



Board Briefing Book May 2024

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Meeting Agenda:

Board of Directors
May 16, 2024, 9:30 to 12:30

Teams meeting link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

- 9:30 Call meeting to order
Review of Agenda
Review and Approval of February Board Meeting Record
Introductions
- 9:40 Presentation by Paul Kolp and Kari Dupler – East Fork Lewis River Project Updates and LCFRB Proposals
Action Needed: Approval for Board Chair to sign proposal submission forms
- 10:00 Presentation by Willie Levenson, Human Access Project
- 10:20 Presentation of the [Blue River: A Call to Heal the Willamette](#) by the Portland Harbor Community Coalition – Cassie Cohen, Ed Edmo, Candice Jimenez
- 10:50 Break
- 11:00 Board Development Committee Report and Recommendations:
 - Review and Approve [Slate of Nominations for 2024/25](#) – **Action Needed:** Approval of Officers, Terms, Committee members. May be taken as single vote.
 - Executive Committee leadership positions for 24/25
 - Board Member Terms (with potential additional nominations in September 2024)
 - New Committee Member on Board Development
- 11:15 Executive Director’s Report
 - Written Report/Board Book Follow Up
 - Grants Update, Pending and Received
 - Contracts Update
 - Personnel Update
 - Legislative Update
 - CCMP Update Check In
- 11:30 Finance Report
 - Quarterly Finance Report
 - [Proposed Revision](#) to Finance Policies for P Cards – **Action Needed:** Approval for Policy Revision
- 11:45 Review and Approve [Board Schedule](#) for 24/25 - **Action Needed:** Approval of Board Schedule
- 12:00 General Updates from Board Members
- 12:30 Meeting Adjourns

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Board Development Committee: August

Executive Committee: September 5th, 2024

Board of Directors: September 19th, 2024

Prior Meeting Record:

Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership Board Meeting Record

Thursday, February 15, 2024 9:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon Estuary Partnership Offices

Members Present: Rian Sallee, Tabitha Reeder, Amy Boyd, Mary Lou Soscia, Barbara Bergquist

Ex Officio Members Present: Rich Doenges, Yvonne Vallette, John Netto, Irma Lagomarsino

Presiding Officer: Rian Sallee

Staff Present: Elaine Placido, Madeline Marucha, Erinne Goodell, Jana Magnuson, Alvey Seeyouma

Introduction and Review of Agenda

Action: *None Required*

Review and Approval of November 30, 2024 Meeting Record

Action: *Approved.*

Executive Director Update

Contracts and Grants. Elaine Placido gave an overview of current and pending contracts and grants.

Personnel Updates. Research Scientist Andi Hurzeler's last day was on January 12. Stormwater Project Manager Aaron Guffey's last day will be March 21. The Estuary Partnership is in the hiring process for a new Stormwater Project Manager. The Education Team will be bringing on three temporary employees for the summer: an intern from the SkillsBridge program, an Environmental Educator for the Paddle Program, and a Summer Paddle Leader.

Legislative Update. The Communications Team will be conducting virtual visits with federal legislators due to the schedule of this year's ANEP meeting and continued uncertainty about the federal budget process. Valerie Pufahl and Erinne Goodell will be attending the RAE conference in October.

CCMP Update. The Partnership is shifting away from surveys as a tool to gather feedback in its CCMP update process. Instead, it will be using walk-and-talk meetings with members of the public and one-on-one meetings with partners.

Fort George Brew Day. Fort George Brewing is partnering with the Estuary Partnership to raise funds during Earth Month. Board members are invited to a Brew Day event on March 25 in Astoria. Also, the Monitoring Team will give a tour of their Eddy Flux Tower in Astoria that day.

Action: *None Required.*

Board Profile Grid

Elaine Placido reviewed the [Board Profile Grid](#) and [Recruitment Strategy](#) with the Board. These documents will guide the Board Development Committee's recruitment of new members in the coming year.

Action: *None Required.*

Board Policy Amendments

Elaine Placido presented [Board Policy Amendments](#) that were approved by the Executive Committee at their February 1, 2024 meeting. These amendments provide guidance for the structure of the Executive Committee.

Action: None Required.

Estuary Partnership Trivia Activity

Elaine Placido led a trivia game about the Estuary Partnership’s staff and projects.

Action: None Required.

CCMP Update Activity

Elaine Placido led a discussion activity about the CCMP update process. The materials from that activity are linked [here](#) and [here](#).

Action: None Required.

Other Business

Rich Doenges will be leaving the Board after this meeting. He is working with Elaine Placido to determine a new Board member representing the Washington Department of Ecology.

