

**Charter
of the
Lower Columbia Solutions Group**

February 2005

Background

The Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) was convened by the Governors of Washington and Oregon in July 2002 as a diverse, bi-state group of local, state and federal governmental and non-governmental stakeholders interested in and affected by dredge material disposal activities in the Lower Columbia River area. On December 2, 2002 the participants formally signed an Agreement Document to guide the group's work. The LCSG was intended to be an experiment to see if the key groups involved with the river could tackle one or more short-term dredge material disposal projects for beneficial uses. The initial focus of the LCSG was on beneficial use projects related to maintenance dredging. The results have been very encouraging and considerable good will has been built.

After almost two years working successfully on various aspects of the dredge materials issue, the following important events have occurred: (a) the group has shown that stakeholders can work cooperatively to resolve dredge materials-related issues. (b) it has received formal recognition as a collaboration partner with the federal government through an agreement with the Council on Environmental Quality. (c) the Corps' Regional Sediment Management program is advancing and can use guidance on the critical issues it should be tackling.

In June 2003 the LCSG undertook a strategic planning project to explore the future role of the group. As a result of this project and discussions among LCSG members, this revised agreement to replace the original agreement has been developed.

Purpose and Role of the LCSG

The basic purpose of the LCSG is to serve as the key bi-state clearing house to coordinate policy, projects and research related to dredge material disposal and sediment management on the Lower Columbia River and Littoral Cell. The LCSG focuses on finding sustainable solutions to policy issues, research, operations and conflicts. Sustainable solutions integrate economic, social and environmental objectives.

The LCSG is not the only group involved in sediment management in the Columbia River and Littoral Cell. However, there is no group that serves as the forum where key stakeholders from federal, state and local government and non-governmental entities can come together to discuss and seek collaborative solutions to the multitude of issues that arise. The LCSG intends to be this forum, but fully recognizes its interdependency with a large number of other organizations.

The LCSG will only get directly involved when it is clear that no existing process will adequately manage an issue, where the parties to the issue ask the LSCG to get involved, or where the LSCG can bring parties together to facilitate resolution of an issue. The LCSG may decline to assume management of an issue and instead lend its support to others.

Since each member of the LCSG is an independent organization and all agencies with regulatory authority over the river are not on the LCSG, actions of the LCSG are only recommendations to its members and others.

Figure 1 shows how the LCSG interacts with other groups and how issues are raised and vetted. The first box shows the sources of ideas for initiatives on policy, research, projects or conflict resolution. When an idea comes to the LCSG, staff will first evaluate the issue to make sure it relates to dredge material disposal or sediment management. If the project is within the LCSG's charter, staff will further evaluate the idea based on the criteria shown in Appendix A.

Since it is not the role of the LCSG to replace or displace the work of existing organizations, a key criterion is whether the new idea should properly be handled by others. The LCSG will only handle matters where its unique capabilities can be brought to bear to resolve issues. If a project is determined to be within the LCSG's area of competence, staff will develop a detailed project plan and budget and the LCSG will approve or disapprove proceeding.

Key Policy Areas of Concern to the LCSG

This following list provides an initial inventory of issues that the LCSG believes are important for management of dredge materials and sediment on the lower river. Funding may limit its involvement in many of these issues, and other issues may arise that are more important. Thus, this list is not definitive or restrictive on future activities of the LCSG. More detail on some items can be found in the LCSG document *Toward Development of a Management Structure and Strategic Plan for Columbia River Dredge Materials and Sediment*.

