We have strict standards for giving out letters of support to ensure the other projects align with spiritual mission of protecting the landscape and the purpose is holistic. Sometimes the spiritual significance can be hard to convey to partners. |
| 5. | Yes, the watersheds in our region engage frequently and meaningfully. We can't always be a partner or involved due to limitations on our side with internal capacity or not enough staff, etc. |
| 6. | Yes, we feel very involved in other grantee's projects. We try not to be in direct competition with our partners which is why we don't always apply for OWEB funds. However, sometimes the engagement from partners can be inauthentic. |
| 7. | Yes, I feel like there is genuine outreach from other OWEB grantee organizations. Sometimes though we wish they would reach out sooner or contact us in the initial stages, but sometimes we are not available to be involved. |
| 8. | Our partners depend on OWEB funds and there is an uphill curve for understanding quality partnerships- they take time. Partners need to reciprocate and allocate their funds and money when we need assistance. However, DEI efforts are working and it is good but sometimes the Tribe's capacity is not always considered. |
| 9. | We have excellent partners and we feel involved them and aware of OWEB projects. We partner primarily with BLM and the Forest Service and they are great about getting us involved early. |
| 10. | We participate and feel involved with OWEB through working with the watershed councils and partners are very eager to work with us. Sometimes the relationship with OWEB feels paternalistic and we feel like there is not always true co-management. There's a power imbalance between partners and it can be frustrating to have them dictate how Tribes manage land and use money. We are less likely to apply and receive OWEB funds directly because they're competitive and our partners will also apply for them. |

Question 5- What are the factors you consider when determining if your Tribe should be a lead applicant or a partner on an application to pursue OWEB funds (i.e., Open Solicitation grants, FIPS, Small grants)?

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | The biggest factor is if it is a project on our lands and we will be the lead then, and if there are projects where we want more control. |
| 2. | Small Grants can support large projects. We will take the lead on a grant application if it is on tribal land or if the area is culturally significant. It can be an administrative burden to be the lead on a grant project if the parcel of land is not culturally significant or if it not on tribal lands. |
| 3. | We are the lead applicant in areas significant to the Tribe and as a partner we look at the letter of support requests. We like to consider if the area is critical and if there is no one else there doing work. Monitoring responsibilities can also influence if we are the lead or not depending on what we have going on. The Tribe has its own priorities and if the project is on reservation land, we would take the lead. Throughout the basin we partner well with other organizations and have close coordination. We also like to consider the likelihood of success and if it looks likely, we will be the lead. The Tribe would like to be more active in land acquisition projects of properties they'd like to own. We also consider the Tribal council's strategic goals and how well a grant project aligns with it or not. |
| 4. | With our core partners and long-term collaborators, we build in who leads a specific effort/project. We choose to be the lead if it is critical to our internal goals otherwise, we leverage partnerships and offer to help others. We try to be judicious about our applications. |
| 5. | Our region plans early on with all of the stakeholders about taking the lead on various efforts. We do it when it is the most logical. |
| 6. | We consider project location, staff time, capacity, project fit, direction from tribal leadership before applying for a grant. Small Grants are easier to handle and implement. |
| 7. | It depends on what tribal leadership would like to see happen, our ability as a limited staff to do the work, other projects we are currently involved with and leading. Tribes are sovereign nations and have their own governments and the priorities for the DNR are high, but everything is taken into consideration. |
| 8. | The size of the grant is not a factor for us we primarily don't want to compete with watershed councils. OWEB seems to offer limited funds outside of monitoring and restoration. |
| 9. | It depends on the scenario what the project involves dictates if we are the lead or not. For example- it is easier to plan for a project where there are annual or consistent things done so we can better predict the cost of the project or what staffing requirements or overhead costs are involved. Time to do the project work as well as the administrative work is another factor. We have limited staff and resources so we try to be selective. If the project is happening on land valuable to the Tribe that would take priority. |

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| 10. | We consider where the project will happen then the ecosystem relationship- how does this project impact the ecosystem it is in and how can we understand the impacts of the project down the road or on other habitats? Project coordination capabilities, cost, and capacity are also very important considerations as well as tribal council and the pace the project needs to be. |
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Question 6- What are the factors you consider when deciding which OWEB grant programs (i.e., Open Solicitation grants, FIPS, Small grants) to pursue?

