# DECLARATION OF COOPERATION

COLUMBIA NEAR-SHORE BENEFICIAL USE PROJECT

September 2005

I. Background

A group of public and private sector participants has engaged in a collaborative process to explore the use of lower Columbia River maintenance dredge material to stem the depletion of the natural sand volumes in the near-shore environment off of the South Jetty of the Columbia River. The project team was convened by Jim Bergeron, a retired Sea Grant agent and currently a Port of Astoria Commissioner. Project support was provided by Steve Greenwood through the Lower Columbia Solutions Group and *Oregon Solutions.*

A number of recent studies have documented significant erosion of near-shore sands resulting from the reduction in sediment in the littoral system, in particular a loss of offshore sediment to the mid-continental shelf and near shore region offshore from the Clatsop Plains, resulting in greater wave energy being focused on the jetty and the ocean shore. The ongoing erosion offshore from the south jetty and adjacent areas has prompted concern that the south jetty may eventually be undermined or breached through toe erosion. The placement of Columbia River dredge material in the near shore area off the south jetty may help to slow this process and prevent further damage to the jetty and erosion of the ocean shore beach.

The long-term objective of a proposed supplementation of dredged sediments would be to keep these sediments in the littoral zone, and rebuild the offshore sands to better protect the jetty from the impacts of waves coming from the southwest. The project team has identified an iterative approach to accomplishing this objective:

- A narrowly-focused, small scale (30,000 cubic yards) testing of the enhanced dumping method of dispersal, in summer 2005.

- Subsequent testing, using larger volumes to determine the degree and direction of migration of deposited sands in the near-shore environment.

- Subsequent measurement of biological impacts and navigational safety (wave) impacts prior to any long-term large-scale dispersal of dredged sediments in the near-shore environment.

## II. Columbia Near-shore project tasks

The Columbia Near-Shore Beneficial Use project team addressed the following tasks:

1. *Identify and describe a "regulatory roadmap" that must be followed to establish near shore dispersal of dredged material.*

   The project team examined the administrative and technical review processes that would be required to obtain regulatory and planning authorization for the dispersal and monitoring of dredged material in the near shore area along the northern Clatsop Spit.

   This work included: legal mandates, implementation requirements, information needs, sequencing, timeline and notification requirements, public participation, and other relevant information. In addition, the regulatory agencies explored how the various planning and regulatory processes could best be aligned and coordinated.

   The regulatory roadmap developed through this process addresses both a larger-scale Demonstration Project and the longer-term project, and indicates the types of information that must be generated to satisfy all site planning and regulatory requirements, including additional baseline studies that may be needed.

   This regulatory road map was utilized in developing the proposal for the 2005 Demonstration. There was a meeting of regulatory agencies in January 2005 to discuss and coordinate the various regulatory processes and issues related to the proposed 2005 Demonstration. Subsequent to these meetings, however, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) determined that the 2005 Demonstration qualified as research and should be regulated through the Ocean Dumping Act, through EPA authority. A research permit application was submitted to EPA in July 2005.

2. *Review existing technical and natural resource information*

   Through the help of a PSU student, Amber Moore, the project team assembled the most current information on the bathymetry and status of benthic and biologic resources that could be affected by the disposal of dredged material in the near shore environment.

Subsequently, through funding by DLCD, the Institute for Natural Resources has identified a group of leading scientists to develop white papers summarizing the current state of knowledge on six separate technical and scientific issues related to the near-shore environment. Discussion of these scientific findings took place in May 2005 in a two-day Science/Policy workshop. The White Papers and results of the Workshop can be found on the Institute for Natural Resources website: http://inr.oregonstate.edu/columbia-river.html

3. *Demonstration of the enhanced dumping method of near shore dispersal for supplementing depleted sands.*

   After consideration of various dispersal methods, the project team agreed to conduct a limited demonstration (30,000 cubic yards) of the enhanced dumping method in September of 2005. This test of the enhanced dumping method is intended to measure per-run ocean-bottom accumulations to verify projected results and help determine the viability of this method.

III. Commitments from Collaborative Partners for the 2005 Demonstration

The 2005 Demonstration is scheduled for mid-September of 2005, contingent upon final regulatory approval. To conduct the 2005 Demonstration project, these partners have made the following commitments, some of which are contingent upon final regulatory approval and actual implementation of the demonstration project:

Sponsorship: The Port of Astoria will be the principal sponsor of this project, including contracting for development of the regulatory documents, submission of the application and Biological Assessment, and contracting for the sediment profile imaging.

Coordination: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has agreed to utilize the dredge Essayons to disperse material for this demonstration project, using the "enhanced dumping" methodology.

Funding: The following partners have provided a combined total of $59,000 in financial contributions toward the conduct of this research demonstration project:

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
Oregon Sea Grant program
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Sediment Management program
Oregon Division of State Lands
Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries
Port of Astoria
Columbia River Channel Coalition
Port of Portland
Port of Longview

Port of Vancouver
Port of Kalama
In addition, CRCFA offered a 50% discount on the boat rental needed for the project.

Technical Assistance: The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development has served as the agent for the Port of Astoria, assisting with the preparation of technical documents and the design of the monitoring program. The Institute for Natural Resources has been integrally involved in the design of the research and the monitoring program, and took the lead in coordinating the Science/Policy Workshop which led to some changes in design of the 2005 Demonstration.

In-kind Services Contributions: The Columbia River Crab Fishing Association has offered to provide boats for the research project at a significantly discounted cost. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will provide a multi-beam bathymetric survey as part of the research monitoring program.

Regulatory Coordination: The following agencies participated in meetings to help coordinate the regulatory process for this 2005 Demonstration project:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
NOAA Fisheries
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Columbia River Estuary Research Taskforce (CREST)

## IV. Next Steps

Subsequent to the 2005 Demonstration, but prior to any future actions, a number of issues will need to be addressed:

*Biological monitoring*. The group has discussed but not yet determined a specified program for biological monitoring. The technical white papers and workshop in spring of 2005 will aid this future effort.

*Navigational safety.* While there is consensus that navigational safety (including both wave and current impacts) will need to be addressed in the design of a long-term near-shore sediment dispersal program, there has not been a determination of what model or models should be used to estimate wave impacts.

*Budget and funding for actions beyond the 2005 demonstration project*. Although preliminary budget estimates and funding requests have been made, there are neither adequate funds nor staffing currently obligated for any steps beyond the

2005 Demonstration. Funding from other partners may need to be identified if Federal funding is short of the desired project budget, or acceptable reductions in the project budget need to be identified.

V. Declaration of Cooperation and Agreement.

This Declaration of Cooperation, while not a binding legal contract, is evidence to and a statement of the good faith and commitment of the undersigned parties. The undersigned parties to this Declaration of Cooperation have, through a collaborative process, agreed and pledge their cooperation to the above findings and actions:

C.R.E.S.T.

Port of Portland

Port of Astoria

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Clatsop County

Oregon Dept. of State Lands

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Economic Revitalization Team

Pacific Marine Cons. Council

Oregon DOGAMI

Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Col. R. Crab Fishing Association

Oregon DLCD

Col. R. Bar Pilots Association

Pacific County Planning Dept.

WA Dept of Fish and Wildlife

Institute for Natural Resources

Columbia R. Channel Coalition