

Lower Columbia Solutions Group
***DRAFT* Meeting Notes**

May 4, 2010
Meyer Memorial Trust Board Room
710 Urban Center, Portland State University
Portland, Oregon
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Participants

Greg Wolf, LCSG Convener	Doris McKillip, USACE
Mark Ellsworth, OR Governor's Office	Mike Ott, USACE
Brian Lynn, WA Governor's Office, WA DOE	Dale Blanton, OR DLCD
Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland	Kathy Roberts, USFWS
Larry Pfund, Port of Astoria	Page Phillips, Congressman Baird's office
Bill Hunsinger, Port of Astoria	Kimberly Pincheira, Senator Cantwell's office
Mike DeSimone, Pacific County, WA	Jessica Stokke, USACE
Kevin Brice, USACE	Zoanne Thomas, WA DNR
Dale Beasley, Columbia River Crab Fishermen	Micah Russell- CREST
Hobe Kytr, Salmon for All	Steve Marx, Representative Wu's office
Lisa Pomasl, Columbia River Channel Coalition	Kris Wall, NOAA
Deb Marriott, LCREP	Ted Wall, Maul Foster Alongi
Catherine Corbett, LCREP	

Staff

Jane Bacchieri, LCSG Program Manager
Kim Travis, OS Program Coordinator
Lauren Beeney, OS Project Coordinator

Welcome and introductions

Greg Wolf, Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) convener, welcomed everyone and reviewed the meeting objectives. Participants introduced themselves.

Mouth of the Columbia River (MCR) Regional Sediment Management Plan project

Jane Bacchieri, LCSG Program Manager, gave an update on partner support and funding to develop a recommended regional sediment management plan for the mouth of the Columbia that establishes new nearshore or on-shore beneficial use sites in Oregon and Washington to address ongoing erosion. The goal of this project is to increase the beneficial use of dredged sediment in the MCR to help protect nearshore fishery habitats, coastal beaches and jetties from erosion, while avoiding and minimizing adverse environmental

To assess the best use of the area, the project participants will engage scientists and stakeholders to focus on the biological science information of the area and thereby identify knowledge gaps that will guide decisions in providing long-term, sustainable placement of sediment.

Cogan Owens Cogan and the Institute for Natural Resources have been subcontracted to complete the work. The first meeting of the Steering Group established for the project is scheduled for May 18. The project is

scheduled to have recommendations ready by March of 2011, with final reports ready by July of 2011. The EPA, USACE, and states of WA and OR have all provided financial support necessary for implementation of this project.

Progress on Upland Disposal Facility and next steps

Micah Russell, CREST Director, gave an update on partner support and funding requests for the Upland Disposal Facility project that is under development for disposal of contaminated sediments in the Lower Columbia River.

To date, a total of \$50,000 has been collected from commitments by the City of Warrenton, the Port of Astoria, CREST, and the Port of Ilwaco. An additional \$50,000 from a grant request submitted by the Port of Astoria to the Oregon Business Development Department is pending approval, as is an additional \$50,000 from the US Army Corps of Engineers and a \$2 million appropriations request for FY11.

For the next steps of the project, CREST has volunteered to provide the project management, and requested this be made a designated project. As such, it would include conveners and a team of members from the LCGS be put together to ensure the voice of the group is included in the planning stages, and to have additional guidance when working with the contractor (once selected) and to also have additional input as to deliverables and feasibility.

Following the update on the project, members of the group discussed the high expense related to dredging and storing contaminated/toxic material, and discussed other potential funding sources. The Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (through PNWA) was recommended as a potential source, though potentially difficult because it is a national funding source. Additionally, funding may also be obtained for this project through the appropriations process, and that will be discussed in further detail at the next LCGS meeting.

It was suggested that as this project moves forward, it would be useful to include a cost of usage estimate, as the current cost estimate is based solely on the expenses related to design and build of the disposal facility. Jim Tallent from the Walla Walla district of the USACE was recommended as a person to contact to obtain an accurate dredging cost estimate.

Immediate next steps for this project include Jane Bacchieri compiling a list of recommendations for the team and circulating that among members for suggestions and approval, and Greg Wolf will put together a list of potential conveners.

Update on sand tracer study near the South Jetty

Michael Ott, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regional Sediment Management Manager, provided an update on initial results of a sand tracer study conducted from fall 2008 through spring 2009 to understand sediment movement near the South Columbia River Jetty in Oregon. Results from the study thus far indicate that the selected location is highly active, and therefore very positive in terms of beneficial use.