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | FIPs are attractive because of the size and scale of projects, as well as the chance to work with so many partners and develop regional clarity and goals. Everyone starts from the ground up and it builds engagement. |
| 2. | When invited, we enjoy being part of FIPs. I also discuss with tribal leadership and my team the Open Solicitation options as a group and see if any of those funds make sense for a project we have in mind, but this is not done too often |
| 3. | Out of the options we focus on the Open Solicitation grants like monitoring and restoration to avoid working with private landowners |
| 4. | We think about our grant writing capacity as the main factor with OWEB grant programs and think if there is a partner who could do the work. Our agency can't do it all. |
| 5. | If the grant program looks like it fits with our current strategy and we have a project in mind that isn't already paired or part of a federally funded project we would consider Open Solicitation or Small Grants. Timing is also a big factor. |
| 6. | (During the interview, this question was combined with question #5 due to meeting time constraints) |
| 7. | (During the interview, this question was combined with question #5 due to meeting time constraints) |
| 8. | Location is a big consideration for us as a factor and the type of project we want to do will impact the size and the type of collaboration needed. Sometimes the feedback on OWEB grant applications can be surprising. The biggest factor for any of the projects we do or grants we apply for come down to the Tribes' interests and moves from there. |
| 9. | For us we develop the project after we think of big picture goals then we think of the grant we need to get it done. We also consider how it relates to existing work. |

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| 10. | (During the interview, this question was combined with question #5 due to meeting time constraints) |
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Question 7- How does history and/or geography impact your tribe’s capacity to implement watershed restoration? [This question is intentionally open-ended, feel free to describe your Tribe’s capacity and how that may be based on where they are located or what has happened historically.]

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | <p>We are immensely impacted by geography. The Tribe covers important grounds in the state connected to the Cascades and the Columbia River. When there is drought, we are heavily impacted. Our community has aging infrastructure that becomes hard to use and repair which affects fisheries’ success. The reason new infrastructure or better repairs on infrastructure aren’t happening is because of the high costs and also the Tribe has so many priorities- while everyone agrees the fishery is important, so is having clean water and that takes precedence. These conversations are difficult to have and it takes time to build trust. There is a long history of state agency’s ignoring treaties and reserved rights, and the federal gov agencies say we’re equal but there’s a huge power imbalance. We are invited to tables but we don’t get to set them. There is tension over ceded lands in the basin. This area is huge and requires all partners to cooperate and participate. Some counties are harder to work with than others but all users care about these issues- it’s all very personal. Building trust with organizations and private landowners is hard, and their private landowners can have anti-government feelings with other agencies or not want to work with us because of discrimination. The discrimination is part of the history but also still exists.</p> |
| 2. | <p>Geography and history impact everything. A small example is our office location and proximity to projects- it can be tough to do the work we want to see happen on ceded lands that are far from our offices on the reservation because our staff needs the resources to be able to go to these places and do work, and that’s additional money. The cultural and spiritual significance of many places is not just history but something always present and it is difficult to be removed from those places and have to advocate for access or get permits. We have interest in areas that may not be obvious but because of our history there, we are invested in its protection but we don’t have the ability to do the work because of capacity restraints. We want to make sure that even if a property is far away that we will manage it well and not have it wither away. Access to BPA dollars can be tricky but through tributaries we can make it work, but due to the geographic boundaries it can be tricky to find funders for specific work. This area is very populated and this means more organizations and funders available, but also tougher issues.</p> |

