

WETLAND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT GRANTS FY 2012

Alaska

Homer Soil and Water Conservation District – *Developing Key Components of a Coordinated Wetlands Program for the Kenai Peninsula*

This project proposes to develop three outputs to create a successful Wetland Program Plan (WPP) for the Kenai Peninsula. The three components Homer Soil and Water Conservation District proposes to develop are a comprehensive and central online wetlands website, wetland management strategies for peninsula wetlands which will be correlated to existing tools (maps and wetland assessment data), and a gap analysis identifying information gaps in the peninsula's set of existing tools.

Native Village of Eklutna – *Proposal to Develop a Tribal Wetland Program Plan*

The Native Village of Eklutna (NVE) proposes to develop a WPP in coordination with several partners or stakeholders. They plan on partnering with the primary landowner in the watershed, Eklutna, Inc. and other stakeholders through the Eklutna River Watershed Council (ERWC). NVE indicated that other stakeholders (Federal/State regulatory and management agencies and landowners) would be consulted and invited to meetings. They also plan to invite The Great Land Trust and Alaska Conservation Fund as cooperating entities. The WPP will address the core area of regulation, with the objective to promote compensatory mitigation projects.

Chilkoot Indian Association – *The Chilkoot Indian Association Wetland Program Planning Capacity Building Project*

The Chilkoot Indian Association plans to build Tribal and other interested stakeholders' capacity to develop a comprehensive WPP. Through trainings, stakeholder meetings, a wetland mapping pilot study, and development of a web-based Wetland Public Education and Planning Tool, this project will equip the applicant and local decision makers with resources to initiate a tribal WPP and local wetland program planning in Haines, Alaska.

Idaho

Nez Perce Tribe – *Developing Goals and Strategies for Wetland Restoration and Protection in Coordination with Partners*

This project will further develop and refine the Nez Perce Tribe's wetland program by 1) identifying restoration/protection goals including priority restoration targets, 2) updating Quality Assurance Project Plan to ensure scientific validity of monitoring activities, 3) developing a wetlands monitoring schedule, 4) monitoring condition of select wetlands, 5) establishing reference conditions, 6) developing wetland management guidance, and 7) providing comments on proposed permits impacting wetlands.

The project objective ties into the EPA Strategic Plan by advancing the restoration and protection of wetlands through developing restoration/protection goals and targets. The Strategic Plan's focus on assessment of wetland conditions will also be addressed by development of a monitoring schedule and establishment of reference condition.

Oregon

Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians– *Developing a Tribal Wetland Program Plan*

The Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians plans to develop a comprehensive WPP focused on Monitoring and Assessment, one of EPA's Core Elements. The WPP will consist of the Tribe's objectives, goals and needs in managing wetland areas of cultural importance within the South Umpqua Basin of the Usual and Accustomed area. Besides a WPP, they intend to establish a monitoring and assessment protocol and create a database of culturally important wetland areas that need to be assessed and monitored for current conditions.

The Klamath Tribes– *Upper Klamath Basin Wetland Program Plan Development Project*

The Klamath Tribe plans to develop a WPP that addresses EPA's two core elements: monitoring and assessment and voluntary restoration and protection. They plan to take the lead in developing the WPP for the Upper Klamath Basin watershed. The lack of a single restoration agency, demands that WPP development process consist mainly of group meetings with all of the relevant actors. A WPP would clearly help prioritize work of the partnering agencies.

Clean Water Services w/Willamette Partnership– *Testing an Oregon Stream Functional Assessment Methodology for Mitigation*

This project addresses one EPA core element (Regulatory) by testing an Oregon Stream Functional Assessment Methodology for Mitigation. Oregon Department of State Lands would partner with Clean Water Services, building on work started under a 2011 WPDG. Oregon does not have an effective way to manage compensatory mitigation for impacts to streams. However, by winter 2013 the state will have a draft functional assessment methodology and mitigation framework to guide stream mitigation. Shifting the state's mitigation program toward a watershed-based approach will require confidence that the methodology is accurate and practical. Current mitigation for impacts to streams is often done with "out-of-kind" mitigation. The 2011 work does not include plans for testing the new methodology. This project will help to accomplish that data gap.

Washington

Washington Department of Natural Resources – Natural Heritage Program – *Updating and Identifying Wetland Conservation Priorities for Washington State - Phase 3: Eastern Washington.*

This project is for two years and builds on and expands the scope to further identify the extent and evaluate conditions of Washington's Natural Heritage Wetlands in eastern Washington. This is Phase 3 of a three phased project. This project completes the work to develop a more comprehensive State-wide inventory and condition assessment of eastern Washington Natural Heritage wetlands. Tools for identifying and reporting Natural Heritage wetlands are also being refined and will be made available for better reporting of new Natural Heritage eligible wetlands. With a greater number of high quality wetlands identified and updated in the Natural Heritage program database, users of the Washington Department of Ecology's Wetland Rating System will also better identify those Category 1 wetlands.

