

Progress Report on Southwest Washington Littoral Drift Restoration Project

Prepared for Lower Columbia Solutions Group

October 10, 2008 Meeting

Background

The Southwest Washington Littoral Drift Restoration Project grew out of efforts by the Coastal Communities of Southwest Washington (CCSWW) to develop a long-term strategy for disposal of dredged sediment in the littoral area north of the 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.

In response to a request from CCSWW and based upon the results of an assessment conducted last winter, the LCSG agreed to serve in the role of project convener, provide a project manager for a Partners Group for the project, identify a convener for the Partners Group, and assist in establishing a Science Advisory Team (SAT) to advise on both Washington and Oregon beneficial use projects. Both the Partners Group and SAT have met twice, most recently on September 11, in conjunction with the Oregon Nearshore Partners Group. Jim Neva, Port of Ilwaco Manager, is serving as convener.

The project goal is placement of sand to address beach erosion north of the Columbia, rather than simply a Benson Beach project. As a consequence, Benson Beach has been dropped from the Partner Group's title and the overall project description has been revised to explain it as more than a Benson Beach project.

Status

Until recently, this project had focused on a \$3.5 million demonstration project entailing the placement of dredged materials in an area approximately 1,000 feet north of the North Jetty along Benson Beach in Cape Disappointment State Park. While scientific analysis and environmental clearances are largely complete and there is broad support for this demonstration project, funding issues have caused the Partners Group to begin to investigate alternatives. Alternatives being considered include the "football" site, "mudhole" site, a scaled-back Benson Beach project, and a combination of on-shore and nearshore placement.

Several obstacles are constraining the ability to move forward with a restoration project at this time:

1. Although the Corps has received a \$1.8 million regional sediment management (RSM) appropriation for Benson Beach, the appropriation would apparently allow planning but not placement and thus cannot be used for the Benson Beach demonstration project. Placement authorization language is needed through Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) or another act.
2. Similarly, the RSM authorization is specific to Benson Beach and may not allow use of the funds for planning at alternative sites.
3. WRDA requires a match for the incremental costs associated with a beneficial use project. A state match of \$1.7 million has been requested but may be difficult to obtain in the state's current fiscal climate. Budget decisions will not be made before December.

The Partners Group believes that the goal should be to use the federal appropriation for a project rather than for more studies. With that goal in mind, the group has identified the following strategy for proceeding:

- WRDA or other act authorization is needed to allow the RSM appropriation to be used for placement.
- If state or other matching funds and authorization for placement are obtained, the Benson Beach demonstration project should proceed as planned.
- If matching funds are not available but authorization for placement is obtained, a scaled-back Benson Beach project should be considered.
- If authorization for placement is not obtained, authorization to redirect the RSM appropriation to planning related to alternative beneficial use projects is needed.

LCSG Action Requested

- Assistance in contacting the Congressional delegation to discuss the process to obtain WRDA language flexibility for the use of the Benson Beach appropriation.
- Assistance in lobbying for \$1.7 million in state matching funds and identification of other potential sources of matching funds.
- If matching funding is not available, approval of the Partners Group investigating an alternative project or a scaled-back Benson Beach project.
- Sponsorship of a science-policy workshop focused on biological sciences and identifying alternative beneficial use projects.

Next Steps

- Determine the potential and timing for obtaining WRDA or other act authorization.
- Organize a science-policy workshop within the next 6-8 weeks.

Contacts

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