

MEMORANDUM

To: Community Stakeholders for the Siuslaw Estuary Partnership
Florence Planning Commission

From: Carol Heinkel, Planning Consultant and Project Coordinator
Sandra Belson, Florence Community Development Director and Project Manager
Liz Vollmer-Buhl, Coordinator/Executive Director of Siuslaw Watershed Council

Date: January 4, 2012

Re: Siuslaw Estuary Partnership

The Siuslaw Estuary Partnership is in its third and final year of the project. The Interdisciplinary Team continues to meet to provide staff support for the project and the third round of public involvement is about to commence. At the January 10, 2012 joint work session, staff will present highlights of the various products that will be available for local review and comment this calendar year and to respond to questions. The brief summary below provides a quick snapshot of where the project stands today. The attached Phase III Work Program provides details on the local adoption process for each of the products as well as anticipated outcomes and their status.

Project Elements Update:

I. SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION: The Interdisciplinary Team continued to provide staff support for the project.

II. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND STEWARDSHIP:

- The EPA Work Plan calls for a Focus Group to be formed the last year of the project to provide in-depth review and comment on the products. Three products are scheduled for completion next calendar year: Aquifer Protection Plan, Wetlands and Riparian Areas Plan, and Siuslaw Estuary Trail Vision. These and other aspects of the Partnership will be presented to the Focus Group as early as January 2012.
- The third Open House is scheduled for April 30, 2012 at the Florence Events Center. Draft reports for products due to be completed this year will be presented for public comment. A newsletter will be prepared and distributed throughout the study area prior to the Open House.
- Staff continue to explore options for the Estuary Trail. City staff have met with members of the Port Board to determine the best way to reach agreement on use of the Port property for a trail. ODOT staff are scheduled to meet with City staff and consulting engineers in January and will, at that time, begin to scope out the costs and requirements for enlarging the culvert in Munsel Creek. The crosswalk at Redwood is on the list to be funded by ODOT and is expected to be constructed in 2012.

III. WATER QUALITY AND QUANTITY:

- **Water Monitoring Program:** George Ehlers, Lane County contract sanitarian, came to Florence on November 3 to investigate the septic systems around the Well B2I. There were some problems with the septic located due east (immediately up-gradient) of the monitoring well, and those problems appear to be fixed. We will continue to monitor this well monthly; and we may install another well further down-gradient, perhaps at the end of the road near the back entrance to Harbor Vista, to see if the high nitrate levels attenuate.

The County sanitarian examined the four lots closest to the monitoring well. Here is his report:

“Southwest lot: The septic system (pressurized bed) was installed in 1991 under permit 90-1680. The bed is located in the SW corner of the lot, and showed no evidence of failure. He talked with the homeowner and she reports no problems with the system. Northwest lot: The septic system (gravity "leach bed") was installed in 1968 under permit 68-1984. The drainfield is located in the NW corner of the lot and showed no evidence of failure. Northeast lot: The septic system (pressurized bed) was installed in 2003 under permit SP03-7041. The bed is located in the SW portion of the lot, and showed no evidence of failure. Southeast lot: The septic system (pressurized bed) was installed in 1982 under permit 82-901. The drainfield is located in the NW portion of the lot and showed no evidence of failure. However, the owner reports they have been dealing with some septic problems. Apparently several months ago they determined that the pump was not functioning properly. He stated the septic tank was overflowing onto the ground surface. He was not sure how long the problem persisted prior to their discovery; he estimated it had been failing for about one month. Several months ago they had the pump replaced and the system now seems to be functioning adequately. This property seems to be the most likely candidate for causing elevated nitrate concentrations in the monitoring well. Now that the system has been repaired, one would expect the concentrations in future samples to return to background levels.”

- **Aquifer Protection Plan:**

- GSI Water Solutions, the hydrogeologist consultants for the project, submitted the draft Source Water Protection Areas (SWPA) Maps to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) for state certification on October 31, 2011. OHA has 60 days to respond with a timeframe for them to decide on the delineation. Other activities can occur simultaneously with OHA's review, including the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Stakeholder process, and the development of the Potential Contaminant Source Inventory.
- GSI is working with staff Team members from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Project Coordinator on a preliminary Contaminant Source Inventory, based on existing information from the 2003 Inventory and planned land uses in the area.
- The TAC has been formed and approved the revised Scope of Work, Plan Outline, and Policy Analysis at their first meeting on October 5, 2011.