1. Long-term, comprehensive dredge material and sediment management planning for the Lower River and Littoral Cell, including deep ocean disposal.
2. Erosion in the near-shore area, with particular focus on the South Jetty and Benson Beach.
3. Repair and protection of the jetties.
4. Management of sediment from authorized Corps of Engineers projects
5. Maritime safety as affected by sediment management programs
6. Coordination of dredge disposal activities with habitat restoration efforts, including dike removal and the use of fill to enhance agricultural and other areas.
7. River hydrodynamics, sediment transport and the sediment budget.
8. The impacts of sediment management on the local and state economies.
9. Commercial use of sediment and dredge materials, including the use of sumps and rehandle sites.
10. Coordinated testing standards for sediment and dredge materials.
11. Streamlined processing of permits for beneficial use of dredge materials and sediment.
12. Toxics in sediments.
13. Corps of Engineers least cost policy

Organization of the LCSG

1. Membership and Decision Making
 - a. Members of the LCSG are organizations plus a citizen representative. Each member shall appoint a representative, who shall be the chief executive officer or a senior official. The current list of members is contained in Appendix B. The citizen representative shall be appointed by the LCSG.

- b. Term of Membership: Member organizations shall determine the length of service of their representatives. The citizen member shall serve for two years. This member may serve consecutive terms and shall continue serving thereafter until a new individual is appointed.
- c. Quorum: a quorum of members shall be 9.
- d. Decision Making: decisions shall be by consensus of those present.
- e. Alternates: Member organizations may designate an alternate to their representative.

2. General Powers and Duties

- a. The LCSG may adopt such bylaws and policies as it deems necessary to carry out the Agreement.
- b. The LCSG shall have all powers necessary and incidental to the execution of its specific duties, which powers shall be consistent with the Agreement and law.

3. Officers

- a. The initial chair of the LCSG shall be the executive director of the National Policy Consensus Center, who shall be a non-voting member. The LCSG may also appoint such other officers as it deems necessary.
- b. The LCSG may decide to elect a Chair from among its own membership at any time. Once this occurs, elections shall occur annually thereafter.
- c. An officer shall serve until a successor is elected. Except as provided in (a) above, if an officer is no longer a member of the LCSG, a new officer shall be elected at the next meeting of the LCSG.
- d. The LCSG may appoint an Executive Committee, whose powers shall be defined by the LCSG.

4. Meeting Procedures

- a. Meetings of the LCSG shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Oregon and Washington public meeting laws (ORS Chapter 192, WAC 42.30) depending on the state in which the meeting is held.
- b. Each meeting of the LCSG shall provide an opportunity for the general public to address it. The LCSG may limit the time for public comment as it determines necessary.
- c. Meetings shall be held quarterly, or as determined by the members.
- d. Meetings shall be held in Oregon or Washington, up- and down-river.
- e. Minutes shall be taken at all LCSG meetings and approved at a subsequent meeting.
- f. Meetings shall be conducted according to the groundrules listed in Appendix C

5. Advisory Committees and Liaisons

- a. The LCSG may establish advisory groups composed wholly or partly of non-LCSG members.
- b. The LCSG shall recognize Government Liaisons, which shall be representatives from federal, tribal, state and local governmental agencies interested in the work of the organization.
 - i. Liaisons shall be put on the LCSG distribution list and shall receive all materials provided to the LCSG members, excepting materials that state law allows to be restricted to executive sessions.

- ii. Liaisons shall be contacted by the staff of the LCSG prior to each meeting of the LCSG to determine if they have agenda items for the LCSG meeting. The LCSG staff shall put all such items on the agenda and provide time for a presentation by the Liaison to the LCSG.
- iii. Liaisons shall be designated by and serve at the pleasure of their respective organizations.
- c. The LCSG shall develop a list of Interested Parties consisting of organizations or individuals interested in the work of the LCSG.
 - i. Interested parties shall be put on the LCSG distribution list and shall receive all materials provided to the LCSG members, excepting materials that state law allows to be restricted to executive sessions.

6. Public Information

- a. The LCSG shall establish and maintain a website on which shall be maintained the minutes of all meetings, reports and other information of interest to the members and the general public. As resources allow, the site shall be interactive.