This project addresses Wetland Program Core Elements: Monitoring and Assessment and Voluntary Restoration and Protection. It also will strengthen Washington State's regulatory tools for protecting high quality wetland by serving as a resource for developing wetland protection plans as well as for selecting sites for voluntary restoration and protection.

Washington Department of Ecology – *Developing a Wetland Program Plan for Washington State*

A clear strategy is necessary to have a wetland program that effectively protects wetlands and strives to achieve a net gain in wetland resources. Ecology plans to develop a WPP that addresses the four core areas of a comprehensive wetland program: monitoring and assessment, regulatory, water quality standards, and protection and restoration. Ecology seeks to clarify and inventory the state's existing wetland protection strategy and identify key gaps. They plan to incorporate the reviews of two key plans 1) the 1995 State Wetland Integration and 2) the Puget Sound Action Agenda to identify areas where the WPP can support current efforts as well as fill key gaps. In addition, Ecology will meet with sister state agencies, Washington Department of Natural Resources and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, to identify more comprehensively how the three state agencies contribute to wetland and aquatic resource protection.

Washington Department of Ecology – *Assessing Wetland Buffer Establishment in Washington: Phase 2*

Wetland buffers are a primary wetland protection tool used by state and local agencies in Washington State. This project is Phase 2 of a project to evaluate how wetland buffer establishment and maintenance are being implemented as required under state and/or local regulations. Sites were selected in Phase 1 from four local jurisdictions permit records in Washington State. Using site evaluation and data collection methods developed under Phase 1 funding, Phase 2 will involve collecting data from 50 selected sites. Buffer establishment and condition will be evaluated for 32 sites, including compiling information from permits, providing aerial photos, and reporting on-site data conditions. A final publication will be issued summarizing methods, results and making recommendations for any changes that might be needed in state and local jurisdiction policies and regulations. Applications of this buffer study include: improving the protection of wetlands, providing information to improve the effectiveness and sustainability of compensatory mitigation, providing tools and methods to assist local governments. Core Elements supported by this project include: Monitoring and Assessment and Regulatory.

Colville Confederated Tribes – *Colville Confederated Tribes Wetland Program Plan Development and Wetland Monitoring & Assessment Strategy*

Project objectives are to carry out a set of actions supporting two core elements of the WPP for the Colville Reservation. The Tribe received WPDG funding in 2011 to develop a WPP. Their plan is on track to be finalized this year. The wetlands of the Colville Indian Reservation have tremendous natural and cultural resource value for the Tribal people. Considerable land area, 25 – 30,000 acres of wetlands occur within the reservation. This grant will support one year for a wetland specialist project position. The specialist will in turn produce a wetland monitoring and assessment strategy, an associated Quality Assurance Project Plan, and establish measures of restoration success, performance standards, and past-performance review methods. This grant compliments work completed under WPDG funding provided in 2007 to develop a rapid assessment tool that could be used by multiple departments within the Tribes organization (Forestry, Fish and Wildlife Department, Water Quality Natural Resources, and in 2011.

Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe –*Developing a Comprehensive Wetland Conservation Program for Vulnerable Wetlands and Aquatic Resources*

The Tribe plans to develop a custom wetland assessment method based on a combination of biological and cultural wetland assessment methods. Project objectives include developing a Comprehensive Wetland Conservation Plan that expands the Tribe’s level of understanding of the role and condition of tribal area wetlands (including Hood Canal and its contributing watersheds). The Plan will also serve as a Wetland Program Plan incorporating wetland conservation and policy objectives into their natural resource management program; help document and demonstrate wetland and aquatic resource importance as well as their contribution to larger ecosystem functions (including cultural and aesthetic values); and develop more protective regulations to conserve the tribes local area wetlands.

Cowlitz Indian Tribe – *Cowlitz Historical Mapping and Wetland Program Development*

The Tribe plans to implement a portion of their draft WPP currently under development that will address the following core elements: regulation; restoration; and coordination among Tribal, state, local government and federal agencies. The Cowlitz Indian Tribe propose to accomplish three main goals: 1) add to existing EPA funded GIS mapping coverage of historical wetland mapping in Cowlitz and Lewis counties, Washington; 2) hire a Wetland Ecologist who will coordinate the mapping effort, gather and synthesize data about traditional use, location and conditions associated with aquatic resources, and "ground truth" National Wetlands Inventory and others in mapping historical wetlands; and 3) produce a public document that shares conclusions and data with the Tribe's regional partners and outlines Tribal restoration and conservation goals.