

**Lower Columbia Solutions Group  
DRAFT Meeting Notes**

July 8, 2011  
11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m  
Ft. Columbia State Park Theater  
Naselle, Washington

**Participants**

Steve Greenwood, LCSG Convener  
Brian Lynn, WA Governor's Office, WA DOE  
Jim Neva, Port of Ilwaco  
Donna Nyberg, Rep. Witt's office  
Chris Hathaway, LCREP  
Kimberly Pincheira, Sen. Cantwell's office  
Caren Braby, ODFW  
Dale Blanton, Oregon Coastal Management  
Program  
Kathy Roberts, USFWS  
Nancy Pustis, OR DSL  
Alejandro Bancke, CREST  
Peter Huhtala, Clatsop County  
Hobe Kytr, Salmon for All  
Doris McKillip, USACE  
Kevin Brice, USACE  
Larry Pfund, Port of Astoria

Herb Florer, Port of Astoria  
Jonathan Freedman, EPA  
Sally Duncan, INR/OSU  
Cate Gable, Chinook Observer  
Lionell Klikoff, WA DNR  
Dale Beasley, CRCFA  
Bridgette Lohrman, EPA  
Page Phillips, Sen. Murray's office  
Doug Kess, PC MRC  
Gretchen Smith, USACE  
Rebecca Weiss, USACE  
Linda Lillycrop, USACE  
Mike Ott, USACE  
Eric Braun, USACE  
Micah Russell, CREST  
Ted Wall, Maul Foster Alongi

**Staff**

Steve Greenwood, LCSG Program Manager  
Lauren Beoney, Oregon Solutions Program Coordinator

**Welcome, introductions and meeting objectives**

Steve Greenwood called the meeting to order, welcomed the group and attendees then did self introductions.

**Progress on the Regional Upland Disposal Facility**

Ted Wall from Maul Foster Alongi, the engineering firm which was awarded the contract to perform the feasibility study and do preliminary disposal site design, provided up update on the progress of those tasks. He thanked all those who attended the tour of the site prior to the meeting, and noted that there was a good turn-out for the brief event.

Ted noted that so far there have not been any fatal flaws determined for the site at Warrenton. He shared that there will be challenges, such as permitting, but declared that the site is a good potential facility based on the fact that it's already built, as well as its proximity to the dredging site but also its isolation. Ted shared that the project team is currently looking at different transport and transfer options, and that a number of different types have been explored but that direct transfer option appears to be the most viable at this point.

Ted also reviewed the project teams work on diking district issues, solid waste issues, determining what regulations the disposal site will be subject to, exploring the need for a liner and the work on geotechnical

analysis that is being undertaken with assistance from the USACE. Ted concluded that the feasibility study will provide necessary insight into the regulatory pathway, and some design/construction information which will inform the total cost estimate. Ted noted that much more specific information should be available to share with the group within the next month.

### **Port of Astoria Presentation**

Herb Florer, Deputy Director of the Port of Astoria, gave the group a presentation on the sediment accumulation issues that the port has been experiencing. Herb went through a PowerPoint presentation (available at [www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org](http://www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org)) which covered the specific location the problem is occurring in, the scope of the problem, the factors which contribute to the problem and some potential solutions for mitigating or eliminating the problem.

Herb shared that the need to keep the draft deep enough at the piers available for incoming ships is at a critical point. Navy ships, research vessels, cruise ships and, after 14 years, logging cargo ships all utilize the port. Keeping the port open and available to these vessels is critical to the health of the port as well as the region. Herb showed the group a number of diagrams which indicated the levels of sediment in different seasons, and noted that between March and October of last year, the water depth decreased from approximately 40 feet to only 33 feet. Thanks to early dredging the depth was restored to 40 feet but shared that those numbers are critical as the log ships have a 36 foot draft. Herb shared that based on the sounding information available, the location where the most sediment is accumulating is around pier 3 and the turn basin beyond that is also being affected, although the port is only responsible for dredging 100 feet from the pier. Herb noted that the port spends, on average, including staff and administrative time, \$1/2 million every year to maintain this area.

Herb shared that the most recent, extensive hydrology information the port has is a report from 1971. He shared that he was also able to find a simulator online which showed that due to the geography of the area, there is a back eddy effect which occurs by the piers which picks up sediment from areas where it has already been dredged and redeposits it by pier 3.

