



Oregon

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Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board 2013 Annual Government-to-Government Report

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Major Areas of Work

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency with statutory authority to administer constitutionally dedicated funds for the purpose of protecting and enhancing Oregon's watersheds and native fish and wildlife habitats. The responsibilities of the agency include:

- Managing a grant program for watershed protection and enhancement;
- Assisting in the development and implementation of watershed-scale restoration efforts; and
- Coordinating and supporting local infrastructure throughout the state to achieve voluntary cooperative conservation outcomes.

OWEB works with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribal governments on a government-to-government basis to address the watershed scale restoration efforts and through a grant program to fund watershed management, protection, and restoration projects.

OWEB is led by a 17-member policy oversight and decision-making board. Board members represent the public at large, federally recognized tribes, state natural resource agency boards and commissions, Oregon State University Extension Service, and six federal land management and natural resource agencies. The agency provides grants and services to citizen groups, organizations, and agencies working to restore healthy watersheds in Oregon. OWEB actions support the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds, created in 1997. Funding comes from the Oregon Lottery as a result citizen initiatives in 1998 and 2010, sales of salmon license plates since 1997, federal salmon recovery funds, and other sources.

Department Statement

The OWEB Board unanimously adopted a Tribal Policy in May of 2007.

Summary of Programs and Process for Involving Tribes

OWEB involves tribes at all levels of the organization. The following sections describe the agency's involvement with Oregon's nine federally recognized tribal governments during 2012.

A. OWEB Board

The Governor appoints a tribal representative as a voting member of the OWEB Board. The position currently is occupied by Eric Quaempts, Natural Resources Director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. In September 2011, Mr. Quaempts was elected as a Board Co-Chair. In January 2013, he was re-elected as Co-Chair for a two-year term.

The tribal position on the Board has been extremely valuable in helping to identify opportunities for collaboration and making the OWEB Board and staff aware of its responsibilities to involve and consider tribal interests. Mr. Quaempts has been an effective voice for tribal interests, and has improved awareness by OWEB staff of the significance of tribal issues associated with the grants and programs managed by the agency.

The June 2013 OWEB Board meeting was held at the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR)'s Wildhorse Resort & Casino. Prior to the official start of the meeting, CTUIR staff hosted a tour of the Meacham Creek Floodplain Restoration and In-Stream Enhancement Project. During the first day of the Board meeting, CTUIR staff and researchers from Montana State University provided a 1-hour presentation to the OWEB Board about the Meacham Creek project and other restoration and conservation work in which the Tribes and its collaborators are involved. The tour and presentation were incredibly well received by the OWEB Board and staff and other attendees at the meeting.

B. Grant Program

1. Small Grant Program. In OWEB's small grant program (OAR Chapter 695, Division 35), tribes are identified as an eligible member of "small grant teams" in each of the 28 Small Grant areas around the state. In this role, tribes are members of local teams that award grants of up to \$10,000 for watershed restoration purposes. (Other members of the teams include watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts.) Since 1999, OWEB has awarded seven grants to tribal agencies through this program.

2. Regular Grant Program. OWEB solicits grant applications twice a year through the regular grant program. During 2013, seven grants were awarded to tribes, including the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, The Klamath Tribes, CTUIR, and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. These grants totaled approximately \$970,000 for restoration, technical assistance and monitoring activities.

3. Regular Grant Program – Regional Review Teams. Applications received through OWEB's Regular Grant Program are reviewed by one of six regional review teams,

comprising state, federal and tribal natural resource professionals. Currently, two of the review teams include tribal members from the Burns Paiute Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

4. Land Acquisition Grant Program. OWEB's land acquisition grant program provides funding for projects that acquire an interest in land from a willing seller for the purpose of addressing the conservation needs of priority habitat and species. Under new administrative rules for land acquisition grants adopted by the OWEB Board in January 2013 and the associated guidance and process approved by the Board, OWEB has incorporated into its process a formal notification to tribes after an acquisition application is received for relevant proposed projects. If a tribe expresses interest in a project, OWEB staff will complete a tribal consultation.

5. Water Acquisition Grant Program. OWEB's water acquisition grant program provides funding for programs or projects that plan for or implement, or both, the acquisition of an interest or interests in water from a willing seller for the purpose of increasing in-stream flow. In June of 2013, the OWEB Board adopted new administrative rules for water acquisition grants. Staff have drafted the associated guidance and process for these grants, which the Board will consider at its January 2014 meeting. The process proposes to include tribal notification after a water acquisition application is received for relevant proposed projects. If a tribe expresses interest in a project, OWEB staff then will complete a tribal consultation.

C. Grant Applicants

OWEB grants are available to a broad range of entities, including tribes. Tribes have no unique standing in the grant program, but are equal to any other applicant [ORS 541.375(1)].

In addition to eligibility on their own, tribes are often members of local watershed councils. Oregon statutes describing watershed councils, ORS 541.388, specifically identifies "federally recognized Indian tribes" as potential members of local watershed councils. Watershed councils received nearly 45% of OWEB grant funds awarded in 2012.

Internal Tribal Relations and Training

As appropriate, OWEB's Tribal Liaison meets internally with management staff to provide updates on the Government-to-Government activities, and communicates about tribal interests and issues at all-staff meetings and retreats.

At the request of tribal members involved in the Natural Resources Workgroup, OWEB's Tribal Liaison presented information about the agency's recently adopted framework for its Long-Term Investment Strategy and discussed the potential for tribal funding at the workgroup's September 4, 2013 meeting. As follow-up to that presentation, OWEB received an inquiry from staff with the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe to learn more about OWEB's process for Focused Investments under its investment strategy framework. OWEB staff will meet with tribal staff in early 2014 to discuss the agency's process and its potential intersection with lamprey restoration and conservation efforts being conducted by this and other tribes.