

Siuslaw Estuary Partnership

An Integrated Multiple Objective Approach To Watershed Protection and Restoration

Public Involvement Plan

Approved by the Florence Planning Commission, January 12, 2010

Current Status of this Plan

On January 12, 2010, this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was approved by the Florence Planning Commission, the City's Committee for Citizen Involvement. A draft PIP was prepared with the guidance of the Public Education and Stewardship Staff Team, a sub-team of the Inter-disciplinary Team for the Siuslaw Estuary Partnership Project. The Siuslaw Estuary Partnership Project is funded by the Environmental Protection Agency's West Coast Estuaries Initiative for Coastal Watersheds Program and project partners to protect and restore water quality and wildlife habitat in the Siuslaw River Watershed.

Introduction

Public Education and Stewardship is one of the key objectives of the Siuslaw Estuary Partnership Project. It is intended to provide broad policy guidance on the structure and content of the public involvement program for the project. The detailed implementation of this PIP will be documented in a more detailed "Key Messages and Strategies" document that will be developed, updated and revised throughout the project as needed and appropriate to implement this PIP.

This PIP is further defined in the following sections:

- Purpose
- Target Populations
- Tools and Methods
- Key Messages and Strategies
- Guiding Principles
- Stakeholders Groups

Purpose

The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) is to establish a framework for public involvement in the Siuslaw Estuary Partnership Project, consistent with the following Citizen Involvement Goal, Objectives, and Policies stated in the adopted Florence Realization 2020 Comprehensive Plan:

"Goal

To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

Objectives

1. To encourage citizen input in the preparation of plans, implementation measures and plan revisions.
2. To take into account the desires, recommendations and needs of citizens during the planning process.

Policies

1. The Planning Commission shall act as the City's Committee for Citizen Involvement. (Approved by LCDC, March 1, 1976.)
2. A Citizen Advisory Committee, appointed by the City Council, shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Florence Planning Commission to assure the broadest input during periodic review and post acknowledgment Plan and zoning amendments.
3. The City Council shall ensure that a cross-section of Florence citizens is involved in the planning process, primarily through their appointments to the Planning Commission, Design Review Board, Citizen Advisory Committee and other special committees.
4. Official City meetings shall be well publicized and held at regular times. Agendas will provide the opportunity for citizen comment.
5. Records of all meetings where official action is taken shall be kept at City Hall and made available on request to the public.
6. Planning documents and background data shall be available to interested citizens.
7. The Citizen Involvement Program shall be reviewed annually.
8. Citizen involvement shall be assured in the review and update of the Comprehensive Plan."

Target Populations

The Siuslaw Estuary Partnership Project will impact specific population groups. The tools and methods described below will be used to ensure outreach and opportunities for involvement and stewardship by these groups and individuals. The following Target Populations have been identified:

- City of Florence Residents
- Heceta Water District Residents
- Rural Residents with private water source
- Property Owners with wetland, riparian, or upland resources
- Local Officials
- Youth
- Business Owners
- Development Community
- Tourists

Tools and Methods

The project will use the following tools and methods to foster Public Education and Stewardship in the Siuslaw Estuary Partnership project.

- **Web site**
Consultants will be hired to create a web site for the project. It will be maintained by Project Staff team members.
- **Newsletters**
Consultants will assist in the development and distribution of three newsletters for distribution throughout the Study Area. Distribution outside City limits will be conducted by Heceta Water District and other partners, as willing and able.
- **Media Outreach**
Efforts will be made to engage newspaper, radio and televised media in the project. In addition to newspaper notices, press releases will be prepared at key junctions and milestones; meetings will be held with media representatives to provide detailed background and respond to questions; and the media will be notified and invited to participate in all public events.
- **Signage around Clear Lake**
Five educational signs will be installed around Clear Lake, informing the public of lake water importance and risks.
- **Interested Parties List**
An Interested Parties List will be developed and maintained throughout the project. The list will be circulated at meetings, including open houses, Stakeholder Group meetings, and other meetings so that those interested in staying informed about the project can provide contact information. This list will be maintained and updated over time and direct mailings to this group will be sent notifying them of scheduled events, i.e., open houses, stakeholder meetings, and local official meetings where products are reviewed.
- **Targeted Outreach**
Targeted outreach to key groups will be conducted, including presentations to groups upon request. The Interdisciplinary Team and the Stakeholder Group will be invited to participate in this targeted outreach effort.
- **Estuary Trail Vision**
A vision for an Estuary Interpretive Trail system will be prepared that will, when it is implemented, be an important environmental education tool.
- **Public Open Houses**
The public will be invited to three open houses, one each year of the project. The purpose of the open houses is to provide an opportunity for all interested citizens to learn about the project and its outcomes and to provide comments on draft products, when they are available.
- **Local Official Public Meetings and Hearings**
City Planning Commission and Council will receive monthly reports on the project, including the Public Education and Stewardship Element; and will hold public hearings on the final products to be adopted by the City. Reports to other local

officials, including the Lane County Planning Commission and Board and Heceta Water District Board, will be coordinated by the Interdisciplinary Team member from the respective organization.

➤ **Stewardship Programs**

Several Stewardship Programs are planned and others will be developed during the course of the project. The Stormwater Demonstration Project in Old Town is an example of an opportunity to both educate and involve interested citizens in hands-on caretaking and monitoring of water quality in the estuary. Another opportunity will be promoting efforts to protect and restore wetlands on private property and public participation in protection and restoration of wetlands on City-owned properties. Other efforts are coordination with the Stream Team, to further foster stewardship of Munsel Creek, the estuary, and the North Fork; and involving youth and retirees in projects to clean up and remove invasive and noxious vegetation.

