



Oregon

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Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board 2012 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.

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.

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 five grants to tribal agencies through this program.

2. Regular Grant Program – Regional Review Teams. OWEB solicits grant applications twice a year through the regular grant program. Applications are reviewed by one of six regional review teams, comprised of state, federal and tribal natural resource professionals. Currently, three of the six review teams include tribal members. Staff from the Burns Paiute Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Reservation serve on these review teams.

3. 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. As part of the review of proposed land acquisition projects, OWEB staff historically have contacted affected tribe(s) early in the evaluation process and provide an opportunity to comment on proposed projects, especially where the acquisition is proposed on or adjacent to tribal lands, including reservation lands, trust lands, or usual and accustomed sites.

Under proposed changes to OWEB's administrative rules and associated application and review processes for land acquisition grants, OWEB is proposing to expand its outreach to tribes: 1) After an acquisition application is received, staff will notify tribes about relevant proposed projects; and 2) For proposed projects that are recommended for

funding by the OWEB Board Subcommittee on Acquisitions, staff will complete a tribal consultation as part of the public review process prior to a funding decision by the Board.

C. Grant Applicants

OWEB grants are available to a broad range of entities, including tribes. Tribes have no unique standing in the grant program, they are equal to any other applicant [ORS 541.375(1)]. In 2012, two grants were awarded to Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

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

Due to the passage of Measure 76 in 2010, which creates a long-term funding horizon for OWEB grant investments, OWEB initiated a process to develop a Long-Term Investment Strategy for Conservation (Strategy) in early 2012. As part of the outreach for the Strategy, staff contacted tribal governments to make them aware of the Strategy development process. All nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon were contacted and two tribes—the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde—requested meetings with OWEB staff. These tribes described topics of interest and provided suggestions regarding the Strategy. This input will be communicated to the OWEB Board prior to and during its January 2013 meeting.

Both OWEB’s Executive Director (and Key Contact) and Tribal Liaison attended the 2012 Tribal State Government to Government Summit. In addition, the Tribal Liaison participated in the Pre-Summit Cluster Meetings. OWEB’s Tribal Liaison meets internally with management staff to provide updates on the Government-to-Government activities. Communication about tribal interests and issues occurs regularly at monthly all-staff meetings and at periodic all-staff retreats.

In the past, OWEB representatives have participated in statewide training sessions and have attended the annual Tribal Government Day at the State Capitol. Due to staffing changes, OWEB has a new Tribal Liaison, who anticipates participating in similar trainings and events as they occur during 2013.

2013 Plans

In Winter of 2013, OWEB will hold listening sessions about the proposed direction for the Long-Term Investment Strategy for Conservation. Staff will notify tribal governments of the dates and locations of these listening sessions and invite participation from tribes. In addition, OWEB’s Tribal Liaison will keep the Natural Resources Workgroup members informed about development of the Strategy, which is scheduled for Board adoption in June 2013.