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| <p>3.</p> | <p>The Tribes historically had the Reservation in the basin which gave them control over land and water management. That went away when the reservation was lost. However, the Tribes retained their water rights associated with hunting, fishing, and gathering on the historic reservation. The Tribes have a responsibility to protect, restore, and steward tribal treaty resources including plants, wildlife, and fisheries. The Tribes have good working relationships with the state and federal agencies and have input on watershed restoration on state and federal lands and water projects. We do not have good relations with private landowners that have been impacted by the Tribes water calls. Our habitat restoration program is small (one restoration project manager) and only existed for a few years. Now there are several other restoration entities to help coordinate the work and serve as a cooperative type of leadership, but the Tribes have had to handle other government issues before DNR. The Tribes’ attuned to protect and enhance health of watershed. We have influence over the management of restoration, but the history of the region can’t be overlooked or forgotten.</p> |
| <p>4.</p> | <p>The Tribes have the ceded areas and the reservation within the Columbia River basin and we have access to BPA dollars which brings flexibility with agreements, salmon policy levels, and this area is protected and co-managed with the federal government. This gives us the capacity from a funding side to hire and have highly technical people hired by tribe so we have the ability to complete solid applications and great work. There’s difficulty in other locations is due to capacity funding. If you can’t support staff hard to get a volunteer to write application to get project on the ground. Our DNR admin ability is strong- The Tribe did not go through termination and the tribal government capacity is somewhat strong and a large governmental staff.</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>All of the areas we oversee are equally important. We were displaced in the 1860s through forced removal and onto reservation lands. This greatly shapes where our influence has been over time. In addition to working towards accessing lands and doing grant projects, we also have to educate folks, our own people and others about the history and connection and spiritual essence to these places. It’s extra work. We have multiple offices and it can feel disjointed. Water is huge and there are lots of irrigators that impact fisheries. Using a science-based approach rooted in traditional knowledge is critical, especially during monitoring and the landscape shows that our knowledge has been missing, but it is returning.</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>Historically the treaty was signed in the 1850s and then about 100 years later the Western Oregon Indian Termination act was signed and federal recognition was lost and even more resources were lost it wasn’t until more recently did the Tribe regain federal recognition. This directly impacted our ability to oversee and manage lands and fundamentally have an identity as a people. The land base in not contiguous, Congress has had to return land that was previously BLM land and logistically difficult to take on big restoration projects without the internal staff and resources. Because</p> |

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| | <p>the land is non-contiguous we are not always at the headwaters and being downstream of structures has downstream impacts. We have an additional level of due diligence when working on certain parcels. Could not do Stage 0 work because there wasn't a large enough parcel and in populated area.</p> |
| 7. | <p>Historically, the Tribe used to own and manager more land than they do now. The landscape would look differently if tribe owned what they once did- extrapolating that out to contracts would be more money coming in to do more work, geography might impact staff ability and cost of gas amount of driving of living in rural area. However, we have access to larger parcels of land and that helps us and most landowners are cooperate and we partner regularly with BLM or the Forest Service. Stage zero work- fewer people may make it easier.</p> |
| 8. | <p>In terms of geography, it can be a challenge having all the members of the Tribe be together and take part in culturally important events like hunting, fishing, gathering foods. The DNR ensures that the culture is preserved through these traditions and practices. Our department needs assistance with cultural preservation and make sure people across the state access these activities and traditional knowledge. The ability to access culturally important resources, specifically accessing natural resources is very important and that importance is difficult to explain because it goes into the realm of spiritual. It is easier to have people come onto properties to gather food and that's less controversial than hunting, and whenever we bring people out and they're excited to step on acquired land. We are interested in acquiring land and restoration for cultural resources that not may be an interest of our partners. Review teams want to know if there are things like Coho there, etc., but that may not always be our top priority. For areas that we are not physically close to but have a historical and cultural legacy in the area we want to keep a pulse on the activities there and usually offer letters of support and speak with other natural resource teams to know what is happening there.</p> |
| 9. | <p>For geography, we manage non-contiguous parcels and it can be difficult to manage and the reason we have non-contiguous land access is because of past policies and history. National forests lands in our region also protect riparian areas but they are able to generate revenue from their services per capita, and for us we have to provide service for the Tribe without the same type of revenue. The impact of genocide and forced removal and combining disparate bands of Tribes from across the state and lots of history has been lost overtime. Place-based trauma has repercussions and the way we move past it is through re-connecting with our history and culture and the way we do that is through activities like gathering basket materials. These events are healing for us and allow us to practice ecological restoration as well. When we gather materials to make baskets it is done in reciprocal, ecologically beneficial ways.</p> |

