

**Date:** May 26, 2010

**To:** Environmental Quality Commission

**From:** Dick Pedersen, Director

**Subject:** Agenda item E, Informational item: Freshwater Trust restoration projects  
June 16-17, 2010 EQC meeting

**Purpose of item** This item will outline The Freshwater Trust's work to promote efficiency in permitting and funding restoration projects. The Freshwater Trust is a not-for-profit organization that actively works to preserve and restore our freshwater ecosystems.

**Background information** StreamBank is a web-based platform built and tested by the Freshwater Trust, a resulting not-for-profit organization from a merger of the Oregon Trout and Oregon Water Trusts, to accelerate, coordinate and streamline the restoration of rivers and streams. As part of an Oregon Solutions process begun in 2008, the platform demonstrated significant decreases in permit and funding timelines while embedding regulator criteria and standardizing the steps for common riparian or in-stream project implementation. That process evolved into the Stream Restoration Partnership, which was recently chartered into the Governor's Core Team, along with federal agencies. In 2009, the Oregon Legislature passed a bill exempting certain voluntary restoration actions from permitting, and under direction of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), The Freshwater Trust is in final negotiation of a memorandum of understanding with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for notice-based permitting on the federal side, tiering to NOAA permit requirements.

After its first two rounds of field tests with 20 projects around the state and as a pilot project to evaluate StreamBank efficiencies, DEQ awarded The Freshwater Trust a \$60,000 319 water quality grant in 2009 and 2010 to fund restoration projects in the Willamette Basin. With one-to-one private funding leverage, the 2009 effort rendered first-generation environmental credits calculated using Willamette Partnership's "Counting on the Environment" protocols.

The objectives of the 2009 projects include implementing 11.5 acres of riparian tree planting, invasive species removal, 150 pieces of large wood placement, an alcove restoration, a pond retrofit in high-priority locations in the Willamette Basin, conduct implementation and baseline water quality monitoring, and conduct a survey to document the experience of

StreamBank users and efficiencies of the StreamBank system compared to traditional grant processes.

The use of StreamBank to streamline all aspects of project implementation and as a credit-generation tool for environment markets is growing. This spring, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board approved The Freshwater Trust and Willamette Partnership's request to set aside \$400,000 of funds as a credit purchase "guarantee" to help jumpstart market activity in the basin. In this way, OWEB can act as a buyer of verified conservation outcomes – essentially completed, certified projects. Clean Water Services has agreed to purchase \$100,000 worth of verified conservation outcomes in the Tualatin Basin, and discussions are underway with USDA and other entities to further expand the pool of buyers.

These growing initiatives may provide new ways to implement restoration actions throughout the Willamette Basin at scale, and model methods for use elsewhere.

**Attachments**      None

Approved:

Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Report prepared by: Christine Svetkovich, with  
information provided by The Freshwater Trust  
Phone: (503) 229-5046