Action: None Required.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Submitted by: Elaine Placido, Executive Director; Madeline Marucha, Operations Coordinator

Signature: _____

Date Approved: _____

Upcoming Meetings & Events

Board Development Committee: April 15, 2024

Executive Committee: May 2, 2024

Board of Directors: May 16, 2024

Executive Director's Report:

Welcome to May and our Annual Meeting! So far 2024 has been an incredibly busy year for all segments of our organization. For each of our Board meetings, members of our team prepare brief reports for you in this Board Book about all the different projects that are currently in development and implementation. While I'm here everyday and get to hear regular updates from the teams about what we're working on, it's still so very impressive to read through and see it all summarized. If you have questions after reading through, please feel free to reach out to me or staff.

Below are some of the highlights of what I've been working on:

- CCMP Update:
 - The CCMP Update work has been slowly moving forward. We're currently working to connect for one-on-one meetings with a list of partners and hope to have those conversations complete by the end of the summer. We're working with our partners at CREST and the NPS to plan a CCMP-focused walk and talk out in Astoria in September or October.
- BIL Workplan and Implementation:
 - The BIL has been an important piece of funding for us. We have been able to leverage those funds to get projects completed that likely would never have been implemented. There is incredible flexibility to apply funds to projects that are in our BIL project areas – stormwater, environmental education, and habitat restoration. The funding has meant a lot more work for the admin/finance team, we are working to try to lessen that burden. We are still awaiting our award for Year 3, which began October 2023. I expect it any day and with a starting date change to January 1, 2024. For the most part projects are still spending out year 1 and 2 funds, but there is some use of year 3 for the Ridgefield Pits project. For the September meeting, I'll prepare a report of all BIL funds and projects completed in the first three years.
- Financial Assessment:
 - We have contracted with CFO Selections to complete a financial assessment focused on our finance systems, communication, and workflow. I would anticipate some policy and procedure recommendations and potentially some suggestions to address capacity. This is an opportunity that I'm very excited about and looking forward to learning more. It should be complete in a few weeks. We will provide a report to the Board.
- ANEP Spring Meeting:
 - The Spring Meeting with the EPA and all the NEPs, which is a required element of our EPA Base Funding, was the first week of May in DC. It was a good meeting. I always feel like the meetings agendas are just too full and not really geared to what the NEPs are interested in learning more about – we are hungry for more program administration and grant administration, learning about how to deal with EPA awards that are delayed for months or longer, reporting, etc. But it was a good meeting. The Estuary Partnership co-sponsored a happy hour for delegation and agency staff, that was a fun event though given the tight timelines in DC not many delegation staffers were able to join.
- Preparing for new Fiscal Year:

- The new fiscal year begins July 1. The Board previously approved a 3% COLA and a 3% periodic pay increase (awarded to employees on their anniversary date).
- There has been a significant change to the overtime and exempt employee rule from the DOL. I'll be working through that with my team and our attorney to ensure we remain in compliance with the law.
- Benefits Renewal – It's that time of year again! We met with our broker last week. If we stay with our same medical plan, it will result in about an 8.5% increase. There are a few other options, but we're weighing the impact on employees and impact on the company. We also submitted an updated census and requested a rereating. I also requested a quote to shift our life and short term disability coverage to Hartford, our provider for Paid Leave Oregon, so depending on how that quote looks we may be making a shift there, as well. The Executive Committee will receive a final proposal for approval before the end of the fiscal year.
- Changes to Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) and Paid Leave Oregon (PLO) – Oregon has some significant changes to OFLA and PLO that kick in July 1st. We'll make sure staff has access to that information and are aware of those changes. Primarily, OFLA, which is the protected leave portion of the two statutes, is greatly narrowed. PLO and what it will pay for is clearly defined. And most significantly, employees can no longer use the two concurrently. We're working with our broker to learn more about how to make sure our employees can use their benefits, including OFLA, PLO, PTO, and short term disability.
- NEPORT – We're working on some ways to better incorporate and honor the work of our partners in the region as they implement projects that help achieve the goals of the CCMP.
- Lifestyle Spending Accounts- this was a primary activity of the Wellness Team and an innovative new benefit to offer employees. Unfortunately, it is difficult to identify appropriate and allowable funding sources. I'll continue to work through options with the finance team and our broker to see what kind of solutions we can identify that are defensible and allowable from an audit and finance perspective.
- Policy Updates: We will have several policy updates to consider in September. If there are any Board members who are interested in participating in the review of our policies, particularly Finance, Board, and Employee Handbook, please let me know.

Since our last meeting I've participated in:

- ANEP External Affairs Committee Meetings (2)
- ANEP Executive Committee Meetings (2)
- Led two recruitments – Stormwater Project Manager and Limited Duration Research Tech
- Met with Partners at:
 - WA Department of Ecology
 - Friends of Fox Creek (Spoke at Annual Dinner)
 - CRITFC
 - Human Access Project
 - CREST
 - Spirit Lake Toutle Cowlitz Rivers Community Collaborative

- Met with Congressional Staff from following offices: Blumenauer, Bonamici, Gluskamp-Perez, Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell
- DEI Meetings x3
- Showing of the Blue River film and presentation by members of the Portland Harbor Community Coalition

Team Updates:

Community Programs/Ed Team:

Totals for Education Programs from February 1, 2024 – April 30, 2024

- 58 classes within 19 schools
- 1,464 students
- 144 class lessons
- 31 student field trips

Totals for Education Programs the 23-24 school year from September 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

- 121 classes within 32 schools
- 2,630 students
- 286 class lessons
- 54 student field trips at 13 sites: Salmon Creek, Steigerwald Refuge, Vancouver Lake, Meldrum Bar/Willamette River, Fox Creek, Scappoose Bay/Veteran's Park, Tenny Park, Burnt Bridge Creek, Sequest State Park/Silver Lake, Lacamas Creek Park, Meadowbrook North, Forest Park, Gibbons Creek

Totals for Volunteer + Community Programs from September 1, 2023 – April 30, 2024

- 27 volunteer events
- 492 volunteers engaged (168 youth & 324 adults)
- 11,558 plants installed
- 5 sites for events: Burnt Bridge Creek, Sandy River Delta, Veteran's Park – Scappoose, Steigerwald Refuge, Salmon Creek

New Awards and Projects of Note:

- Our *RCO No Child Left Inside (NCLI) 2023-25* project is in full-swing with the first field trips happening the week of 4/29. This funding program is in partnership with Washington State Parks. Valerie and Jasmine were able to meet with Parks Commissioner Holly Williams to discuss future state park partnership opportunities and hope that Holly will be able to visit one of our programs this spring. The next application period for NCLI will open August 16, 2024.
- We've received two *additional Big Canoe program awards for 2024*:
 - **Metro Central Community Grant** program (\$25,938 fully funded)
 - **City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services Portland Harbor Community Grant** program (receiving \$20,000 of a \$37,000 request).
 - This project was reworked to account for smaller budget. A community-collaborative design, educational map project of Portland Harbor has been moved to a separate funding source (BIL Environmental Education) and will work with Art Nature Place (formerly Super Nature Adventures) to create a waterway educational guide, similar to our land-based maps of Vancouver Lake and Salmon Creek. The cost of this project element is \$4,000. This will be our first canoe-centered, oriented from the river map project.
- Our *East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District Partners in Conservation* grant proposal is on the list of recommended projects to receive full funding (\$25,571 request) for our STEAM Paddle project for Big Canoe programming in 2024. We should receive final notice by 5/7/2024.
- Our collaborative proposal with Confluence Project for *Metro Nature in Neighborhood* funding has been awarded \$98,270. About 20% of funds account for EP's portion of the project. This work will be primarily led by the Indigenous community with support from Confluence and EP for continued work at the Sandy River Delta.
- *ITECK Project at the Sandy River Delta*: We are moving forward on getting this project off the ground using EPA Base 7 funding. We are planning to begin with some site testing this spring but are still waiting for the water levels in the wetland to draw down. Wisdom of the Elders came out for a few days and worked on cutting an access trail into the wetland through blackberry as well around the margin. We invited our Sandy River Delta ITECK partners to participate in our annual Sandy River Delta partners meeting organized by the US Forest Service.
- *Land Care Collective*: (formally referred to as "Next Steps" group)- Marci continues to work with partners from BES and West Multnomah SWCD as a member of the Land Care Collective steering committee. The steering committee planned and facilitated a spring gathering at Tryon State Park on 3/19/24. There were 45 people in attendance

Stormwater

Stormwater Project Manager: The search to hire a new Stormwater Project Manager remains a work in progress. After opening a recruitment, reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and offering the job to two candidates – we have decided to pause the search for a few months. One candidate was

weighing two job offers and ultimately decided on the other. The second candidate ultimately asked for an unacceptable salary.

Baker Bay: Staff are working with KPFF, Learning Landscapes, the City of Ilwaco's contract engineer Gray and Osborne, and the Estuary Partnerships construction management firm, MacKay Sposito, to finalize the bid documents, technical specifications, work area plan, and other final elements. The Estuary Partnership recently contract with MacKay Sposito to provide bidding support and on-site construction management. They will be a great addition to our team and provide a level of construction management expertise for a large stormwater project that our staff lacks. We hope that the project will go to bid in May or early June.

Grattix Box Project: The Grattix Box project is complete. All boxes have been delivered, all final reporting completed, and all project funds have been expended. Building and placing Grattix Boxes was complex with many many moving parts. It is unlikely that we will undertake a larger project like it again (at least in the same way).

Mittleman Jewish Community Center (MJCC): We have been working hard to find a contractor to build the MJCC project. The project is slightly more complex because of the need for a liner, and because of significant City of Portland insurance requirements the Contractor must maintain. We are meeting with Blossom Landscape and Construction to work through a recent bid from them, and will hopefully come to an agreement that would allow them to initiate work in the next month.

Stormwater Design and Engineering On-Call List: The Estuary Partnership completed a solicitation to develop an On-Call list of stormwater focused Landscape Architects and Engineers to provide design and engineering services for the Estuary Partnership's current and future stormwater projects. We have been actively using the list to sign new contracts for work at Sunnyside School, Glencoe School, Rigler School, and the Capen Creek Washougal High School project.

