

11/8/18

TO: Lower Columbia Solutions Group
FROM: Jim Owens, Facilitator
RE: PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS
ASSESSMENT: MOVING FORWARD ON MOUTH OF COLUMBIA
RIVER BENEFICIAL USE PROJECT

In response to direction received at the May 2018 Science-Policy Workshop and in consultation with the Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) co-conveners, the following Assessment has been prepared on how to move forward on the Mouth of Columbia River (MCR) Beneficial Use Project. This Assessment is based on input from interviews with a number of key LCSG stakeholders combined with personal observations as the LCSG's facilitator for a number of years. The focus of both the interviews and the recommendations provided is on the types of services desired/needed for the LCSG, how best to obtain these services, their cost, and how to fund them.

A summary table of Program Recommendations is followed by a synopsis of interviews and a recommended work scope and budget for 2019.

A. PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

	Recommendation
Management/Coordination of LCSG Services	<p>Continue to contact with a neutral consultant for general project management for the MCR Beneficial Use Project, management and technical team coordination and facilitation, workshop organizing and facilitation, and general LCSG assistance.</p> <p>Overall management direction should continue to be provided by the two states' coastal management agencies, with some additional management functions handled by WDOE, e.g. web site, mailing list.</p>
Services to be Contracted	<p>Primary Services as defined below under Recommended Scope of Contracted Services.</p> <p>If additional funding can be secured, current services should be expanded to increase the program's visibility through (in order of priority): (1) a program of periodic briefings to Congressional and state legislative staffs; (2) outreach to ports and parties who would be potential members; and (3) media outreach.</p>
Cost of Contracted Services	<p>\$25,850 for Primary Services (as defined below) for a period of 12 months.</p> <p>\$48,950 for Primary and Secondary Services (as defined below) for a period of 12 months.</p>
Funding Solicitation and Contracting Mechanism	<p>A transition in fiscal agent and consultant contract manager services from the National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC) to Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE) is recommended. The arrangement</p>

	<p>with NPCC would be replaced by Cooperative (interagency) Agreements between WDOE and LCSG members whereby LCSG members agree to fund contracted services, with WDOE serving as fiscal agent and consultant contract manager. The Cooperative Agreements would be renewed annually or executed for multiple years. WDOE would need to determine its administrative fee, if any, for administering the Cooperative Agreements.</p> <p>Through the Cooperative Agreements, LCSG members would be invoiced for project management, coordination and facilitation services for LCSG. Conference sponsorships rather than dues would seem to be easier to implement among the various types of LCSG members. The Agreements would focus on annual Science-Policy conference sponsorship while being framed broadly enough to include not only annual conference organization and facilitation but general project management/coordination, staffing of the management and technical teams, and other support services.</p>
<p>Levels of Contributions to Solicit</p>	<p>To support the recommended Primary Services, at least \$30,000 will need to be solicited to account for the inability of some LCSG members to contribute or the ability to contribute at lower than assumed levels, as well as timing limitations associated with budget cycles.</p> <p>Contributions ranging from \$500 to \$6,000 should be solicited. Among the parties to be solicited: Corps of Engineers, EPA, OR Coastal Program, ODFW, WDOE, WDFW, Washington State Parks, Pacific County, Clatsop County, CRCFA, Port of PDX, Port of Ilwaco, Port of Astoria, Columbia River Pilots, CREST, NOAA, USGS.</p> <p>Discussion is needed on the appropriate party to make the solicitation queries.</p>
<p>Contracting Mechanism Options</p>	<p>The current consultant contract expires 12/31/18 and funding has not been secured to extend that contract.</p> <p>To avoid losing continuity in the MCR Beneficial Use Program, ideally the transition from NPCC to WDOE can be implemented by the end of the first Quarter 2019. This will require executing Cooperative Agreements, securing adequate funding to engage a consultant, and contracting for consulting services.</p> <p>If additional time is required for a full transition, LCSG should consider continuing to obtain contract services through NPCC until a set time in the future, e.g. 7/1/19 or 12/31/19. The nature of services will be dictated by the amount of money that can be secured by 3/31/19.</p>

	<p>If the WDOE-proposed Cooperative Agreement program is not supported by LCSG members or is determined to be functionally infeasible, LCSG should continue to obtain contract services through NPCC through December 2019 while pursuing a contracting arrangement with CREST or a similar 501(c)3 organization that is initiated in January 2020 (or sooner if possible).</p>
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B. ASSESSMENT SYNOPSIS

Management/Coordination of LCSG Services

The general feeling among parties interviewed is that current support services are adequate but that, with additional funding, the program could be better promoted, Congressional and legislative staff regularly briefed, and more between-meeting coordination could occur. There are also suggestions for engaging additional parties, especially ports. Conversely, several interviewees feel that annual convenings suffice as a level of effort.

