

Report on Regional Upland Disposal Planning

Prepared for Lower Columbia Solutions Group

May 1, 2008 meeting

Background

In April 2006, the LCSG charged a subcommittee with exploring potential projects to address contaminated sediment issues in the lower Columbia River. The subcommittee considered potential projects and identified a role for the LCSG in exploring the development of a Regional Upland Disposal Plan for contaminated sediments, with shared upland disposal facilities located in areas that make sense for nearby ports (considering transportation and disposal costs), communities and the environment. In spring 2007, LCREP provided funding for the subcommittee to contract with CREST to collect baseline information on contaminated sediment disposal needs of the lower Columbia ports. The findings indicated that the Port of Astoria has an immediate need for a new upland disposal site for contaminated sediments, and the Port of Ilwaco may be in need of an upland disposal site in the near future. No other lower Columbia ports have current or projected needs for new upland disposal areas for contaminated sediment. The Estuary Partnership is now collaborating with CREST and the Port of Astoria in the second phase of the project to identify a potential regional upland disposal site.

Update on Phase 2

The original goal of Phase 2 was to identify a potential upland disposal site to meet the Port of Astoria's current need, while also considering sites that are accessible to the Port of Ilwaco and other nearby ports. It was to include the development of basic engineering parameters, as well as criteria to assess the cost to the Port of Astoria for using the site and the economic viability of other lower river ports using the site. However, during the course of Phase 2 development, the goals changed slightly from their original scope of work. After researching potential contaminated dredged disposal sites in the lower Columbia River, there wasn't one clear site that rose to the top as a best choice. The new goal of the project is to create a list of the top 2 to 4 sites and then disseminate that information to the LCSG for input and direction. The development of site parameters has changed as well. DEQ has informed us that a permanent upland contaminated dredged material disposal site will be required to get a solid waste landfill permit. Thus, due to its complexity, engineering parameters and economic costs associated with building a site will have to wait until the next phase of the project. Subsequent phases of the project would entail a legal analysis (i.e. liability, ownership issues), economic analysis, development of engineering designs, a permitting process and a public input process for a selected site(s). The final report on phase 2 of the project will be presented at the next LCSG meeting.

An ongoing role for the LCSG

The LCSG's role as a high-level clearinghouse for issues and ideas has been invaluable in this process. As we learn more over the next few months about the costs of constructing one or more upland disposal facilities, there will be an ongoing role for the LCSG in identifying other financial resources that could support this project.

Please come to the May 1 meeting prepared to share your thoughts on what role you think the LCSG should have as this moves forward, in addition to any other guidance you may have for the project.

For more information

If you have questions or ideas related to this work prior to our May 1 meeting, please contact Jay Flint at CREST (503-325-0435 or jflint@columbiaestuary.org) or Mikell O'Mealy at the National Policy Consensus Center (503-229-6590 or mikell.omealy@state.or.us).