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| 10. | A lot to say- historically this community has had its land taken and was then abandoned when the treaty rights were ignored and because a lot of the land was taken away it caused problems. The tribe had trouble continuing their way of life. This is why environmental justice is so important it is about restoring the ecosystem, including the people who live here. Geographically, there is a lot of land we have ancestral ties to, alongside neighboring Tribes, that we are all interested in using. There are many people in this region affiliated with more than one Tribe and the physical boundaries we have now are not the same as they used to be, but it is hard to go back. Working with agency partners like the Forest Service and BLM to access public lands and we are working with them and other entities to talk about issues like damming and dredging. |
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Question 8- Are there are any administrative or technical obstacles that create barriers that prevents you from applying for OWEB grants? If so, do you have any recommended solutions to address these barriers? [Hoping to develop recommendations about where the weight points are in process for grants]

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | An administrative obstacle for us is the rule about the indirect rate- we've had trouble with the federally negotiated indirect rate so we have to handle and incur administrative charge to have additional help with processing and can't get funds from OWEB right now because there is no current indirect rate. |
| 2. | Funds get dispersed widely throughout the Columbia Basin and not targeted to all the habitat components downstream of the dams. Fish passage in our region is still a primary goal and sometimes that is hard to do when piecing together the puzzle piece of grants. If there was a way grants could be less competitive that would help significantly. |
| 3. | I have only applied a couple times- not very experienced for doing OWEB grants, I usually apply for federal grants. Tribal specific programs are easier and more successful to apply for those- less competition. Some people are very savvy and experienced at applying for grants and are more successful at preparing proposals. It takes a lot of time and energy can be put into grant proposal prep work. OWEB does not have any tribe-specific prioritizations. OWEB applications are more onerous in terms of requirements and the review process is more rigorous than other grant programs, which is understandable when so many potential parties are interested in the funds. OWEB's process is transparent and well documented, they give good guidance, I would like to see opportunity for tribal specific grants funds. Sovereign immunity and the state does have tribal trust obligations and make it more unique as a state stakeholder. More state provided training on how to put successful application together. When asked, OWEB always offers help and they are very accessible and provide feedback. OWEB could support through advocacy and political means. |

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| 4. | <p>Largest hurdle- meeting the indirect rate for OWEB – right now there’s no solution but we’ve created our own solution. Most Open Solicitation grants are contract related- funding portions/parts of sub contracts to avoid overhead and indirect costs otherwise we couldn’t compete. More clarity around reporting requirements. We use to go after more grants (pre FIP) but got tired of hurdles and the time it took to apply. Still onerous compared for federal programs and the Columbia basin fish program- theirs is automated and easier to prepare and keep track of. The large projects in FIP make administrative hurdles worth it, but it wouldn’t be worth it for smaller grant amounts. It is wonderful that OWEB has specific monitoring grants- not many programs fund monitoring- even BPA has cut back on those funds. So, OWEB grants have been worth the effort. Sometimes it feels like being an employee, when we fill out applications and reports, sometimes the way OWEB asks for things like how to report metrics, can be frustrating. It’s tricky because if we don’t fix things as OWEB wants, there’s the expectation that if you don’t do what they ask you may lose your funding. OWEB could assign line items for billing for records or how to report temperatures in a monitoring project, knowing the formatting requirements ahead of time would be useful and save us time, cost, and aggravation.</p> |
| 5. | <p>OWEB applications can be time consuming. It would be easier if OWEB streamlined the process for Tribes or organizations that have applied for multiple grants, but even though they’re lengthy they’ve improved and changed over time. They’re approaching the balance between thorough and concise. If there could be simpler ways to report for OWEB grants that overlap with PCSRF and NOAA funding that would be wonderful.</p> |
| 6. | <p>It would be nice if there were a pot of money for just Tribes- it is difficult to be competing with partners. Our experience with Small Grants has been positive. An issue has happened regarding the federally negotiated indirect costs rate- max at 10% with OWEB. Grants and finance staff navigated this. Measure 76 requirements and reporting are difficult</p> |
| 7. | <p>OWEB grants are competitive and they take time funding opportunities for the Tribes specifically or region-specific grants could help ease the burden.</p> |
| 8. | <p>More feedback for restoration grants, and specific language in the grant agreements done for Tribes would be helpful.</p> |
| 9. | <p>Match grants are a struggle, staff could charge time and materials w/ other funding, funders have restrictions on funding staff. The Indirect rate requirement is an issue- federally negotiated indirect cost rate- preferred rate rather than 10%</p> <p>Depending on the grant it can be difficult to know what you can apply for or if the only funding source and can’t get another (for land acquisition their own rate could make it difficult and we would need additional funding)</p> |
| 10. | <p>OWEB gives equal opportunities to anyone who qualifies which is good. Some limiting factors- the administrative burden of the grants, difficult to know when or how the grants</p> |