For most interviewees, having an agency assume responsibility for management and coordination raises concerns about capacity, priorities, and ability to manage other agencies. A common concern is the perception of an agency having an inherent bias. For these parties, continuing to rely on contracted services makes the most sense. Other suggestions include one or more state agencies assuming more management functions or a joint Corps-states management team.

Interviewees generally agree that it is important to continue to have neutral facilitation, especially with two states and diverse interests involved. Without it, the continued participation of some groups could be in doubt. A minority view is that perhaps the program has reached the point where perhaps it can continue to move forward without a neutral facilitator.

Funding of Services

All parties interviewed desire to move away from ad-hoc funding, which is perceived to be challenging and unsustainable. Several parties suggest that the Corps and the states’ coastal zone management agencies should be primary contributors.

Interviewees are divided over conference registration/sponsorships versus membership dues as a preferred option to the current funding approach. Some parties feel that conference sponsorships would be relatively easy to administer and to contribute to. Others suggest that membership dues would be a better funding source, assuming there are tiered levels of membership. Federal partners strongly prefer a sponsorship approach. A phased approach is also suggested, starting with conference sponsorships in the short term, then transitioning to a dues program.

Additional funding options identified include having the two states specifically budget for LCSG support, recognizing that General Fund support may be challenging. It is also suggested that LCSG support be budgeted as part of grants. Obtaining funding through grants and foundations is expected to be challenging, especially for ongoing services; funds are likely to be more available for specific projects or events.

Considerations include funding cycles, which can be unpredictable and vary among agencies, and having a specific scope of work to budget for. For federal agencies, moving funds to another federal agency is the easiest way to transfer monies.

Contracting for Services

In response to the question of options for contracting for and managing consultant services, interviewees support either continuing to contract through NPCC or through a new entity, such as a 501(c)3 organization. A variety of organizations are suggested, with CREST (which is not a 501(c)3), most frequently suggested. CREST indicated that it would be interested in serving as fiscal agent and contract manager. The South Pacific County Community Foundation is another suggestion for a local fiscal agent.

Late in the interview process, WDOE proposed the concept of it serving as fiscal agent/consultant contract manager through a Cooperative Agreement program that it indicates would be relatively easy to set up, would not require significant administrative time or overhead, and may offer a multi-year approach. It indicates that there is precedence within the agency in administering such inter-agency, inter-party agreements. Among the few interviewees queried about such a Cooperative Agreement program, it appears to be a feasible approach and potentially easier to administer than the NPCC contract, as well as it keeps the program more closely under LCSG control.

Addressing Cape Disappointment/Benson Beach Erosion

Interviewees generally believe that it is critical and timely to explore options for on-shore placement at Benson Beach to help address increasing erosion at Cape Disappointment State Park and to avoid future impacts to the North Jetty. It is suggested that coordination with other West Coast dredge operations may achieve efficiencies in dredge use and reduce costs. Several parties question why the Beneficial Use program hasn't moved to on-shore disposal when it was identified at least 6 years ago as the most beneficial use of dredged materials.

Recognizing that the approved MCR Regional Sediment Management Plan identifies a program of both nearshore and on-shore disposal, several parties suggest that adequate discussion of how, rather than whether, on-shore disposal at Benson Beach can move forward be part of the upcoming LCSG workshop. Washington State Parks and Recreation should be actively engaged in the conversation and solicited for financial contributions.

C. RECOMMENDED SCOPE OF CONTRACTED SERVICES

PRIMARY SERVICES

Timeframe: 12 months

Task 1: Coordination with Conveners

Assist and advise Oregon and Washington project managers and other key participants as appropriate on project meetings, action items and other aspects of project management. Organize regular conferences (in-person meetings or teleconferences) for purposes of project check-in and identification of next steps. Prepare summaries of all meetings and teleconferences.

Budget: \$5,600

Personnel Hours: 36 hrs. @ \$150/hr. = \$5,400

Expenses (telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$200

Task 2: Facilitation of Management and Technical Teams

Organize and provide neutral facilitation of Technical and Management team meetings and conference calls to plan for 2019 beneficial use site disposal, monitoring and data analysis. Prepare and distribute summaries. Provide in-between meeting coordination with team members.

