



Oregon

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Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

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Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board 2011 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.
- 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 2011.

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 each "small grant team." In this role, the tribe is a member, along with the watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts in the 28 small grant areas, of a local group empowered to make decisions about grants of up to \$10,000 for watershed restoration purposes. Since 1999, OWEB has awarded four 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 contact 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.

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 2011, one grant was awarded to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and 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 were granted approximately 40 percent of OWEB grant funds awarded in 2011.

Internal Tribal Relations and Training

OWEB representatives have participated in past statewide training sessions and have attended the annual Tribal Government Day at the State Capitol. OWEB anticipates participating in these and similar trainings and events as they are available in 2012. 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.

2012 Plans

Measure 76, approved by voters in 2010, not only eliminated the sunset on 1998’s Measure 66 funding dedication, but also revised the language around the eligible uses of those funds. While OWEB generally considers what we’ve been funding under Measure 66 to be eligible under Measure 76, the agency is beginning a process to review and update policies and administrative rules. Concurrently, the Board and staff are working on a plan to engage in a discussion about long-term priorities for funding. It’s likely both the rule consistency and policy discussion will involve stakeholder groups and tribal governments. OWEB’s Tribal Liaison will keep the Natural Resources Workgroup members informed as this effort develops.