7. Activities (Policy development, research, projects, conflict resolution)

- a. All activities shall meet the criteria of the Solutions Process as defined by the National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC), which is summarized as follows:
 - i. A problem or opportunity is defined by the LCSG that meets at least one of the sustainable community objectives.
 - ii. A neutral convener is appointed by the LCSG who can lead the team to address the problem or opportunity.
 - iii. A solutions team is appointed composed of federal, tribal, state, local government and business, non-profit groups and citizens who can contribute to a solution.
 - iv. An integrated solution is developed that leverages the resources of the team.
 - v. A declaration of cooperation is signed by team members that commits them to carry out the integrated action plan.
- b. Activities shall be funded on a project-by-project basis from such sources as the LCSG develops.
- c. The LCSG shall retain staff for each activity as necessary.
- d. The LCSG shall establish uniform procedures for applications for new activity and for the review of them.
- e. Activity teams shall report regularly to the LCSG on their progress and on any issues that arise that need the attention of the LCSG.

8. Financing

- a. Until such time as the LCSG determines differently, funds for the organization shall be managed by the NPCC.
- b. The NPCC shall utilize its contracting procedures to retain such staff as the LCSG deems are needed to carry out its activities and such staff shall be paid by the NPCC utilizing such funds as the LCSG has raised for those purposes.

Lower Columbia Solutions Group

Columbia River Crabbers Association	Date
Port of Vancouver	Date
Port of Astoria	Date
Port of Portland	Date
US Army Corps of Engineers	Date
Salmon for All	Date
Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership	Date
Pacific Marine Conservation Council	Date
Citizen Member	Date
State of Oregon Governor's Office	Date
State of Washington Governor's Office	Date
Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce	Date
Clatsop County	Date
Pacific County	Date
Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission	Date

Appendix A

Initial Staff Evaluation: Basic LCSG Criteria

1. **Geographic Location:** Is the proposed project, research topic, policy issue, or conflict located within or directly relevant to the lower Columbia River area (Interstate Bridge to Astoria) or Littoral Cell (Long Beach Peninsula and the Columbia River to Tillamook Head)
2. **Sediment Management:** Is it related to dredge material disposal and/or sediment management?
3. **Sustainability:** Does it focus on sustainable solutions and beneficial use, i.e., addressing economic, environmental and social objectives?
4. **Added Value of LCSG Involvement:** Is another organization already adequately addressing the topic or conflict? Would LCSG involvement significantly increase the potential for success?
5. **Funding:** Is funding available to support LCSG involvement? If not, is there potential for securing funding?

Detailed Staff Evaluation: Criteria and Process

1. Identify and interview key stakeholders about the topic
2. Determine which agencies/organizations/individuals would need to be involved.
3. Determine key issues, opportunities and challenges
4. Identify other organizations that might take the lead instead of LCSG
5. Consider whether it is the right time for LCSG to take on this topic--Would it be better to defer until a later time?
6. Develop preliminary process or project design
7. Identify possible conveners/facilitators or researchers and staff support options
8. Develop a budget; research funding opportunities; secure funding commitments, if possible

Appendix B	
Membership of Lower Columbia Solutions Group	
Name of Organization	
Clatsop County Commission	TBD
Columbia River Crabbers Association	Dale Beasley
Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce	Christy McDonough (acting)
Pacific Marine Conservation Council	Peter Huhtala
Columbia River Intertribal Fish Commission	TBD
Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership	Deb Marriott
Citizen Representative	TBD
Pacific County Commission	TBD
Port of Astoria	Peter Gearin
Port of Portland	Bill Wyatt
Port of Vancouver	Larry Paulson
Salmon for All	Steve Fick
State of Oregon Governor's Office	Tom Byler
State of Washington Governor's Office	TBD
US Army Corps of Engineers	Davis Moriuchi

Appendix C

LCSG Groundrules

- (1) Reach agreement through consensus.
- (2) Focus on the future, not the past.
- (3) Communicate honestly and openly in LCSG meetings (including project teams, subcommittees, etc.).
- (4) Help make the process as transparent as possible; put issues and concerns on the table; no hidden agendas
- (5) Use the Charter as a guiding document; adhere to the purpose and procedures.
- (6) Conduct an evaluation annually to determine what is working and what needs improvement.

Figure 1
 LCSG Organization and Process Flow Diagram

