

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Nancy Brown, Environmental Protection Agency, Project Officer  
Alan Henning, Environmental Protection Agency, Project Monitor

**FROM:** Denise Kalakay, Lane Council of Governments, Project Manager

**SUBJECT:** Lane Council of Governments Estuary Project, Cooperative Agreement Progress Report – Billing period: January through March 2010

**DATE:** April 29, 2010

This memorandum describes services rendered, deliverables and outputs completed, and budget status for the EPA/LCOG cooperative agreement for the Multi-city/county Water Resource Assessment Project (MC-WRAP). This progress report is for the January through March 2010 quarter. This narrative coincides with the billing statement for the quarter and describes the services and products provided for the budgeted tasks.

**Project Accomplishments (January– March 2010)** – Overall, this quarter maintained an accelerated pace to meet one of our first phase goals of conducting the wetland inventory work during the prime wetland inventory field season between late February and May. Through a combination of hard work and team work among and between LCOG, Department of State Lands, two wetland contractors, and eight city representatives we were able to get in the field by March and will complete the field work by May.

Following is a brief summary of accomplishments towards each of the contract's major tasks for this time frame:

**Task 1. Project Coordination and Introduction.** This task ensures that the project process moves smoothly, high quality products are generated, and the values of each partner are fully integrated. This task is about 75 percent complete with the majority of the task being completed in the first quarter and the remainder of the task consisting of on-going Steering Team coordination and project management. Activities completed include:

- Coordinated and held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Steering Team group meeting providing an overview and discussion of the inventory portion of the project, discussing roles, and determining city specific needs regarding property owner mailings and public forums.

- Developed a project and meeting calendar and timeline to provide partners, stakeholders and others with a conceptual understanding for the project schedule.
- Initiated Intergovernmental Agreements with cities for project cash contributions.
- Maintained internal project management tasks, such as staff and budget oversight.
- Provided quarterly progress report.

#### **Task 1 Deliverables/Outputs completed**

- Regional team formed, and refined project scoping completed
- Kick-off meeting held
- Team meetings held
- Quarterly progress reports prepared and submitted to EPA

**Task 2. Landowner, Public Official, Community Notification and Involvement.** This task creates an initial support for the project throughout the region. It includes initiation of outreach activities to raise knowledge and provide input regarding project goals, activities and approach among local governing officials, developers, and property owners with riparian areas or potential wetlands on their property. This task is complete. Activities performed during this reporting quarter include:

- Finalized and distributed a template letter and access permission form, including feedback from partners and contractors, to be customized and sent to “Potentially Affected” (see Task 3) property owners requesting access permission to their property.
- Finalized and distributed a flyer/poster and press release to cities to advertise and inform regarding the public forums held in each city. Updated website with forum information for all eight cities.
- LCOG staff and City representatives participated in several media interviews and/or submitted news releases resulting in articles for each city in local newspapers and newsletters as well as broader publicity through larger regional newspapers (Corvallis and Albany) and radio programs.
- Established protocols for letter mailings and mailed response processing. In order to meet the very tight schedule for beginning field work in early March it was necessary to very clearly outline the process for establishing mailing lists, formats for mailing, formats for return mailings, and a method for entry of the data and distribution to the cities and wetland contractors.

- Printed and mailed about 1,500 letters with return envelopes directly to property owners that potentially have wetlands and/or riparian areas. Letters explained the project, the ecological services of wetlands and riparian areas, and requested permission to access property. Table 1 provides a summary of the response rate for each City. As the table shows, the response rate was very positive, and exceeded the project target of between 20% and 35%.

**Table 1. Permissions Response Summary**

	Taxlots		
	Access Requested	Access Granted	Access Percent
<b>Harrisburg</b>	213	97	45.5%
<b>Monroe</b>	97	47	48.5%
<b>Adair Village</b>	41	14	34.1%
<b>Scio</b>	128	52	40.6%
<b>Mill City</b>	224	63	28.1%
<b>Creswell</b>	293	66	22.5%
<b>Cottage Grove</b>	351	136	38.7%
<b>Lowell</b>	99	32	32.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,446</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>35.1%</b>

- Personally contacted through phone or face to face meeting, property owners with property in locations critical to having site access.
- Responded to over 100 inquiries regarding the project and/or specific properties.
- Prepared public forum materials including presentations, fact sheets, and posters.
- Coordinated, scheduled and held public forums in each of the eight partnering cities. Owners of property with potential wetlands and/or riparian areas as well as the public as a whole were invited. Forum participants were presented with a project overview as well as a detailed explanation of the field work that would take place on their property (or in their neighborhood). Representatives from the cities, contractor firms, LCOG and Department of State Lands (DSL) were present at every meeting. Residents also had ample opportunity to visit with staff and the contractors to learn about the overall project and/or their specific property. Attendance at forums ranged from between 20 and 50 people.

**Task 2 Deliverables/Outputs completed:**

- At least 85% of property owners notified and property access granted on at least 20% - 35% of properties with potential wetlands.
- Outreach materials including notification to all property owners, website information, articles, presenting the project's goals, objectives and approach and the ecosystem services provided by water resources.

- Public forums and public official information sessions held in each jurisdiction.

