

April 22, 2013 OWEB Grant Cycle Mid Columbia Review Team (Region 6)

Application No.:	214-6012	Project Type:	Restoration
Project Name:	Mud Creek and West LWW Aquifer Recharge and Distributary/Floodplain Function		
Applicant:	Walla Walla Basin WC		
Basin:	UMATILLA	County:	Umatilla
OWEB Request:	\$339,669.00	Total Cost:	\$640,737.00

Application Description

This project will occur in the Oregon portion of the Walla Walla watershed. Aquifer recharge will address declining groundwater levels, reduced spring performance, seepage loss in mainstem Walla Walla River and important tributaries, and lack of floodplain function. These issues have been precipitated by flood control levees, a combination of ditch piping, and increased use in the alluvial aquifer to supplement reduced surface water volumes due to required instream flow agreements. Aquifer recharge simulates historic recharge through the distributary system and floodplain connection. This proposal would install five (5) aquifer recharge sites located in the area of the Little Walla Walla River, Mud Creek and Dugger Creek. It would also fund a water quality station that the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council (WWBWC) and DEQ are installing to be able to monitor water quality real time as it relates to the recharge and the limited license component. Partners include landowners, BPA and WWBWC. OWEB funds would be used for pre-implementation, project management, in-house personnel, contracted services, travel, supplies/materials, equipment, fiscal administration, and effectiveness monitoring.

REVIEW PROCESS

Regional Review Team Evaluation

This project is a continuation of a very successful aquifer recharge project in an area where previous efforts are making a difference in both groundwater levels, reduced temperature in tributaries, and spring branches running longer in the season. The applicant did a good job at explaining how the next locations would most likely influence river flows. The team acknowledged that the application was well written and provided enough detail for a very complex project.

The review team discussed at length the benefits of increasing the water table and how those results are impacting rivers and streams in the area. The WWBWC has been working a long time on this vision of restoring the function of a floodplain system in developed urban areas. Some of the team would have liked costs broken out by site in the budget instead of lump sums, and some thought that costs seemed high. Some questioned how much water would actually be delivered to each site. However, they noted that the council has a reputation as one of the best in this area of work, is a national leader whose work is expanding the science, and the team has high confidence in the project. This work is important to inform other basins with their groundwater decisions. After much discussion, the review team recommended this application for funding.

Ecosystem Process and Function

This project would simulate historic floodplain connectivity through aquifer recharge; increase water quantity on losing river reaches; improve water quality of groundwater aquifer, associated spring branches and inputs to rivers and streams; and restore hydrologic cycle of this distributary system.

Regional Review Team Recommendation to Staff

Fund.

Regional Review Team Priority

7 of 10

Distribution of Recommended Award Amounts

Recommended Amount	EM Portion	PE Portion
\$339,669.00	\$46,776.00	

Staff Recommendation to the Board

Fund.

Staff Recommended Award

Recommended Amount	EM Portion	PE Portion
\$339,669.00	\$46,776.00	

Total Recommended Board Award

\$339,669.00