

March 1, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

FROM: Ken Bierly, Deputy Director

**SUBJECT: Agenda Item L: Grant Solicitation for April 2007
March 14-15, 2007 OWEB Board Meeting**

I. Introduction

This report proposes the Board revise the 2005-2007 grant cycle schedule to allow staff to solicit grant applications for Technical Assistance for the upcoming April 23, 2007, deadline. The Board will consider grant awards for this solicitation at its September 2007 meeting. Staff will propose a grant cycle schedule for the full 2007-2009 biennium at the May Board meeting.

II. Background

In OAR Chapter 695, Division 5, OWEB's rules direct the Board to announce the timing and type of grant applications to be considered. In May of 2005, the Board adopted a grant cycle schedule for the 2005-2007 biennium. For the April 23, 2007, grant deadline, the schedule currently includes a solicitation of Restoration/Acquisition grant applications only.

III. Current Status of Grant Offerings

At present, we do not know with certainty how much funding will be available for the OWEB grant program during the 2007-2009 biennium. However, there are strong indications that there will be significant capital funds available for restoration and acquisition projects. There is less certainty regarding the level of non-capital funding that will be available for the grant program. Non-capital funds support a variety of grant types that directly and indirectly support capital-funded projects – such as monitoring, assessments, technical assistance, and education and outreach. Over the years, the relatively modest levels of non-capital funds have forced the Board to very carefully consider how to direct those funds.

In the 2005-2007 biennium, the Board directed limited non-capital funding to technical assistance. Beginning in October of 2005, technical assistance grant applications have been accepted at each grant cycle. With the prospect of significant capital funds next biennium, staff continue to believe one of the best uses of non-capital funds is to ensure technical assistance is available to guide capital project development.

The demand for technical assistance has been clearly demonstrated. Of the 38 Technical Assistance applications submitted in October of 2006, only 16 applications are recommended for funding by staff. Staff are not recommending funding for 11 applications recommended by the regional review teams due to limited amount of available funding.

Even though OWEB's 2007-2009 budget is not yet known, staff recommend soliciting Technical Assistance grant applications on the April 23, 2007, deadline for Board consideration at the September 2007 meeting. Staff are not suggesting a Board reserve of the 2007-2009 non-capital funding at this time. Instead staff will propose a non-capital spending plan, and Technical Assistance funding recommendations that address that proposed plan, at the September 2007 meeting.

Staff do not recommend soliciting grant applications for the other non-capital grant types (education, monitoring, and assessment) at this time. Future offerings for these grant types will be discussed in greater detail at the upcoming May and September Board meetings.

IV. Recommendation

Staff recommend the Board revise the grant cycle schedule to add the solicitation of Technical Assistance applications to the April 23, 2007, grant application deadline.