

Progress Report on Regional Upland Disposal Planning
Prepared for the Lower Columbia Solutions Group
March 5, 2009 meeting

Background

Since 2006, the LCSG has been exploring options to address the challenges that some lower Columbia ports face with dredging and disposal of sediments that are too contaminated for flow-lane disposal. The LCSG recognizes that contaminants originating throughout the Columbia River watershed move down through the system and deposit at the mouth of the river, leaving lower Columbia ports with the costly problem of dredging and disposing of contaminated material, most of which they didn't produce.

A subcommittee of the LCSG has evaluated the potential for creating a shared upland disposal facility that could be used by multiple ports, located in an area that makes sense considering sediment transportation costs, environmental considerations and community interests. In October 2008, the LCSG received a report entitled, [Selection of an Upland Disposal Site for Contaminated Dredged Material in the Lower Columbia River](#)¹, which described the subcommittee's work to identify candidate sites for an upland disposal facility to meet the Port of Astoria's immediate need for contaminated sediment disposal and potential future needs of the Port of Ilwaco and other lower Columbia ports.

As described in the report, the subcommittee's review revealed that an unused City of Warrenton wastewater lagoon presents a promising option for siting and constructing an upland disposal facility. Key considerations in identifying this site included its estimated capacity to hold 200,000 cubic yards of material, which could meet the lower ports' needs for the next 5 to 15 years; relatively close proximity to the lower ports, which affects transportation costs of moving dredged sediments to the facility; the site's existing engineering to handle wastewater solids, which could reduce the cost of constructing a facility to hold contaminated sediments; and the City of Warrenton's desire to find a new use for the lagoon.

Status and next steps

The next steps for this project involve conducting a Feasibility Study (FS) to determine whether the City's unused wastewater lagoon can be used for construction and operation of a regional upland disposal facility for contaminated sediments. The attached Request for Qualifications (RFQ), outlining basic components of the FS, was issued in January and responses are now being reviewed by a selection team representing LCSG members and participants, including CREST, Port of Astoria, Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership, Port of Vancouver, Oregon DEQ, Oregon DSL and NOAA. In reviewing the RFQ responses, the selection team will decide on the appropriate scope and cost of the FS, at which point we will begin seeking funding partners to contribute. Once funding commitments for the total cost of the FS are obtained, we will issue a detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) to hire a consultant to conduct the FS.

Below is an estimated timeline for these steps, as well as critical needs for LCSG assistance and guidance.

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| late-January | RFQ was issued to identify firms interested in conducting the FS. |
| late-February | Four RFQ responses received, selection committee organized to review and rank responses. |
| March | Selection committee will meet to discuss RFQ response and decide on the appropriate scope, cost and timeline for conducting the FS. |

¹ The LCSG's report on this work, entitled [Selection of an Upland Disposal Site for Contaminated Dredged Material in the Lower Columbia River](#), can be found at www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org; click on *Projects* and *Regional Upland Disposal*.

- March/April LCSG subcommittee will seek funding partners to support the cost of the FS. Initial cost estimates range from \$300,000 to \$500,000, depending on the level of detail the FS could provide to prepare us for the facility design/construction phase.
- The Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership has requested federal funding to support the FS, but the likelihood of congressional support for funding a study is uncertain.
- April/May Once funding commitments to support the full cost of the FS are confirmed, we will issue a detailed RFP to the firms who submitted top-ranking responses to the RFQ and select a firm to conduct the FS.
- May/June Enter into a work agreement with the selected firm and begin the FS.
- The Estuary Partnership has offered to enter into a contract with the firm on behalf of the LCSG and to oversee the FS process, with ongoing assistance from subcommittee members.
- Summer/fall Conduct the FS to determine whether the unused City of Warrenton wastewater lagoon can be used to construct and operate an upland disposal facility, and to identify issues, challenges, costs and timelines for designing and constructing the facility.
- Fall/winter If we determine that it is feasible to construct the facility, we will seek congressional and other funding to support design and construction.
- Congressional representatives have indicated that some federal funding may be possible to support construction, particularly if we have a local match.

LCSG action needed

LCSG assistance is needed in two critical areas:

- Funding for conducting the Feasibility Study – We expect that the FS could cost \$300,000 to \$500,000, depending on the level of detail it will provide in preparation for the facility design/construction phase. Through the RFQ, we will determine the exact scope and cost of the FS and then seek funding partners to contribute to the cost. The RFP will not be issued until we have confirmed funding commitments to support the full cost of the FS. LCSG assistance in identifying potential funding sources and partners is needed.
- Technical oversight/management of the FS – To effectively oversee the FS process on behalf of the LCSG, the Estuary Partnership will need a technical expert with experience working on design and construction of a disposal facility or a similar project. We are talking now with Estuary Partnership Board members about their ability to loan a qualified staff person to assist with this project, but any suggestions or assistance LCSG members can offer would be very helpful.

We have made good progress on this project over the last two years, and we've now identified a promising opportunity to address a regional need, support our local economies and improve the lower Columbia environment. We can only move forward if we find ways to meet the needs above, and we appreciate your ongoing support and any assistance you can provide.

For more information

Please contact Mikell O'Mealy, LCSG Program Manager, at 503-229-6590 or mikell.omealy@state.or.us, with any ideas, suggestions or questions about this project, our next steps and these critical needs.