

Regional Sediment Management Plan for the Mouth of the Columbia River

Project groundrules and expectations

The Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) is initiating a project to develop a recommended Regional Sediment Management Plan (RSMP) for management of dredged materials at the mouth of the Columbia River (MCR) that will identify potential new nearshore or on-shore beneficial use disposal sites in Oregon and Washington. The new sites will be designed to restore sediment in the littoral zone and help protect nearshore fishery habitats, coastal beaches and the Columbia River jetties from erosion. The sites will provide sustainable long-term alternatives to deep water disposal of sediment and will be adaptively managed to avoid and minimize adverse environmental, resource and safety effects.

This document describes ground rules and expectations for the project to ensure that all participants understand and agree with the project goal, approach and expected outcomes.

Project scope and constraints

From November 2009 through January 2011, the project will engage scientists, stakeholders, regulatory agencies and resource managers in collaboration to develop recommendations for potential new beneficial use sites, how they should be managed (i.e., timing, volume and method of placement), and associated study, monitoring and adaptive management plans. A primary focus will be to analyze what is known about the benefits and impacts of nearshore sediment placement, particularly from a biological perspective, and identify knowledge gaps and priorities for developing additional information through studies and monitoring. Initial recommendations will be provided in September 2010, and additional recommendations will be finalized in January 2011.

All partners have an interest in developing a recommended RSMP that can be implemented, sustained and adaptively managed over the long term. To achieve this, considerations of regulatory, operational, funding and legal constraints will be discussed and recommendations developed with these realities in mind.

Collaboration and consensus

The LCSG will support participants in working together collaboratively to develop recommendations for potential new beneficial use sites and associated study and monitoring plans. The LCSG project manager and participants will seek to reach consensus, but in the event that consensus is not possible on particular points, majority and minority recommendations will be documented.

Use of best available science

All participants are committed to using the best science available to inform decisions about regional sediment management and beneficial use. If the scientific information that is needed to make some decisions is not available, participants will develop recommendations for priority studies and monitoring, including collection of baseline information before beneficial use activities occur. Recommendations for adaptive management measures will ensure that the results of scientific studies and monitoring inform decisions about beneficial use.



Expectations for participants

Primary participants will include stakeholders and local governments with a direct interest in beneficial sediment use, state and federal regulatory agencies involved in permitting beneficial use disposal sites, scientific experts who can inform management decisions, and resource managers.

- Stakeholders and local government leaders will be expected share their knowledge of how beneficial use may affect local conditions, and to provide suggestions, feedback and recommendations related to beneficial use options.
- State and federal regulatory agencies will be expected to identify and raise questions, issues, concerns and interests related to applicable regulatory authorities and agency missions, to ensure that all known issues can be considered and addressed in the collaborative process.
- Scientific experts will be expected to share their knowledge of current information related to beneficial use, raise questions or concerns associated with various beneficial use alternatives, and provide suggestions and recommendations to enable adaptive management of new beneficial use sites.
- Resource managers will be expected to provide suggestions, feedback and recommendations related to resource, operational, policy and regulatory considerations, to ensure that all known issues can be considered and addressed in the collaborative process.

All participants will be expected to contribute in a collaborative manner, representing the interests of their organizations in good faith and keeping the larger interests of the lower Columbia region in mind.

Role of the LCSG

The LCSG will provide a neutral forum and project management services for the project, as it has done for similar recent projects, including the Southwest Washington Littoral Drift Restoration Project and the Oregon Columbia Nearshore Project. The LCSG will hire a project manager and appoint a project convener (or two co-conveners) to lead project meetings, support participants in collaborative decision-making, work with participants between meetings and develop meeting materials and products.

Role of the Steering Group

A Steering Group comprised of select LCSG members will be formed to help guide the project, including providing feedback on draft meeting agendas and materials. The role of the steering group is *not* to make substantive decisions related to the project, but rather to help frame and structure project meetings to ensure that all participants are fully supported in collaboration and decision-making.