Washougal High School and Surrounding Streets: The City of Washougal and Ecology have a signed Stormwater Financial Assistance Program contract, the Estuary Partnership and the City have a signed MOU, and the Estuary Partnership and Robertson Fick Engineering have a signed contract for Robertson Fick to complete the associated survey, Geotech, design and engineering work associated with the project. Work has begun and the Estuary Partnership just submitted an Ecology 05-05 Cultural Resources form as the first step in getting the ok to move forward with the project's geotechnical work. Ecology is providing \$390,502 and the Estuary Partnership about \$20,000 from our EPA School Stormwater Program grant in match. This is a design only project.

Tualatin SWCD TREE: Staff finalized this project by submitting all final reporting and invoicing. Staff met with folks from Christ the King Lutheran Church, Tualatin SWCD, and Clean Water Services to talk about a future Tualatin In April, staff submitted a pre-application to the TSWCD for a project at the church. In late April, TSWCD invited the Estuary Partnership to submit a full proposal.

EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Fund the Funder: Staff fully started work on this project. All stormwater projects, except the Baker Bay project now fall into this funding source. It seems likely

that our next large High School project, at Evergreen High School in Vancouver will receive design funding (see below). We also recently got the ok to move forward on another High School project in coordination with the City of Vancouver and the Vancouver School District (likely Fort Vancouver High School). Staff are continuing to work with Portland Public Schools, the City of Portland, and others on a series of smaller projects. Though we have not even finished Year 1 of this Six-Year grant we have already come close to securing the necessary \$1.5 (ish) million match.

Evergreen High School: Same as last time: In October 2023, staff wrote an Ecology grant application for the City of Vancouver to submit for a stormwater retrofit design project at Evergreen High School in Vancouver. (This approach mirrors our Ilwaco and Washougal projects – the Estuary Partnership needs a City, County, or Port partner to apply for SFAP funding.) In late January 2024, Ecology released their draft “Offer List” which included \$379,306 in funding for the Evergreen project. The Estuary Partnership’s share, (\$66,936) will come from EPA School Stormwater Project funding. Ecology will release their final “Offer List” in July 2024. The project will likely start in Fall 2024. The project would create designs for stormwater retrofit projects within multiple parking areas on the Evergreen campus.

Clackamas County Water Environment Services (WES) RiverHealth Grant at Sunnyside Elementary School (North Clackamas School District NCS D). We received a \$26,996 RiverHealth grant to build a stormwater retrofit project at Sunnyside School. This funding will provide a match for the EPA grant, and the EPA grant will provide any additional project funding necessary. We have hired Parametrix from our on-call list to develop a stormwater planter. We have worked through multiple design iterations and expect to have a final design ready for bidding in the next few weeks. Construction will likely take place this summer with students involved in planting the area in October/November.

Rigler Elementary School: We expect the stormwater retrofit project at Rigler Elementary School to be one of our flagship projects. Already, in late January 2024, Rigler was the site of a visit from EPA Regional Administrator Casey Sixkiller along with other EPA staff, and staff from the City of Portland, Portland Public Schools, Rigler School, the East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, and the project’s landscape architect Juncus Studio. Recently we signed a contract with Juncus to have them move the project from concept design through community engagement through final construction documents and to provide construction oversight. We also submitted a pre-application for additional project funding to the City of Portland Percent for Green program. The Rigler PTA (Padres Unidos de Rigler) is receiving \$23,000 from the EMSWCD to contribute to the project’s construction.

Science Team:

Staff Updates

- Curtis Helm retired from the Estuary Partnership on May 3. A staff gathering was held in his honor at Chris and McKenzie’s house and was attended by over 50 people including spouses and kids.
- Sarah Kidd has moved on from the Estuary Partnership. Her last day was April 3 and was celebrated with a staff gathering. Sneha Rao is transitioning into the Team Lead position.

Miscellaneous Projects:

- We are working on a follow up to the Tracking Toxics in the Lower Columbia (TLC) project with USGS and CRITFC. The TLC project is updating the status of contaminant levels in the lower Columbia River and updating the sampling design. EPA CRBRA has an RFA out for research and monitoring of contaminants across the basin with an application due date of May 17. We are discussing a collaboration between ODEQ, WA Ecology, and CRITFC for a follow up project in the mainstem. More to follow.
- The Bay to Bay: Community Resiliency project with Washington Sea Grant and Pacific Conservation District is coming to a close. We've held 3 workshops in Baker and Grays Bays regions that have each garnered over 30 participants. We are finishing a Resiliency Plan for hosting on our and Washington Sea Grants websites. This will provide workshop results and conceptual approaches for solutions. We are planning final celebratory workshops for the two regions to present the results of the project and garner support for next steps.
- Science to Policy Summit – this is next week! The agenda is finalized, and we have over 70 people registered. Hope you all can make it!
- Science Work Group – The monitoring team will provide an overview of the new drone and its sensors at the May 28 Science Work Group.