Based on the results of the study, the USACE will be moving forward with the next steps for the North Jetty/Benson Beach project this summer. Due to their low cost bid, Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Corporation has been selected to perform the dredging and placement of material, which includes depositing 300,000 cubic yards in order to further protect the jetty.

This project was highlighted as a great success story for the LCGS. It is a reflection of the progress that can be made when organizations come together to develop and implement beneficial use activities. Many

people and organizations, including state and local governments, a variety of agencies, private entities, and the state universities, have been involved in this project and are responsible for its success.

Progress on Regional Sediment Management Planning and next steps

Catherine Corbett, LCREP Technical Programs Manager, provided an overview of the work that the Estuary Partnership has completed on a Regional Sediment Management Plan for the lower Columbia River, as well as the progress of the work outlined in the RSMP DOC. Catherine presented pages from the progress report on the project that is currently being completed and highlighted the work of the subcommittee for the Sediment Management at the Mouth of the Columbia River.

Deb Marriott, LCREP Director, provided an overview of why and how LCREP is working on the Regional Sediment Plan. She described how LCREP is an organization tasked with habitat restoration and one of their goals is to implement a sustained monitoring program in the lower river. By looking at sediment management, they can make informed decisions about habitat restoration and it also helps them to answer questions about the movement of toxic sediment in the lower Columbia River. Based on this interest and connection to the project, they have dedicated 1 FTE to it.

Jane Bacchieri, LCSG Program Manager, then reviewed the work of the Policy Committee in this process, the framework they have developed to inform it, and possible next steps with the group. She commended LCREP for funding the project thus far, as that is currently the only source of funding. Jane indicated that the group has made good progress so far, but requested comments and suggestions for the group in order to determine how best to proceed and consider other possible funding sources.

Jane presented a framework document for the project which outlines the vision, goal objectives and actions of the project, and requested recommendations of priorities in order to decide how many resources to put towards particular components of the project. The amount of funding for research is commensurate with prediction capabilities, and there are different considerations to make based on desired available information. Additionally, the framework provides segments and articulates the process in such a way that make it easier to consider requesting small portions of funding for specific aspects of the project rather than seeing to fund it all at once.

Jane requested input from the LCSG members on: priorities and next steps, reviewing and potentially revising the DOC, whether or not the group is comfortable with the current process and procedures of the RSMP project, and alternative or additional resources for funding.

Update on Columbia River Restoration Act and appropriations requests

Deb Marriott, LCREP Director, provided an update on the Columbia River Restoration Act (CRRA). She informed the group that there are currently two ongoing processes related to the CRRA.

Requests have been made through Senator Merkley and Representatives Blumenauer, Baird and Wu to authorize \$40 million over the next five years for the Columbia River Basin. This includes the EPA developing and completing an action plan for the area and also raising the Columbia River to “Great Water Body” stature, which would designate it to a status that has a statute in place for receiving funding. This process is currently in the hearing stage and going next to mark-up in Congress.

The other process that is taking place is an appropriations request for \$19.2 million, which includes \$6 million for toxics monitoring and restoration above Bonneville and \$13 million for below Bonneville. It is anticipated that numbers and approvals will be released before the end of the year, but not likely prior to the next LCSG meeting. As LCREP is acting on behalf of the region, they are uncertain what the ultimate priorities are/will be as they are heavily dependant on what funds are awarded.

Looking ahead – location and agenda items for next meeting

Jane Bacchieri reminded members to keep the West Coast Governor's Agreement on Coastal Health in mind as a possible source of funding for FY12 or beyond.

Greg Wolf requested the group consider funding sources for the operation of the LCSG for 2011.

Kevin Brice, USACE, invited the LCSG and/or a sub-committee to visit the placement site at Benson Beach during the summer to see the project in action and to celebrate the achievement. Michael Ott, USACE, recommended early to mid-August as the optimum time for a site visit. This event may be concurrent with the next LCSG meeting.

Astoria was also offered as potential location for next LCSG meeting.

Next steps

Greg Wolf summarized the next steps as:

- Mouth of the Columbia River Project- will have an update at next meeting
- Upland Disposal Project- get a team identified and working, and get a convener
- Sand tracer study- stay tuned for more data and also placement of material on Benson Beach
- Regional Sediment Management Plan- the policy committee will draft an updated DOC and suggest prioritization
- Get University of Arizona study of Port of Astoria to Mike Ott in order to assist their sediment management
- Continue to look to be supportive of the group and the sub-committees

The meeting was adjourned before 2 PM.