

Grants Pass Session Overview – June 4, 2012

Note: the following information is offered for the Board to consider as it develops its Long Term Investment Strategy.

Long-Term Investment Strategy Comments

Grants Pass participants stressed that OWEB's investments should lead to a better educated general populous (statewide) and landowners, land managers, students and others who are more aware of the impacts their actions have on their watershed's ecological health. OWEB's investment strategy should underscore the need for both regional and statewide education and public outreach, while focusing restoration grant funds on whole watershed health: uplands, riparian, aquatic and wildlife habitat. Participants felt that OWEB's strategy should support the monitoring necessary to develop and maintain data-driven information. The monitoring should not only attend to the ecological aspects of OWEB's work, but also the social and economic benefits that OWEB's funding is providing the region. In addition, participants felt that OWEB should integrate accountability requirements into its grants/investments to help people stay focused on regionally developed priorities—which OWEB supports through an outcome focused approach to investing.

Grants Pass participants also focused on the important role OWEB plays/can play as a convener and supporter of collaborative partnerships at both the local, regional level and federal. OWEB could help by being more proactive in: reaching out to other funders; helping to develop local partnerships; and creating networks that could offer shared resources (such as technical assistance, shared services and more integrated/cross-council communication). Proven methods that enhance communication and collaborative actions is information that OWEB can easily provide—and would benefit the region.

As in other places on the tour, Grants Pass participants stressed the importance of local information driving decisions—including those made by the Regional Review Team. Many noted that more opportunities to communicate earlier with Regional Review Teams would enhance the grant process at the local level. They also thought that OWEB should find ways to support new and innovative ideas through on-going or special grant funds.

Finally, participants urged OWEB to be more vocal with its public acknowledgement of successes that OWEB funds create. This would not only be useful at lifting morale and maintaining participation, but would also be a means of educating both those involved in watershed work—and those who only read about it.

Additional Advice

Participants suggested that developing an on-line application process would be very useful for those further from Salem. And some noted that OWEB's analysis (and sharing of the analysis) of what works to engage people in meaningful watershed restoration work would be mutually beneficial.

Wrap-Up

OWEB Director Tom Byler and board members Dan Thorndike and Jim Johnson ended by noting that Grants Pass participants' saw a real need for OWEB assisting with education, monitoring, innovation, flexibility, integration, and enhanced collaboration and communication.