Grant applications:

- The Restoration Team submitted 4 grant applications to the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) which facilitates the Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Salmon Recovery Funding. The grant applications include requests for Dyer Creek construction, Campen Creek construction, Woodard Creek Ph 2 construction, and Woodard Creek Ph 3 feasibility assessment.

Restoration Efforts:

Steigerwald: Continuing plant establishment, site tours and post construction action effectiveness monitoring. The project team has closed out three of five funding sources and completed all regulatory reporting, except FEMA remapping of the floodplain. The team continues to give tours to select parties (including student groups and BPA's executive team), replant select areas, and control invasive species to promote our native plantings. The monitoring team is continuing to establish a pit tag array for fish monitoring and post construction effectiveness monitoring including sediment accretion, water quality, and vegetation communities.

East Fork Lewis River Reconnection Project (Ridgefield Pits, Daybreak Park, and Dyer Creek): The East Fork Lewis River (EFLR) Reconnection Project continues to move towards construction. The Estuary Partnership and design and construction management team are reviewing the draft final design and have initiated the procurement process for hiring a construction firm. The project will correct legacy effects of instream gravel mining and restore three river miles of the EFLR, while protecting homes, county

property, and businesses and creating local jobs for construction crews. Next steps for this important project include finalizing project designs, construction procurement (fall 2024), final regulatory approvals (winter 2024/25), and construction (spring 2025).

Horsetail Creek Phase 2 – Continued plant establishment maintenance and infill at the Horsetail Creek floodplain in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area where 85,000 native plants were planted during 2020-2022. This project expanded the footprint of the restoration completed at the site in 2013. The project team also will install beaver dam analogs at the site in summer 2024.

Horsetail Creek Thermal Refuge Enhancement – Continuing to work on resolving long term stewardship issues for this project so that it can move forward. We completed a feasibility study assessing the potential for constructing a cold-water refuge at the confluence of the Columbia River with Horsetail and Oneonta creeks. Currently, we are evaluating the next steps, including funding options and long-term maintenance and ownership.

Mason Creek – Completed final engineering designs and continuing to work with landowners to gain support for the project. Mason Creek is located about 1 mile downstream of the EFLR Reconnection project. Mason Creek is an important tributary of the EFLR for rearing salmonids and is typically several degrees (Celsius) cooler. Restoration efforts will focus on a 1-mile section of Mason Creek above the confluence and on a ½ mile section of the East Fork Lewis River. The project will reconnect a 10-acre off-channel wetland, improve riparian conditions, increase instream habitat quantity and quality, and enhance existing cold-water refuge areas. We completed the final design package, which includes engineering drawings, cost estimate, design report and material specifications. Project design and permitting was funded by the LCFRB-RCO. We anticipate requesting funding from LCFRB for construction of this project in 2025.

Woodard Creek Ph 2- We've completed final designs and permit applications. We are requesting funding for construction from the Lower Columbia Fish Recovery Board (LCFRB) this year for construction in 2026. We received funding from the State of Washington's Recreation and Conservation Office Salmon Recovery Funding Grant for a restoration project completed in 2021. The project will reconnect the channel to the entire valley bottom in an area impacted by historic road building, timber harvest, and mining. The project will take place on U.S. Forest Service land, and they are our partner on this project. After multiple reviews by USGS, USFS and a third-party engineering firm, we revised the design package in late 2023 and early 2024. We are applying to LCFRB-RCO for a third restoration phase that would occur downstream of Phase 2; this is a very complex project that would take years to design and permit.

Multnomah Channel Marsh Natural Area (MCMNA) - Continued assessing feasibility of replacing culvert at Crabapple Crossing. This project includes two restoration projects –a floodplain reconnection to the sloughs and marsh habitats of the site and the replacement of the Crabapple Creek culvert under Highway 30. The culvert poses a barrier to fish and amphibian passage under Highway 30. The final 60% design for the floodplain reconnection part of the project was completed in November. We are still assessing the feasibility of replacing the culvert under Highway 30. Working with ODOT, the railroad, and ODFW, we are developing a list of replacement options and cost estimates of each. We expect to select a preferred alternative by this summer and are also working to identify funding opportunities, complete wetland delineation, and begin permitting efforts.

Campen Creek Floodplain Reconnection – Continuing engineering designs and permit applications for construction in 2025. We worked with the City of Washougal and our engineering and cultural resources consultants to begin developing the final engineering design plan set. We also learned that the WA Dept of Ecology Centennial grant will be awarded to provide construction funding; we applied to LCFRB-RCO to complete funding needed for construction. We have given tours to regulatory agencies, coordinated on cultural resources compliance, initiated final design, submitted a funding application to LCFRB, and secured donated logs from the adjacent golf course. We anticipate completing the final design and permitting in 2024 and constructing the project during summer 2025.