Herb concluded his presentation with recommendations which would lessen the amount of dredging done in the area and avoid “double dredging” the same material from 2 different sites. The recommendations included getting a new study to show the current hydrology of the area, a study to explore the viability of a wing dam installation on pier 3, having the support of the LCSG for seeking grants or other funding options- possibly through USACE, and LCSG support for the ports request for 2013 funding for dredging the turn basin.

The group discussed the presentation and a representative from the USACE shared that they had been in discussion with the port on some options, but that talks need to continue to explore other ideas. It was also mentioned that the USACE has several programs with authorities and appropriations that might match what the port is seeking to accomplish, including potential funding for data gathering and analysis. However, it was noted that the current federal financial situation is difficult, and it is unclear how much funding will be available. It was also suggested that the port connect with their local Regional Solutions Center Coordinator, Mark Ellsworth, as he may be able to assist with connecting the port to state and educational institution resources. Another suggestion was to connect with David Jay who has recently implemented a coastal engineering program which may be seeking research opportunities.

### **MCR Regional Sediment Management Plan (RSMP)**

Jim Owens, project facilitator from Cogan Owens Cogan, provided an update on the progress of the RSMP, noting that the document is a culmination of more than a decade of work by a very large number of people. Jim provided a detailed summary of the process, the plan elements, the assumptions and conditions that informed the plan, the network of 7 sites that are identified in the plan and the proposed

Adaptive Management Program which includes elements of an Adaptive Management Team (AMT), and Annual Use Plan, Research and Monitoring, and Management and Implementation (PowerPoint available at [www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org](http://www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org)).

Jim Neva, project manager from the Port of Ilwaco shared that he has been working on the erosion problem for over 15 years, with no movement and very little consensus. He declared that it took a group like the LCSG to put it together and he noted his appreciation for the commitment and participation of team members and shared that he was very pleased with the outcome.

Sally Duncan, from the Institute of Natural resources at OSU shared that the science team looked at what information was currently available and determined what information was lacking, assisted in prioritizing those data gaps, and determined the research and monitoring plan. Sally noted that the plan currently reflects clear priorities, but noted that the methods discussed are given as best examples and options and are flexible depending on the funding available. Sally noted that the priority of monitoring by the AMT is key to the plan, and once that group has been formed they need to trust each other and adapt as needed, as success will be based on the people and how they manage the data they receive. Sally also shared that the science advisory group will be reconstituted as a Science Advisory Team (SAT) for the AMT.

Many members shared their appreciation for the plan, and the collaborative nature in which it was put together. It was noted that though the plan is close to completion, there is still much more work to do and the continued support and patience of the LCSG is going to be needed for the future.

Mike Ott, with the USACE, echoed the larger groups comments, saying that the work has been truly a collaborative effort and that implementation will be the critical next step. Mike shared a brief PowerPoint presentation (available online at [www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org](http://www.lowercolumbiasolutions.org)) which addressed a preliminary funding opportunity through the USACE and the regulatory framework of the RSMP. Mike shared that under the Army Corps national Regional Sediment Management program, there is an opportunity to procure funding which is available to projects that are based in collaboration. Mike noted that the funding is limited to FY12 and the MCR application would be competing on a national level. Mike shared that he believes that the MCR proposal is a strong contender and that it would be very competitive. The deadline for the application is August 12, and staff at the Portland USACE office have already begun to draft and format the application.

Mike also shared that there will be some regulatory hurdles which will need to be addressed, but noted that the process of collaborating on the MCR RSMP has gone a long way towards laying the groundwork to address some of the issues by including agency suggested language.

The nature of the USACE RSM funding was discussed, with it being shared that the money is treated as state funding, and is not something that will likely be awarded repeatedly to the same applicant. It is expected the funding will go towards the initial work of the partners to determine what the key baseline is that is needed to determine the impact of beneficial placement. The goal of the USACE funding department is to move sediment and optimize issues, but there is also a research aspect included. Applying for the funding once does not preclude being able to apply for it again in future years, though the field is competitive. Awards typically average between \$50-100,000. Though the USACE grant does not have a match obligation component, it is positive to be able to maximize the resource as much as possible. It was shared that, during initial agency interviews, many had remarked that they would be willing to participate with the funding aspect. It was asked whether the Corps' "regular" pot of money will be utilized at all for baseline studies and monitoring, and whether any of that funding would be able to be redirected based on potential savings negotiated through the work of the RSMP. The Corps responded that bathymetry data is required for much of the work they do and that it serves a multitude of purposes, but that because the funding varies from year to year it is difficult to determine what future funding may be available.