Project funding

The states of Oregon and Washington, the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are providing funding to conduct this project, with an estimated cost of approximately \$165,000.



Relation to regulatory actions

The product of this project – a recommended RSMP for the MCR – will be delivered to the states of Oregon and Washington, the Corps and EPA in September 2010 to inform future regulatory decisions under the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) for ongoing dredging and beneficial use of dredged sediment at the MCR.

- CWA Section 401 Certification – The recommended MCR RSMP will inform multi-year CWA 401 Certifications by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Washington Department of Ecology for MCR dredging activities. Currently, CWA 401 Certifications are made on an annual basis.
- CWA Section 404 designation – EPA and the Corps will select new beneficial use sites through the advanced identification authority under Section 404 of the CWA. The recommended RSMP will inform those site selections.
- CZMA consistency – The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development and the Washington Department of Ecology will determine the consistency of MCR dredging activities with the CZMA. The recommended RSMP will inform state federal consistency concurrence.
- ESA consultation – The National Marine Fisheries Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will consult with the Corps on endangered species protections. The recommended RSMP will incorporate the Services' input and recommendations for beneficial use at the MCR.

Relation to other lower Columbia River work

This project will build on and advance work of the LCSG and its partners since 2005 to develop beneficial use disposal options in Oregon and Washington. It will also contribute to the LCSG's larger Regional Sediment Management Planning process, which seeks beneficial use of dredged sediment from Bonneville Dam to the MCR.

Lower Columbia Solutions Group members and participants sign on to these ground rules and expectations to guide the development of a recommended Regional Sediment Management Plan for the mouth of the Columbia River.

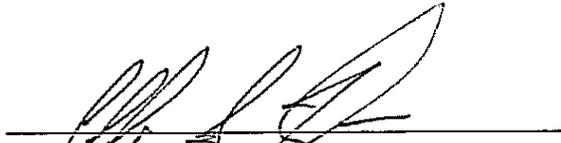
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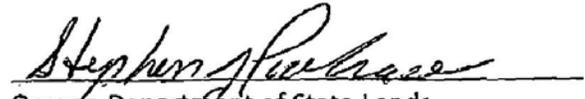
Lower Columbia Solutions Group



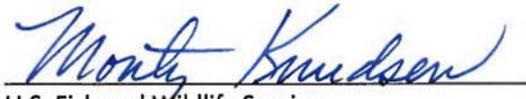
Coastal Communities of Southwest Washington



Clatsop County, Oregon



Oregon Department of State Lands



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



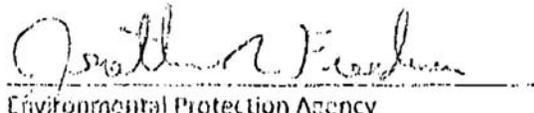
Columbia River Crab Fisherman's Association



National Oceanic and Atmospheric
Administration/National Marine Fisheries
Service



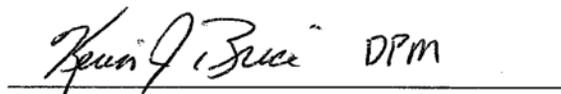
Washington Department of Natural Resources



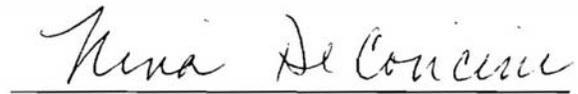
Environmental Protection Agency



OR Dept. of Land Conservation & Develop.



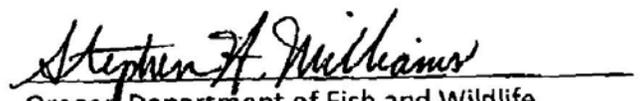
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



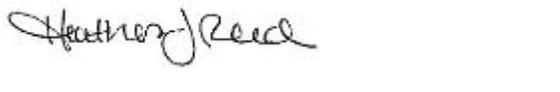
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality



Washington Department of Ecology



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife