

June 2-3, 2009 OWEB Board Meeting

Executive Director Update #C4: Communications Strategy Update

Background

Since December 2007, the OWEB Board Communications Subcommittee, composed of members Jim Johnson, Meta Loftsgaarden, and Patricia Smith, and OWEB lead staff Carolyn Devine and Tom Byler have met seven times. Discussions have focused on the statutory guidance to the Board regarding OWEB's communications. Building upon this direction, the Subcommittee began drafting goals and outcomes. The Subcommittee recognized that utilizing all communications tools (Education and Outreach grants, the web site, press releases, publications, etc.) will be essential to support the larger agency mission of creating and maintaining healthy watersheds and natural habitats. The challenge is to design a plan that strategically uses these tools, funding, and staff resources toward these outcomes.

To help prioritize resources and hone outcomes OWEB contracted with Gard Communications in January. At that time, Gard undertook an initial discovery process that involved interviewing a few key stakeholders representing a variety of perspectives from every corner of the state. They presented some of their initial findings at the March 2009 Board meeting in Salem.

Recent Activities

On April 21, 2009, the Communications Subcommittee met. The following items were discussed:

1. Awareness

Based on both the March 2009 Board meeting and the April Subcommittee meeting, there is consensus that the main focus of the strategy is on promoting public awareness rather than increasing involvement in the watershed enhancement program. Many landowners, volunteers and others already participate in watershed enhancement activities. However, few Oregonians are aware of these activities and the value healthy watershed brings to their community and economy.

2. Coordination with the Strategic Plan

Gard Communications will coordinate and facilitate both strategies to ensure the Communications Strategic Plan and the strategic plan for OWEB will complement and inform each other.

Attached is a report from Gard describing their discovery process and draft message platform.

Staff Contact

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Carolyn M. Devine, at carolyn.devine@state.or.us or 503-986-0195.

Attachment

- A. Gard Communications Update