PROGRESS REPORT
Regional Sediment Management Planning
Prepared for the Lower Columbia Solutions Group
Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership
October 22, 2010 Meeting

STATUS

Since the last meeting of the Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) in May, the Regional Sediment Management Planning (RSMP) process has moved forward on incorporating final comments on several chapters of the RSM plan.

Technical background chapters

The Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership staff drafted and revised several technical background chapters for the RSM plan. These chapters include the following topics:

- descriptions of the regulatory framework;
- sediment-related physical processes and conditions;
- biological processes and conditions; and
- toxic contaminant issues.

The draft chapters have received multiple, detailed reviews from technical experts. Three of the chapters have been completed, while the fourth, the biological processes and conditions chapter, is still underway. NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service volunteered to provide detailed revisions of this chapter in spring 2010.

Estuary Partnership staff requested final comments on the regulatory framework; physical processes and conditions; and toxic contaminant chapters by early July 2010. The Estuary Partnership contracted Val Brenneis to incorporate these comments in August. Val and Catherine met with the USACE twice in July and August to walk through their final comments and ensure these were incorporated. The final versions are available on the Estuary Partnership ftp site (ftp://www.lcrep.org/RSM_planning/).

Funding request

One of the main take-home messages from the Regional Sediment Management Planning process is that we lack the necessary flow and sediment data to develop a robust sediment transport model for the lower Columbia River system. The Estuary Partnership worked with the USGS to develop a budget estimate for some of the basic data collection work needed to inform a sediment model that was included in both the Estuary Partnership's congressional ask for FY11 and the USGS's request for funding.

Status of the Estuary Partnership's DOC commitments:

- Facilitate technical committee ✓
- Provide project manager ✓
- Continue development of GIS database (in progress)
- Develop physical conditions & processes chapter (100%) ✓
- Provide support role for economic analysis of sediment usage (Discuss with ports) – Not complete
- Conduct a workshop on methods/policies for beneficial use of sediment (USACE is working on this) – Not complete
- Work to ensure outreach ✓

Additional tasks performed:

- Regulatory framework chapter (100% complete) ✓
- Toxic contaminants chapter (100% complete) ✓
- Biological processes & conditions chapter (80% complete) ✓

The Estuary Partnership has hired two new staff: Marshall Johnson and Paul Kolp who started in late September/early October. Marshall has a Masters in Environmental Management from Portland State University and will be working with the Lower Columbia Solutions Group on determining next steps for the RSM Plan. He comes to us from Clean Water Services, Washington County's Stormwater and Wastewater Utility, where he was managing 17 large scale restoration projects. Marshall has also worked for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, the Wetlands Conservancy, and the City of Portland, and is a founding member and co-chair of the North Clackamas Urban Watersheds Council. Paul will be participating in the Technical Advisory Committee for siting the Upland Disposal facility. He comes to us from HDR Engineering in Seattle, WA and has designed, built and monitored more than 30 watershed restoration projects. Paul has a Masters in Watershed Science from Colorado State University and has technical knowledge in ecological restoration, geomorphic engineering and sedimentation, including hydrology and hydraulics numerical modeling with HEC-RAS, SWMM, iSIS Sediment and RUSLE.

Columbia River Restoration Act 2010

The bill passed out of the Senate Energy and Public Works Committee June 29, 2010, with a unanimous vote. The bill was changed a bit, including addition of the Flathead River Basin and a process for the basin to develop a management plan. This Senate version, S 3550, also strengthened the process for the Columbia basin, including more definition about the stakeholder process and EPA role. It also gave the State's an opportunity to opt out of the process.

The bill has not been scheduled for a floor vote. It may be packaged with several other similar bills and the National Estuary Program reauthorization. A few parties continue to express concern about the EPA role.

4/14/10 DRAFT

Lower Columbia River Regional Sediment Management Planning

Vision

Sediment management decisions in the lower Columbia River region are guided by a coordinated regional sediment management plan to: encourage the beneficial use of sediment; restore healthy ecosystems; protect (coastal) beaches; maintain safe navigation; improve efficiency of decision-making; and rely on scientific data and methods for modeling, monitoring and adaptive management.

Goal

To develop a regional plan that encourages environmentally and economically sustainable sediment management practices to restore or enhance ecosystem functions in the lower Columbia River, nearshore ocean, and beaches.

Objectives

1. Increase understanding of past, current and future conditions and management practices on sediment processes.

2. Evaluate ecosystem effects of alternative sediment management options and practices.

3. Develop a sediment management plan together with monitoring and adaptive management tools.

Actions

- Synthesize information on existing biological, physical and environmental conditions related to sediment transport and management.
- Summarize information on historical and current dredging and disposal activities.
- Describe the existing policy and regulatory framework for sediment management.
- Identify data gaps and needed information for sediment planning and management purposes.
- Identify critical erosion and accretion areas, habitat restoration sites, and sources of sediment, particularly to identify, carry out, and monitor localized, near-term beneficial use projects that fit within the long-term, regional vision of the plan.
- Identify critical areas of contaminated sediment accumulation and develop recommendations for regional approaches to handling these materials.
- Evaluate existing regulatory processes through case studies of various beneficial use projects (e.g., toxics, erosion, habitat creation), including timeline, agency standards and processes.
    - Assess the success or impediments due to the regulatory process.
    - Assess biological outcomes of beneficial use projects.
- Identify actions that improve efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory process.
- Develop consensus on regional sediment management strategies and recommendations.
- Develop recommendations to achieve integrated federal, state and local adaptive management for current and future beneficial use projects.