➤ **Coordination**

Coordination is a critical aspect of the Siuslaw Estuary Project. The Interdisciplinary Team provides an exceptional opportunity to pool resources and create a knowledge base and library for staff and the general public. For example, the Interdisciplinary Team will communicate via an intranet site in addition to team meetings. The web site for the project will include links to the partner agencies' web sites and the Team itself is an excellent resource for knowledge and expertise for this project. In addition, the project will coordinate with related public outreach efforts by the City and the partner agencies, e.g., Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP), Green Building Fair in April 2010, Lane County Extension Service, and others; and with all Stakeholder Group outreach, e.g., articles in the groups' newsletters and other coordination.

➤ **Stakeholder Groups**

The Stakeholder Groups will be a key element of the outreach program. This group list was approved by the Florence City Council on December 21, 2009, consistent with the City protocols, and will be modified by the Council over time as need and interest dictates.

The Council decided to form two groups: a general Stakeholder Group and an Elected Officials Stakeholder Group (see Stakeholder Group List for structure and membership).

Stakeholder Group:

The Stakeholder Group consists of representatives of key interests that will be affected by, or potentially affected by, the outcomes of the project. The Stakeholder Group will meet about ten times throughout the three year project; plus, they will be invited to participate in a nine week focus group in the last year of the project to review and comment on all final products. The mission of the Stakeholder Group is to:

- act as a spokesperson for the project
- help plan and implement the public outreach for their respective group
- review and comment on key products
- provide an effective liaison to his/her group, as applicable
- in Phase I, provide comment on the draft the Guiding Principles
- in Phase III, participate in a 9-week focus group to provide detailed feedback on all draft outcomes and products

Elected Officials Stakeholder Group

The Elected Officials Stakeholder Group will be comprised of representatives of elected bodies that will have a role in accepting, endorsing, and/or adopting some or all of the final products. These Stakeholders will be involved in the project more intensively than their respective elected bodies in terms of outreach, education, and stewardship. In this way, they will be positioned to facilitate acceptance of the final products by their respective agencies or organizations.

The Elected Officials Stakeholder Group will meet once or twice each year of the project; and they will meet as needed in Phase III to ensure the final products are consistent with the vision and mission of their respective agency or organization.

The mission of the Elected Officials Stakeholder Group is to:

- act as a spokesperson for the project
- review informational and educational materials
- provide an effective liaison to their elected body
- in Phase I, recommend the Guiding Principles
- in Phase III, meet as needed to ensure the final products are consistent with the vision and mission of their respective agency or organization.

Key Messages and Strategies

Key Messages

Key Messages convey both basic facts revealed in the research tasks, such as the results of the literature search and the water quality and quantity assessment and monitoring program, as well as the response to these facts, including any resulting policy options, recommendations, and conclusions. Key Messages also seek to portray the true purpose and intent of the project and, where indicated, to dispel myths and rumor which can sometimes lead to less than optimal courses of action.

Strategies

Strategies seek to link the Key Messages with the Target Populations, using the agreed-upon tools and methods (see above). Strategies evolve during the course of the project as need and interest demand. The Public Education and Stewardship Committee, Stakeholder Group, and the Interdisciplinary Team will work together to develop and modify public education and stewardship strategies to best fulfill the public involvement Goal, Objectives, and Policies identified in this PIP. When fully developed, Strategies identify timelines, products, and key staff/participants.

Guiding Principles

One of the primary products of the PIP, in concert with the Team Process, is consensus on Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles will be the formally recognized vision for environmental protection in these watersheds. They will set environmental targets and measurable outcomes that will be used in the evaluation of each of the five work elements:

1. Foster Public Education and Stewardship
2. Protect Water Quality and Quantity
3. Protect and Restore Wetlands, Riparian and Upland Areas

4. Protect and Restore Key Estuary Wetlands
5. Plan for Ecological Growth

The Guiding Principles will evolve from a collaborative process of the Public Education and Stewardship Staff Team, the Interdisciplinary Team (aka the “Full Team”) and the Stakeholders, with input invited by all groups and interests. Team members are encouraged to seek input from others in their respective organizations in every step in this process. The revised Draft Guiding Principles Paper will be the subject of input from Stakeholders (at the first Stakeholders Meeting), Elected Officials Stakeholders Group, and the general public via posting on the Project Web Site.

The environmental database for these watersheds is not sufficiently detailed or comprehensive to establish these targets and measures at this time. In addition, consensus among key partners is critical if the standards are to be accepted and administered effectively. For these reasons, it is important that the process, including the public education component of the project, be used to obtain this level of information, comprehension, and commitment.

Environmental targets and measurable outcomes will be established in the Guiding Principles that will guide all products and processes, as discussed above. Long-term outcomes are land use and water management policies and practices that maintain and protect rearing, migrating, and spawning habitat for resident and anadromous fish, and habitat for birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles; conversion of rural lands to urban densities that do not impair water quality or result in dysfunctional stream conditions; enhanced floodplain functions and inter-connected wetlands and floodplain; and on-going surface and ground water quality monitoring and remedial action to prevent contamination. Ultimately, the natural resource economy will be re-invigorated. People will be drawn to the area with a renewed appreciation for its rich and complex ecosystem; and the area will be a model for other small coastal cities faced with growth pressures.

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