**Task 3. Data Collection and Consultant Selection.** This task relates to the assurance of a high quality inventory and assessment through the compilation of all background materials and the selection of a wetland consultant. This task has been completed during this reporting period. Activities performed include the following:

- Finalized contract negotiations with two wetland contractors, SWCA and ESA Adophson.
- Reviewed and incorporated feedback from EPA on the Quality Assurance Plan (QUAP) and submitted Final QUAP for final review.
- Completed digitizing wetland delineations and determinations from DSL files.
- Generated a preliminary GIS layer of "Potentially Affected Taxlots" for each of the eight cities using GIS based selection criteria (reflecting taxlots intersecting with features associated with wetlands and/or riparian areas: National Wetland Inventory, DSL delineations or determinations, river and stream layers, hydric soil layer). Presented the preliminary "Potentially Affected Taxlots" layer to the Steering Team. Generated final "Potentially Impacted Taxlots" layer with contractor refinements and local insights.
- Generated a spreadsheet and map layers reflecting "access permission status" of properties in each city. Data was generated from permission forms mailed in to LCOG or cities, by landowners.
- Gathered light detection and ranging (LiDAR) data in areas of the region where data is available and used LiDAR to establish contours for each city.
- Prepared FINAL base maps for each city showing taxlots, potentially affected taxlots, access permission status, study areas (with adjustments), wetland or riparian indicators such as hydric soils, NWI wetlands, soils with hydric inclusions, shallow depth to groundwater, waterways, etc. Base maps incorporated new data and feedback provided by contractors, city staff and other team staff.
- Coordinated work of LCOG and contractor GIS teams to prepare field maps at a 200'/1" scale using base maps GIS layers. Completed further data and base map revisions and updates to meet contractor field work needs.

**Task 3 Deliverables/Outputs completed:**

- Request for Proposals prepared and advertised.
- Wetland consultant selected and contract executed.
- Quality Assurance Plan completed and approved by EPA.
- Background materials compiled and base maps produced for contractors.

**Task 4. Conduct Local Wetland and Riparian Area Inventory and Functional Assessments.** This task represents the core of the project providing local jurisdictions and state agencies with an accurate depiction of where significant wetland and riparian resources are in order to protect those areas from development. This task was started during this reporting period and the remainder of the task will be conducted by the wetland contractor with LCOG support in the next 6 months. This task is about 25 percent complete and includes the following activities:

- Coordinated development and distribution of hard copy field maps and loaded GIS data on Trimble Yuma GPS ruggedized tablets (ArcPad) that display preliminary wetland map data and allow field staff to map wetlands directly onto the tablet screen.
- Contacted and scheduled meeting times with property owners granting access and desiring to be present when field work is conducted.
- Reviewed base maps and developed field approach for each city.
- Calibrated field teams and began field work focusing on agricultural lands first which are the areas where hydrology observation can be critical in determining wetlands.
- Began field work for the non-agricultural areas of each city study area. Field mapped wetland boundaries where access was granted and inventoried wetland and riparian areas with off-site methods such as adjacent property observations, if possible (note: field observations are only one factor in the off-site evaluation). Filled out wetland unit summary sheets for each site.
- In the northern cities (Adair Village, Harrisburg, Monroe, Scio, and Mill City), evaluated wetland functions and conditions of each wetland site using Oregon Freshwater Wetland Assessment Methodology (OFWAM) methodology. Note: The southern group of cities (Creswell, Cottage Grove, Lowell) will conduct the assessment evaluation during our current billing quarter.
- Reviewed preliminary riparian area inventory materials for Lane and Benton Counties and participated on technical advisory committees for each county.

**Task 5. Water Resource Land Use Action Kit Development.** The policy portion of the project provides a menu of mechanisms for cities to choose from so that water resources are protected and their environmental values maintained. This task remains in the early stages with only preliminary work completed. Activities from this period include:

- Continued background research of Statewide Planning Goals 5 and 6 and related Oregon OARs.

**Task 6. Public Official and Community Involvement.** This task is designed to provide a series of vehicles to generate informed decision making and give public officials and staff an accurate depiction of how their constituents feel on issues related to water quality. The task will help ensure that ordinances and programs are developed which meet public need and have public support, thus nurturing in policy makers the political will needed to take necessary implementation steps. This task is about 15 percent complete and includes the following activities:

- Initiated the process of securing added-value project assistance through the University of Oregon's RARE program (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments). RARE is a competitive process that places AmeriCorps volunteers into rural project settings to assist rural areas in planning and development efforts. If selected, the cities will fund the RARE participant.
- Attended and participated further in the County Commissioner led Benton, Lane, Linn Water Resource Study Group meetings to share common objectives across projects and to integrate projects towards common goals. Planned public meetings in each county to bolster awareness of water resource issues and gain input from citizens about water resource values.
- Public officials (including City Councilors and Planning Commission members) were in attendance at every Public Forum held, providing them further exposure to the project's goals as well as strengthening their understanding of the sentiments and perspectives of staff and the public related to the project.

**Project Issues/Points of Interest:**

- The GIS components of the final base maps were more complicated in the northern group of cities than in the southern group. This is largely because the southern group consists of cities within Lane County and all applicable data layers are carefully maintained by LCOG. It was necessary that GIS data for the northern cities be assembled and formatted from several sources. This created some GIS related complications with sharing data between LCOG and SWCA, the northern group contractor, resulting in more work/cost than anticipated.
- Public Forums were an effective means for both public information and feedback, as well as towards strengthening the relationships between contractors, agency staff, public officials and city partners. The forums generated a positive team feel which is one objective of the project and is critical to the success of the overall project. In general, all of the forums were attended by at least a few citizens that were concerned about their property rights and values being impacted by the project. Although those concerns were not always eliminated during the forum, citizens did leave with an understanding of the benefits of inventorying and

protecting resources that are important. In addition, by the end of the evening, most of the people that were the most vocal during the forum were signing their property access permission forms as they left.

- The tight time line to begin field work this Spring was a constant challenge for the multiple partners in the project. We were often dependent upon one another, at times relying on one or two day turn around times between LCOG, contractors, and city staff. It was truly a successful team effort that is rarely seen.