

January 6, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Roger Wood, Grant Program Manager

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item L: 2006 Biennial Conference
January 24-25, 2006 OWEB Board Meeting**

I. Introduction

The purpose of this staff report is to describe the proposed structure for planning the 2006 OWEB Biennial Conference and request Board approval to allocate funds in support of the conference.

II. Background

Once a biennium, OWEB organizes a watershed conference for its many partners and stakeholders. These conferences have been immensely popular as they offer the opportunity for all Oregon watershed practitioners to convene and network with each other. The conferences typically draw anywhere from 300-400 people and have offered a wide range of practical and technical information. We anticipate the 2006 conference will take place in November.

Planning for the conference is exceedingly time-consuming, requiring a steady and conscientious effort for approximately 12 months prior to the event. Because the agency does not have staff available for such an intense effort, OWEB has in the past contracted with a professional meeting planner to handle the logistics and registration.

Last biennium, in addition to contracting with a professional meeting planner, OWEB was fortunate to have Louise Solliday as a temporary employee who, as part of her OWEB duties, managed conference planning, fundraising, and other details. This worked very well, as Louise was able to devote attention to the myriad of planning details that OWEB staff simply could not. Louise also successfully raised funds, which resulted in a return of \$7,865.88 in registration receipts to OWEB.

Total conference expenses are typically around \$100,000 with most of that expense tied to the conference venue and meals, and about \$25,000 to the professional meeting planner's fees.

For the 2004 conference, the Board allocated \$25,000 out of the now-closed Board allocation to Statewide Needs and Education (201-904) to cover the costs of the professional meeting planner and in-house printing. The remaining conference expenses were covered by conference registration and fundraising. Louise was paid from a 2001 allocation by the Board for Outreach and Education (201-902).

III. 2006 Biennial Conference

For the 2006 conference, staff would like to continue the successful management formula of the 2004 conference. Staff estimate that \$45,000 should cover this need, with \$25,000 earmarked for the professional conference planner, \$18,000 for a temporary employee, and \$2,000 for in-house printing. All other costs are anticipated to be covered by conference registration and fundraising.

To cover the \$45,000 cost, staff propose to utilize \$37,134.12 from savings in the agency's Outreach and Education budget to support an in-house communications staff person. Savings have accrued as this position has not yet been filled. Staff believe no Board action is needed to redirect those funds as conference planning and preparation fit within the intended duties for the communications position. In addition, the Board may direct the \$7,865.88 returned from the 2004 conference towards the 2006 conference. Combined, these two funding sources should cover OWEB's needs to organize and implement the 2006 Biennial Conference.

IV. Recommendation

Staff request Board action to allocate the \$7,865.88 in excess registration receipts returned from the 2004 conference to support the organization and implementation of OWEB's 2006 conference.