East Fork Thermal Project- In 2022, we completed the lower EFLR Thermal Assessment. The study assessed summer stream temperatures, identified potential thermal refuge enhancement sites, and ranked the sites based on ecological attributes and social constraints. In 2023 we secured grant funds from LCFRB-RCO to develop preliminary designs for 3-4 priority sites upstream of Daybreak Park, WA that were identified in the 2022 assessment. We are currently planning summer fieldwork at these sites and have received two applications from the RFP that was released seeking an engineering firm with experience in restoring thermal refuges. We will be evaluating these applicants and selecting a contractor by the end of May.

Franz Lake National Wildlife Refuge – With BPA funding, we worked with the USFWS to refine and select the preferred restoration alternative for the site. We currently are contracting with Wolf Water Resources to complete the 60% design, at which point we will submit all permit applications. This site is also one of our long-term monitoring sites under the Ecosystem Monitoring Program.

Mirror Lake Upstream Reconnection Project (Rooster Rock State Park) - We held meetings with ODOT, OPRD, BPA, and ODFW, secured letters of support from each agency, completed a hydrologic analysis, and submitted a funding application to OWEB. We also secured a verbal commitment from BPA to fund a feasibility study of the proposed I-84 culvert reconnecting the upstream end of the site to the Columbia River. The monitoring team is collecting baseline data including water surface elevation and temperature and LiDAR.

Lower Columbia River Barrier Assessment – Continuing to assess barriers across southwest Washington. We continue to expand the fish passage barrier inventory and decision support tool for selecting barriers for passage improvement, for the lower Columbia sub-basin in Washington. The project was funded by LCFRB-RCO. This assessment includes a GIS-based comprehensive inventory of barriers for the region and a prioritization model that will determine where maximum salmon recovery benefits may be realized. We are currently compiling fish barrier inventories, conducting field visits to assess passage quality, and developing the decision support model. The project is scheduled to be completed this Fall.

Monitoring and Research Efforts:

Ecosystem and Action Effectiveness Monitoring:

- The monitoring team continues to complete vegetation, water quality, and sediment data processing and analysis for Ecosystem and Action Effectiveness Monitoring Programs.
- The monitoring team continues to strive to disseminate data and results of analyses using Tableau's online dashboards. The Team is continuing to work with researchers to publish the annual reports as hybrid Tableau reports.
- The new drone has come back from renovations and is now fully complete with all the promised sensors (LiDAR, thermal, and multi-spectral).
- Summer field monitoring is tentatively scheduled July 10 through September 15.
- The funding for these programs has been provided by BPA since 2003.

Columbia County Water Quality Monitoring:

- OWEB recently declined our grant application to sustain the water quality monitoring program focusing on Columbia County watersheds. The program has been funded by OWEB, Columbia Soil and Water Conservation District, and internal EPA NEP funds. Without the critical OWEB funding, we can sustain the program only through June 2024. Using the current funding, we will continue monitoring and collecting e-DNA samples across Columbia County. The next water quality program report is expected by the end of June. Data from this program is regularly shared with the ODEQ and is publicly available.

Methane Carbon Flux Study (CH₄C)

Background: This research is funded by EPA under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding to NEPs. We could not be working on this without that funding. Most restoration and protection activities within the lower Columbia River are thought to not only sequester carbon, but also have large methane emissions, which creates uncertainty for their benefit as climate mitigation. Importantly, carbon registries and funding agencies are unable to certify or prioritize tidally influenced riparian wetland or riverine restoration projects as natural climate solutions (NCS). This then limits the ability of conservation practitioners to implement these types of projects for the goal of sequestering carbon. This project will resolve these critical uncertainties to ensure that NCS projects are climate additional and measurable within these tidally influenced freshwater habitats. Researchers are measuring carbon and methane fluxes at various restored and undisturbed habitats representing the estuarine-tidal freshwater gradient of the lower Columbia River. Within each site, researchers will deploy an eddy covariance flux tower to capture the site carbon and methane flux. Within each site, soil chambers will be deployed at locations that represent the diversity of vegetation communities, topography, soil conditions, and groundwater to capture the intra-site diversity of GHG exchange. Researchers will map each site's plant communities and topography using UAVs and multiple sensors and machine learning in order to extrapolate results from the soil chambers to the larger site.

The research is being conducted by four research groups: LCEP, Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU), Portland State University (PSU), and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Each group will contribute their specific expertise and address key questions, integrating their findings to expand regional carbon calculators for assessing baseline, built-out, and post-construction carbon sequestration rates at restoration and undisturbed sites in the lower Columbia River.

Status: In partnership with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, method testing began in 2023 at their 200-acre brackish wetland restoration site in Youngs Bay. OHSU and PSU researchers have installed an eddy flux covariance tower and soil chambers, respectively, while LCEP researchers captured LiDar and multispectral imagery from an UAV in Spring 2024. A second eddy flux covariance tower was deployed near a long-term monitoring site at Tongue Point, Oregon, which is maintained by the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission's Coastal Margin Observation Platform Program (CRITFC CMOP).