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| | are announced, it is very competitive process so the lengthy applications make me hesitant- what if I do the work and not receive the funding? |
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Question 9- What can OWEB do more to help you pursue OWEB funds?

| Tribe | Response |
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| 1. | OWEB can leverage their position as a state agency and maybe try involving other agencies like ODOT or something into projects and think big picture about climate change. Keep these conversations going and try to help connect Tribes with each other. OWEB could actively seek out grants from Tribes- not sure about Open Solicitation since it is so competitive. Set up regular meetings with tribal leaders, resource staff and OWEB staff. |
| 2. | In our region doing work along one mile is huge and so are the costs for restoration. grants have become less onerous overtime so that's good. (Had to end the meeting, due to time constraints). |
| 3. | Offer training for effective grant proposals. Having a FIP or other funded opportunity for this region. It would be nice if there were funds for Tribes so that we did not have to compete with other groups; OWEB grants are extremely competitive and some groups are much more proficient in preparing successful proposals. The State of Oregon has tribal trust obligations because we are a Sovereign Entity. Make a portion of the funds available specifically for Tribes. Provide additional points in the ranking if the lead agency is a Tribe; provide grant writing training for the Tribes. |
| 4. | OWEB right now I don't have anything negative to say. They've made program changes and do trainings and send emails to improve communications. Good relationship as an agency. OWEB does a good job of trying to help and distribute funds we would love to have another local FIP- we need all the help to keep moving needle. An OWEB pro and con on the Open Solicitation grants is the qualitative way of evaluations- I feel they're not super open- quantifiable in a sense regional directors do a great job of input for groups to be more competitive. But I feel it all depends on review team with lots of biases. In SE WA the Snake River salmon recovery board-- each region has quantifiable way to select proposals different resource needs. This model could be utilized. Thank you, OWEB, for doing this! Trying to get tribal input is great and we really appreciate your sincere efforts. |
| 5. | Stay communicative and fair and transparent! |
| 6. | Develop a specific grant opportunity for the pacific lamprey like PLCI another way to balance BPA funds and fish habitat funding. |

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| | Score higher with Tribes in established partnerships or try to involve the Tribes early in process- weary as a requirement- groups that don't understand the process will take time and then they will check the process and say we are a partner without hearing our concerns about their project. We can't always say yes. OWEB funds use by watershed councils/partners help to keep their doors open. |
| 7. | Pretty satisfied with the work OWEB is doing and I feel comfortable reaching out to their staff. |
| 8. | Continue working to improve relationships and stay flexible and receptive. |
| 9. | Recommended for the watershed councils too, but OWEB should have a meeting where all recent recipients of OWEB funding to have annual meetings with Tribes they serve or are in the same area- gets everyone on board and meeting each other |
| 10. | I would like if there was more coordination from OWEB on training like on how to understand what all of the expectations are clarification about what OWEB asking for in applications or projects to avoid redundancy in the application. Overall OWEB is good funding agencies and they work hard to try to involve everyone in participating in public sessions and with their grant peer review process. |