

MEETING NOTES

Columbia Near-Shore Project Partners Meeting

Thursday, March 17 – 1:30 PM
OSU Seafood Center, Astoria, Oregon

In attendance:

Project partners:

Jim Bergeron, Convener
Doris McKillip, USCOE
Jill Smith, ODFW
Dale Beasley, CRCFA
Renee Davis-Born, INR
Greg McMurray, DLCD
Greg Smith, USFWS

Theeme Holznagel, CRCC
Bob Burkle, WDFW
Dan Jordan, Col. Bar Pilots
Kathy Sellman, Clatsop County
Barb Robinson, Clatsop County
Peter Huhtala, PMCC

Interested parties:

Dan Cox, Oregon State University

I. **Announcements**

Steve Greenwood handed out a copy of the Lower Columbia Solutions Group letter that went to the congressional delegation, outlining three main priorities for further federal funding: jetty repair, the near-shore project, and Benson Beach. Peter Huhtala said that the LCSG did a “great job” of pulling that lobby effort together.

Doris McKillip announced that bids have been opened for the jetty repair work. The low bid was \$17 million. The North Jetty repair work will be done this summer (2005).

II. **Science-Policy Workshop and White Papers**

Renee Davis-Born of the Institute for Natural Resources handed out an agenda for the May 2 and May 3 workshop.

The *May 2 Workshop* will be for other invited scientists and professionals, a kind of “peer-review” session on the six white paper topics, and a great opportunity to hear from the experts in their field on the current state of the science.

Gary Braun and Tuba Ozkan-Haller have been added to the list of speakers. Ozkan-Haller was added to speak on the differences between various wave-amplification models

The *May 3 workshop* will be sponsored by the Lower Columbia Solutions Group, and will be oriented to policy-makers. The second day will not be just a re-hash of the white-papers, but will also attempt to capture the main points of the discussion in Day 1.

The Columbia Near-Shore project team is encouraged to attend both days of the workshop. Anyone with suggestions about additional invitees either to the May 2 session or May 3 Policy discussion should contact Renee Davis-Born as soon as possible (Renee.Davis-Born@oregonstate.edu). Renee will send out a list of those currently on the invite list.

Renee said that the draft White Papers will be put on the Institute For Natural Resources Website soon after their due date of April 15.

III. 2005 Demonstration Project

Dan Cox from OSU was present to explain the design of the monitoring plan.

The monitoring will involve receptacles or “rain gauges” to measure sediment accumulations from each of 6 runs. In addition, the Corps will conduct multi-beam bathymetry to measure the “footprint” of the deposition. The project will take place over 3 days to ensure highest scientific validity of the results.

Each of the six runs will be as similar as possible, as the dredge operators have said that there will be some natural variability to account for the ocean conditions at the time. Dale Beasley asked why we needed to spread the amount over so large an area, as he had concerns about affecting the area prior to any crab survey. Dan responded that they wanted to ensure that there was sufficient space between depositions so that there was no overlap.

Steve Greenwood noted that the group initially thought of this method as “simple and cheap”, and it has turned out to require considerable logistical coordination. Example: making sure that the buoys to mark the receptacles do not get in the way of the dredge. The amount of logistics planning and the extra design elements to ensure valid scientific results have raised the price-tag for the monitoring to \$70,000.

IV. Status of Regulatory Proposals

Greg McMurray reported on the regulatory status of the 2005 Demonstration. DLCDC has helped the Port of Astoria, the project sponsor, to hire a consultant

(Steve Novotny of Fishman Environmental) to put together the regulatory proposals.

A regulatory coordination meeting was held in February, involving the various regulatory agencies. NOAA Fisheries indicated at a subsequent meeting that they will likely need their full 135 days to review the proposal. This will mean that approval should come in July.

The consultant expects to submit the proposals to the Corps regulatory staff and to DLCD within two weeks.

Greg said that the only unexpected issue to arise is from the State Historical Preservation Office, which has asked for a map of historic shipwrecks in the area. The project will need to avoid any shipwrecks on the bottom.

V. Status of Fundraising for 2005 Demonstration

Convener Jim Bergeron said that before significantly more time and effort is spent on the 2005 Demonstration, he wanted the group to discuss the fact that there was still a lack of consensus as to whether to move ahead.

Dale Beasley was given an opportunity to express his concerns with the project, as currently designed. He said that the Corps was mostly concerned about Jetty protection. He was concerned that a 7000' by 9000' disposal site might be established, de facto, through this demonstration, and would likely be used beyond the demonstration without appropriate consideration to safety and environmental concerns. He was also concerned about the lack of crab survey and other baseline studies.

Steve Greenwood asked the group how they wanted to deal with these concerns. Greg Smith began by saying that this approval was only for the 2005 Demonstration and anything else would require further scrutiny. Bob Burkle said that he understood some of Dale's concerns but that he's willing to take the risk because of the value of the information to the group. Peter Huhtala from the Pacific Marine Conservation Council seconded this thought and said he wanted to see the Demonstration project happen this year.

Dale concluded the discussion by saying that he would support the project and wants to see it happen this year. Steve then took a last poll of the group about whether to proceed and it was unanimous in support of moving ahead.

Steve then reported that the total cost of the 2005 Demonstration would be approximately \$70,000, and that currently the group still was about \$40,000 short

of the needed commitments. Greg Smith said, "\$70,000 isn't that much for this group. Surely we can come up with this amount."

Several suggestions were made:

- Oregon Sea Grant
- The Pacific Northwest Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- BPA

Dale again said that, if the project were done after September 15, that their boats could be used, cutting that cost by \$6000.

Steve said he would send to all group members the "official" proposal for funding, and he was willing to meet with agency or other officials as necessary to help in soliciting funds. He said that the goal was to get all the commitments necessary by June.