

March 12, 2002

Erik Merrill
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Northwest Power Planning Council
831 SW 6th Avenue, suite 1100
Portland, OR 97204-1337

RE: Lower Columbia Province, Project # 31012

Dear ISRP Members:

1. Why is this program necessary when there are other incentive programs such as CREP?

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is the state sponsor for the Oregon Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. OWEB is also a sponsor for the initial efforts of mainstem riparian conservation sponsored by the Cascade-Pacific RC&D. The project described in application # 31012 highlights some of the limitations of the CREP program. In its current form, the CREP program will not enroll more than 150 feet of the riparian floodplain. The USDA standards for the program limit enrollment to a narrower corridor.

The floodplain in the reach of the Willamette proposed for easements has been cleared and managed for agricultural use. The Oregon CREP can provide a 10-15 year contract to restore riparian vegetation along the immediate riparian zone.

2. What attributes of the USDA riparian protection programs are deemed inadequate for this area?

There are two significant limitations to the Oregon CREP as it relates to this project:

- The time limit on the CREP contract (10-15 years), and
- The limitation of the eligibility of lands for enrollment (limit on the width of floodplain able to be enrolled).

3. How will this program meet conservation objectives?

The project focuses on the reach of the Willamette where historical channel complexity has been most compromised (Sedell and Froggatt, 1984; Benner and Sedell, 1997). The project is located along a reach of the Willamette River that is important for rearing of McKenzie River salmon and steelhead (Lichatowich, 1999).

4. How will the proposed program differ from CREP and other state and federal incentive programs?

The proposal will add to the CREP program by adding both area and duration to the riparian conservation easements. The funding anticipated from the grant will allow easements to be made for a greater area (wider floodplain width) than currently eligible for CREP. The proposed funding will allow permanent easements to be obtained for restoration of floodplain vegetation and channel complexity.

5. Will the program be more flexible than state and federal programs?

The program proposed will be more flexible in that it will be more extensive in area and less encumbered with procedure than existing public programs, like CREP.

6. What are the oversight and easement requirements?

Since the project is being developed at this time, it will be designed after existing programs using easement language from existing riparian easements or USDA contracts. Oversight will be required to verify the project meets restoration goals. Monitoring will be required to document progress towards restoration goals.

I hope this information is useful in the review of project 31012. If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,

Kenneth F. Bierly
Deputy Director

Additional documents submitted in response to this proposal:

[Maryland Easement Program](#)

[Oregon FSA Letter of Support](#)

[Cascade Pacific Letter of Support](#)

[Maryland CREP Easement Option](#)

[Maryland CREP Deed of Conservation Easement](#)