- The DWSA within the North Florence Sole Source Dunal Aquifer, once delineated and certified by the OHA, will be considered a “significant groundwater resource” under Goal 5 because the “public water system served by the wellhead area has a service population greater than 10,000 or has more than 3,000 service connections and relies on groundwater from the wellhead area as the primary or secondary source of drinking water.”¹ As such, it will be adopted as part of Florence’s Comprehensive Plan along with policies to protect the resource.
- DEQ will certify the Aquifer Protection Plan for the Source Water component. Local adoption is not required for that to occur; but the City and the County both have to “sign off” on the Plan before DEQ will certify it. This “sign off” could occur by motion after a work session with the City Council and the Board of Commissioners. It could conceivably be a joint work session. Staff could put the item on the agenda and ask for a motion of support for the Plan and then it would be submitted to DEQ. Then, the Comprehensive Plan and Code amendments would be submitted to the City Planning Commission and Council with the goal of City adoption by September 30, 2012. County co-adoption could occur after City adoption; but co-adoption was not promised in the EPA grant work plan. City and County staff could ask to have this item go before the elected officials in the Spring, after the April 30 Open House. That way, staff can report on any public comments received at the Open House.
- City staff are in the process of forming the Stakeholder Group for the Aquifer Protection Plan.

■ **Siuslaw Interpretive Site:**

This is a match project in the EPA Work Plan. A land use application is being submitted to the Florence Community Development Department and will undergo a completeness review. Once city staff deem the application complete, it will be scheduled for a Planning Commission public hearing.

IV. WETLANDS AND RIPARIAN AREAS PLAN:

The City Project Manager and Project Coordinator are working closely with DLCD to propose significance criteria that make sense for Florence using the Oregon Rapid Wetlands Assessment Protocol (ORWAP). It has recently been ascertained that Statewide Planning Goal 17 “supersedes Goal 5.” Thus, any wetlands that are already subject to the Coastal Overlay Zones in Florence are not subject to the Goal 5 process. The study area for land use measures in the Partnership is the urban growth boundary (UGB). City GIS staff and Lane County staff have overlaid the Coastal Shorelands Overlay Zones onto the wetland maps to get a precise depiction of the wetlands subject to Goal 5. Lane County has also completed an overlay of county zoning onto the wetlands to ascertain if any potential land uses outside the UGB pose a threat to the wetlands that provide recharge and/or water quality function for the aquifer. Staff are now fine tuning new proposed significance criteria and will seek DSL concurrence. Then, the proposed criteria will be

¹ OAR 660-023-0140 (5).

presented to Planning Commission and Council and, if all agree, DSL will be asked to formally “accept” the proposal for use in Florence.

- V. KEY ESTUARY WETLANDS:** The Siuslaw Watershed Council (SWC) and sub-contractors (McKenzie River Trust (MRT), Green Point Consulting (GPC), and Habitat Contracting (HC)) continue to make progress on the Key Estuary Wetlands component of the SEP. As noted previously, the completed North Fork Marsh Management Plan for use by McKenzie River Trust (the landowner) has been shared with funders and partners. Also as previously reported, on Waite Ranch, GPC continued with analysis of monitoring data. Trained volunteers continue to collect water quality and invasive species data. The SWC, partners, and sub-contractors continued to work on project development, communicate with technical partners about future potential data needs, and analysis of design options. The SWC continues to manage sub-contractors and facilitate Key Estuary Wetland Team communication at the SWC’s Technical Team meetings. Work associated with the North Fork Marsh and the Waite Ranch Restoration Site is funded by the SEP-EPA, WWRI, ODFW R&E, OWEB, and other sources.

P:\Community Development\Estuary Partnership - EPA\II-Public Outreach\Stakeholders\Agenda
Packets\Jan 10, 2012\Memo 1-10-12.doc