Communications & Outreach:

- The Earth Month campaign raised more than \$6,900: \$2,500 from sponsors Ash Creek Forestry and KPFF, nearly \$2,000 from individuals, and almost \$2,500 from Fort George's 1% of their 12-ounce can sales. KATU did an Earth Day piece about our work for Earth Day (see link below).
- Annual Dinner is scheduled for Thursday, October 17 at the Jupiter NEXT Atrium Ballroom in Portland. Please save the date! We are currently seeking donations for the raffle and sponsorships. If you have any leads, contact Erinne.
- AND our big 30th Anniversary Annual Dinner will be Sunday, September 21, 2025 at the Indigo Hotel on the Vancouver waterfront!
- Federal delegation updates:
 - Due to the uncertainties of the federal FY 25 budget process and the timing of the annual EPA visit, ESP Advisors (the federal government liaisons to the Association of National Estuary Programs) recommended virtual meetings rather than in-person DC meetings for the FY 25 Appropriations requests. Meetings were held with staff from Senators Cantwell and Murray and Representatives Gluesenkamp Perez, Bonamici, Blumenauer, and Chavez-DeRemer. Senators Wyden and Merkley declined meetings until a clearer picture for the budget emerges. NEP support sign on letters have been circulated. We had 100% of our House delegates signed on to support.
 - Congressionally Directed Spending: we requested support from Senators Murray and Cantwell for the East Fork Lewis River Reconnection Project from an NRCS program. After initial conversations with NRCS, we learned their funding requires NEPA, so we do not qualify.

Social media stats:

- Top Facebook post by reach: Community Programs team [Big Canoe training \(April 22\)](#) with 2,288 impressions and 72 engagements
- Top Instagram post: Promoting our open Paddle Program Specialist position (Feb 15) with a reach of 624 and 72 engagements. <https://www.instagram.com/p/C3ZA12xpa0N/>
- Top Tweet: [February 21, Our February Newsletter](#) with a reach of 112 and 2 engagements (we have not posted anything on this platform since February)
- Top LinkedIn post: Seeking firms for East Fork Lewis River preliminary designs <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7176246108212359168/>

Media Coverage:

[Earth Day: Turn awareness into action.](#) KATU News, April 22, 2024

[CW Community Chest, Rotary, Lions Club announce 2024 grant awards.](#) Lacamas Magazine, March 3, 2024

[Washougal stormwater project ripples out.](#) Camas Post-Record, March 14, 2024

[Kelso Public Library sees spike in visitors for second straight year.](#) Longview Daily News, March 15, 2024

[Clark County to buy 125 acres along East Fork Lewis River as part of habitat restoration project.](#) The Columbian, March 22, 2024

[Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership program helps Clark County students learn about, experience outdoors.](#) The Columbian, February 22, 2024.

[Clark County OKs Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership's Education Program at Vancouver Lake.](#) The Columbian, February 8, 2024.

[Residents and experts meeting, once again, to has out solutions for Grays Bay flooding.](#) The Wahkiakum County Eagle, February 8, 2024

DEI Steering Team:

- The DEI Steering Team continues to meet monthly with a new team structure in place. Co-Chairs Catherine Corbett and Erinne Goodell have taken turns facilitating and moving the team's agenda along. Over the last few meetings, we have been working on:
 - Presenting new Charter to staff for comment, Charter subsequently approved by DEI Steering Team.
 - Small Group Exercises – we've updated the schedule and topics. Jenny Dezso is championing a handbook for small group facilitators.
 - We reviewed the results of a DEI Quiz that was presented at our All-Staff lunch in March.
 - Group Agreements – we reviewed the Group Agreements as a team, sent Team Representatives to gather input on the Agreements, and have discussed when these Group Agreements are used. Following more discussion in the groups, we will revisit and consider approval in June.
 - Workplace Experience Priorities – The team continues to identify priorities to focus on. Below are the priorities identified in May:
 - Ongoing staff DEI trainings, particularly from outside sources. Would be great for the squad to have time to focus on coordinating this.
 - Make sure staff are not over-allocated and have time and funding to collaborate, invest in diverse partnerships, participate in DEI learning, and celebrate our LCEP community.
 - Increase (time) opportunities for staff connection - more regular all staff meetings, check ins, plantings (Specifically cross team collaboration)
 - We should make it a priority to ensure that our workplace culture is not harmful and is welcoming to underrepresented staff, program participants, or partners. Making sure LCEP is a safe and inclusive space for everyone- especially those with diverse backgrounds.
- Meeting Records are below:
 - [March Meeting Record](#)
 - [April Meeting Record](#)
 - [May Meeting Record](#)

Safety Committee:

The Safety Committee will meet next on June 4. Current projects include the following:

- Finalizing our PPE procedure to be more proactive about procuring PPE for current and new employees.
- Planning a safety-themed All Staff Meeting on June 12, which will likely include emergency situation drills.

