

# **LCSG CONVENING OF THE SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON LITTORAL DRIFT/BENSON BEACH PROJECT**

## **ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**January 23, 2008**

### **Background**

In response to a request from the representative of the Coastal Communities of Southwest Washington (CCSWW), at its November 29, 2007 meeting, the Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) agreed to conduct an assessment of LCSG serving as the convener and neutral forum for the Southwest Washington Littoral Drift Restoration (Benson Beach) project.

The Southwest Washington Littoral Drift Restoration (Benson Beach) Project grew out of efforts by CCSWW to develop a long-term strategy for disposal of dredged sediment in the littoral area north of the Columbia River's North Jetty. A two-day workshop in July 2007, with scientists, technical specialists and policy-makers discussed nearshore physical processes in Southwest Washington, their policy implications for sediment management, and a demonstration project at Benson Beach. As currently envisioned, this project would entail the placement of up to one million cubic yards annually for up to five years in an area approximately 1,000 feet north of the North Jetty along Benson Beach in Cape Disappointment State Park. The project's goal is to restore the littoral drift, rebuild onshore sands, track sediment movement over time, and determine whether replenishing the littoral zone helps protect the North Jetty. To date, planning for the project has been led by Pacific County (for CCSWW) and the Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

This assessment is based on 20 interviews with key stakeholders (see Attachment A) conducted in December 2007 and January 2008 to:

- Assess support for the LCSG assuming a convener role for the project;
- Identify opportunities and challenges associated with the convener role;
- Assess support for and advantages/disadvantages of combining the Benson Beach and Oregon Nearshore Beneficial Use (South Jetty) projects; and
- Identify potential convener(s) for the Benson Beach project.

### **Summary of Key Findings**

#### LCSG Convening

There is strong and universal support for the LCSG serving as the convener and neutral forum for the Benson Beach project, the only hesitations being that the convening of any dredged materials placement project should be done in the context of regional sediment management (rather than as a specific project) and that progress on the Oregon Nearshore project not be jeopardized in any way. LCSG's convening is seen as "the best and the necessary course" to move the Benson Beach project forward and to ensure that the energy and consensus coming out of the July 2007 Science-Policy Workshop sponsored by LCSG is not lost. The LCSG is seen as the only entity having the ability to manage/move the project forward, as the State of Washington does not have the time needed nor ability to serve as a neutral convening entity given its regulatory role.

### Combining the Benson Beach and South Jetty Projects

Potential benefits are seen in combining the two projects in terms of establishing a single technical (science) team, as all the technical experts for the two projects are the same. While the same project manager is advantageous for the two projects, it is desired that the projects be managed as distinct and separate from each other with their own project teams. A wide variety of benefits are identified, among the most significant being the opportunity to obtain bi-state Congressional delegation support for projects with a common purpose and the increased likelihood of obtaining federal funding; the opportunity to compare results between the two projects, including relative economic costs, biological benefits, and environmental effects; and significant time efficiencies and cost savings. Concerns relate to potential competition for limited resources.

### Funding for Convening

It is estimated that the costs to the LCSG of providing project management services for the Benson Beach project would be approximately \$20,000 per year. CCSWW is the only entity identified at this time that has stated willingness to contribute funding for those costs.

### Convener(s)

There is strong sentiment that a convener(s) be from Southwest Washington and, while several candidates have been identified, their interest in serving in that role has not yet been verified. A recommendation may be presented at the January 31 LCSG meeting.

## **Recommendations**

Based on this assessment, it is recommended that:

1. The LCSG serve in the role of convener for the Southwest Washington Littoral Drift Restoration (Benson Beach) project, contingent upon commitment of funding (estimated at \$20,000 per year) for project management costs.
2. To help inform the LCSG's Regional Sediment Management Planning work, the Benson Beach and South Jetty projects be served by a combined technical team and a single project manager.
3. To help ensure that the projects maintain their distinctness, separate project teams be maintained for the Benson Beach and South Jetty projects.
4. Table the designation of a potential convener(s) for the Benson Beach project at this time unless LCSG staff presents a recommendation on a confirmed candidate at the January 31 LCSG meeting.

**ATTACHMENT A: Interviewees (20)**

- Dave Hunt and Lisa Pomasl -- Columbia River Channel Coalition
- Dale Beasley – Columbia River Crab Fishers Association
- Doris McKillip and Hans Moritz – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District
- Jim Neva -- Port of Ilwaco
- Phil Osbourne – Pacific International Engineering
- Kathleen Drew – Washington Governor’s Office
- Jane Baccheri – Oregon Governor’s Office
- Mike Desimone and Kevin Varness – Coastal Communities of Southwest Washington
- Brian Lynn, George Kaminsky, and Jennifer Hennessey – Washington Department of Ecology
- Fran McNair – Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Richard Parkin – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Bob Bailey and Dale Blanton – Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development/Oregon Coastal Program
- Steve Greenwood -- Director, Oregon Solutions Program; formerly project manager for Nearshore Beneficial Use Project
- Jim Bergeron -- Convener, Columbia River Nearshore Beneficial Use Project