The group then discussed the support for and logistics of putting the funding proposal together. It was shared that letters of support are not required as part of the application package, but that it wouldn't hurt. The members were asked if they blessed the plan and would charge Mike Ott to proceed with the application, which received a unanimous response of "yes."

Members were asked to assist with the USACE application, in providing some information and reviewing and editing. It was determined that a draft would be available to review by the end of the following week. Caren Braby, Brian Lynn, Dale Blanton, Kathy Roberts and Jonathan Freedman all volunteered.

The group then discussed some of the specific components of the RSMP, starting with the identified priorities. It was noted that they had been provided in order to offer a way to structure the work of the AMT, but they were in no way intended to hamper or lock in the work of the AMT or the USACE. It was noted that, all things being equal, some responses have indicated the priority for material placement would be in the inter-tidal zone and not at the South Jetty.

The group also discussed some of the issues around regulation. Jonathan Freedman, with EPA said that there are currently 2 EPA ocean dumping sites, which are designated under the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA), not the Clean Water Act (Section 404 ). All sites designated under MPRSA must have a Site Monitoring and Management Plan (SMMP). The SMMP for the two sites at MCR, in turn, requires the Corps to write an Annual Use Plan (AUP) which is approved by EPA (and is available for all LCSG members and the public). The AUP currently also covers the use of a third Section 404 site, the North Jetty Site. Potentially the AUP can include the four other Section 404 sites recommended in the RSMP, even though these four sites cannot be managed directly in the SMMP and EPA will still retain final authority over the two MPRSA sites. It was emphasized that there would be no change with the current regulatory approvals. The vision which includes the full scope of all 7 disposal sites which need to be managed together, and can be included together in the AUP, needs to be better portrayed in the RSMP. It was noted that the RSMP is intended to be a pre-cursor for Corps regulatory approval of the 4 proposed new Section 404 sites, and the outcome does intend to describe the system as including all 7 sites.

It was then discussed that there has been an intention to get the key parties to sign a Declaration of Cooperation for the MCR RSMP, which would indicate approval of the work on the plan, but would not indicate regulatory approval. The members were asked is anyone would be opposed to that, and there was no opposition. It was suggested to add the agencies which have management and regulatory responsibility, as well as the LCSG member agencies which have participated in the crafting of the plan and will continue to participate in the work or be affected by the outcomes of the plan.

The group then discussed the AMT, and how to proceed with first steps of putting it together. It was noted that when more time is allowed, there will need to be a larger discussions about the size and specific scope of the role of the AMT, but that initial ideas would be useful to start considering options. It was noted that, depending on the ultimately determined scope of work of the AMT, it may be overly extensive for some people. One suggestion was that the work of the AMT could be contracted out, depending on the funding, due to the potentially large amount of time the work could take. It was shared that ODFW would be happy to serve on the team if requested, but that it should be up to the AMT to decide how best they would be able to do the work requested of them. It was noted that the work of the management and implementation portion of the plan is intended to be a LCSG team-wide effort, and not the sole responsibility of the USACE. With that, there is an implication of financial obligation for the LCSG members. It was noted that it would be very useful to have a better understanding of what the financial implication is as soon as possible in order to prepare and consider allocation options.

### **Other Announcements**

Dale Beasley shared a concept that has recently caught his attention, sediment rights, which he explained is a new way of doing business that includes an aspect of up-river parties being responsible financially for what is carried from their location downriver which could provide a source of funding with which to operate meaningful programs at the MCR. *(I don't know if I captured this correctly- I will review Dale's handout and amend if/as needed)*. It was noted and agreed upon that this would be a good topic of discussion for the next LCSG meeting.

### **Next steps**

The next meeting will include; an update on the feasibility study for the Upland Disposal Site, which will likely be completed; an update on last year's Benson Beach sand placement; an update on the sand tracer study; and a discussion sediment rights.

It was noted that the next meeting will tentatively be in October, location to be determined.

**The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.**

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