Budget: \$5,000

Personnel Hours: 32 hrs. @ \$150/hr. = \$4,800

Expenses (telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$200

Task 3: Organization of Science-Policy Workshop or Similar Forum

Consult with Management Team on and organize Science-Policy Workshop or other appropriate forum in Spring/Summer 2019 on status of disposal/data collection programs at South Jetty and North Head Sites, options for and feasibility of on-shore disposal, program for implementing adaptive management on an ongoing basis, and other topics. Prepare and distribute report on results.

Budget: \$9,760

Personnel Hours: 36 hrs. @ \$150/hr. = \$5,400

Support services: 16 hrs. @ \$85/hr. = \$1,360

Expenses (room rental, refreshments/meals, lodging, mileage, other direct expenses): \$3,000

Task 4: Program Information

Assist WDOE in updating and maintaining a project contact list. To help update the project website and bibliography of reports, assist WDOE in collecting historic paper and electronic files. Review the project web site, blog and other social media background information.

Budget: \$1,220

Personnel Hours: 8 hrs. @150/hr. = \$1,200

Expenses (telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$20

Task 5: 2020 Work Scope

Prepare recommended 2020 consultant work scope and budget for Management Team review, based upon results of the 2019 LCSG program and direction on desired consultant services to be contracted and the approach to be employed for contracting.

Budget: \$920

Personnel Hours: 6 hrs. @150/hr. = \$900

Expenses (telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$20

Task 6: Case Statement

In consultation with LCSG members, develop a cast statement(s) designed to increase the program's visibility and for briefings with Congressional and legislative offices, potential partners, and the media. Produce a visibly pleasing handout(s), web text and links, and other appropriate informational pieces. Secure assistance from an agency member(s) with graphics and reproduction.

Budget: \$1,520

Personnel Hours: 10 hrs. @150/hr. = \$1,500

Expenses (telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$20

Task 7: Project Management/Coordination

Assist the Steering Committee, Management and Technical teams, LCSG and National Policy Consensus Center to organize additional meetings, prepare and present information, respond to inquiries, and other tasks needed to accomplish the objectives of the MCR program. Prepare monthly invoices and progress reports.

Budget: \$1,830

Personnel Hours: 12 hrs. @150/hr. = \$1,800

Expenses (telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$30

Primary Services Total Budget: \$25,850

Total Personnel Hours: \$22,360

Total Expenses: \$3,490

SECONDARY TASKS

Timeframe: 12 months

Task 8: Briefings of Congressional and Legislative Offices

In consultation with LCSG members, identify appropriate messages and “asks” of Congressional and Legislative leaders. Organize and participate in presentations on the LCSG program, its accomplishments, and current activities for Congressional and legislative offices in Oregon and Washington. Prepare summaries of all presentations.

For budget estimation purposes, 12 presentations are assumed; 6 in either Southwest WA or Olympia and 6 in Portland or Salem OR.

Budget: \$12,400

Personnel Hours: 80 hrs. @150/hr. = \$12,000

Expenses (mileage, telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$400

Task 9: Outreach to PNWPA, Individual Ports and Other Potential Partners

Organize and participate in presentations on the LCSG program, its accomplishments, and current activities with Pacific Northwest Ports Association, select Lower Columbia River ports, and other associations and potential partners identified by LCSG. Prepare summaries of all presentations.

For budget estimation purposes, 6 presentations are assumed.

Budget: \$5,050

Personnel Hours: 32 hrs. @150/hr. = \$4,800

Expenses (mileage, telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$250

Task 10: Outreach to Media

Organize and participate in presentations on the LCSG program, its accomplishments, and current activities with key media outlets in SW Washington and NW Oregon. Prepare summaries of all presentations.

For budget estimation purposes, 6 presentations are assumed.

Budget: \$4,725

Personnel Hours: 30 hrs. @150/hr. = \$4,500

Expenses (mileage, telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$225

Task 11: Update of RSMP

Update 2011 MCR Regional Sediment Management Plan to reflect decision-making since its approval on disposal methods, volumes of material to be deposited, details on beneficial site locations, permitting, and other aspects of the program.

Budget: \$925

Personnel Hours: 6 hrs. @150/hr. = \$900

Expenses (mileage, telephone, internet, copies, other direct expenses): \$25

Secondary Services Total Budget: \$23,100

Total Personnel Hours: \$22,200

Total Expenses: \$900

Combined Primary and Secondary Services Total Budget: \$48,950

Total Personnel Hours: \$44,560

Total Expenses: \$4,390