Continuing work on our Safety Manual, which will centralize safety policies, procedures, and documentation for easier reference.

Wellness Team:

The Wellness Team last met on January 29. The team was working towards implementing the Lifestyle Spending Account until an administrative roadblock was encountered in late April. The team is on standby.

Funding Report:

Grant Report 7/1/2023 through 5/13/2024

Program Areas:		Sum of Grant Ask Amount	Sum of Grant Funded Amount
<input type="checkbox"/> Education		\$ 948,699.96	\$ 392,536.00
Awarded: No Match		\$ 568,629.96	\$ 317,761.00
Awarded: Requires Match		\$ 86,725.00	\$ 74,775.00
Closed - Declined		\$ 179,754.00	
Preparing		\$ 10,000.00	
Selected: Awaiting Agreement		\$ 103,591.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring		\$ 335,533.00	\$ 65,533.00
Awarded: No Match		\$ 65,533.00	\$ 65,533.00
Closed - Declined		\$ 270,000.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Grants		\$ 5,000.00	
Closed - Declined		\$ 5,000.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paddling & On-water		\$ 185,940.27	\$ 45,938.00
Awarded: No Match		\$ 83,620.47	\$ 25,938.00
Awarded: Requires Match		\$ 39,632.80	
Selected: Awaiting Agreement		\$ 37,116.00	\$ 20,000.00
Submitted		\$ 25,571.00	
<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration		\$ 11,860,311.71	\$ 6,005,629.00
Awarded: No Match		\$ 335,000.00	\$ 337,097.00
Awarded: Requires Match		\$ 6,479,138.00	\$ 5,668,532.00
Closed - Declined		\$ 298,500.00	
Selected: Awaiting Agreement		\$ 100,000.00	
Submitted		\$ 4,647,673.71	
<input type="checkbox"/> Stormwater		\$ 5,207,089.13	\$ 4,854,692.52
Awarded: Requires Match		\$ 4,827,696.00	\$ 4,827,696.00
Submitted		\$ 379,393.13	\$ 26,996.52
<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted		\$ 35,000.00	
Closed - Declined		\$ 5,000.00	
Preparing		\$ 5,000.00	
Submitted		\$ 25,000.00	
Grand Total		\$ 18,577,574.07	\$ 11,364,328.52

Contracts Report:

Contracts Report (2/9/2024 through 5/10/2024)					
Contracts Awarded to Estuary Partnership					
Estuary Partnership	Contract #	Dollar Value	Purpose	Date Signed	Notes:
Wa Department fof ECY	OTGP-2023-LCEP-00030	\$ 264,000.00	Ecology Base Funds	2/12/2024	<i>Note: This agreement took effect 7/1/2023</i>
OWEB	224-8005-23198	\$ 330,000.00	OWEB Restoration Grant Agreement	1/10/2024	<i>Note: This agreement took effect 10/1/2023. Fully executed 2/22/2024</i>
BEF	MG-10936	\$ 30,000.00	Steigerwald Planting Phase 5	3/18/2024	
Metro	939216	\$ 25,938.00	Metro Cental Enhancement Grant - Canoe Program	4/5/2024	
LCFEG	Agreement - S. Fork Toutle	\$ 5,089.00	Brownell Reach Water Temperature Monitoring	4/19/2024	
Portland Harbor - BES	unassigned	\$ 20,000.00	Canoe Program	5/9/2024	<i>Not yet fully executed by grantor</i>
Total:		\$ 675,027.00			
Contracts Let by Estuary Partnership					
Partnership	Contract #	Dollar Value	Purpose	Date Signed	
Parametrix	28-2024	\$ 15,737.00	Clack Co RiverHealth 23-24 / EPA CRB Stormwater	2/27/2024	
Juncus	31-2024	\$ 55,600.00	EPA CRB Stormwater	3/21/2024	
Mackay Sposito	34-2024	\$ 162,192.00	Ecology City of Ilwaco	4/16/2024	
Robertson Fick	32-2024	\$ 255,053.00	Ecology SFAP Washougal HS	4/17/2024	
Juncus	35-2024	\$ 39,500.00	Glencoe stormwater	4/18/2024	
R Franco	33-2024	\$ 33,000.00	Nfwf Steig \$8k, RCO EFLR R Pits Con 22-26 \$25k	4/16/2024	
Wolf Water	24-2024	\$ 58,954.00	BPA Hab 20R	2/13/2024	
HRA, Inc	18-2024	\$ 19,296.00	Dyer and EFLR Cultural Resources Investigation	2/13/2024	
CREST	26-2024	\$ 56,535.82	EMP Work	2/15/2024	
Schott	25-2024	\$ 47,808.00	EMP and AEMP	2/15/2024	
HRA, Inc	17-2024	\$ 11,969.00	Mason Creek Cultural Assessment	3/6/2024	
Parametrix	28-2024	\$ 12,944.00	Sunnyside Elementary SW Design	3/12/2024	
		\$ 768,588.82			