

Benton County Voluntary Program for Riparian Resources

Update and Recommended Next Steps

Summary Update:

The Benton County Voluntary Program for Riparian Resources began implementation on August 1st, 2013 with approval from the Board of Commissioners. Significant progress has been made to finalize and implement the technical & outreach/education program components, including:

- Development of a remote monitoring protocol to tracking annual losses and gain of riparian vegetation cover along priority riparian corridors;
- Creation of informational/educational brochure to engage landowners and stakeholders in learning about and riparian engaging in enhancement projects;
- Working to gain state approval of the voluntary program methodology.

Given the progress and current status of the project, the following recommendations were developed to ensure the most effective implementation and efficient use of current resources.

Program Recommendations & Next Steps:

The following recommendations are organized according to current program work areas.

Advisory Group

- I. Begin meeting quarterly to review project implementation status and recommend changes. The meetings would be 2 hours in duration and focus on staff work progress and issues that require advisory group review. Staff reports will be provided to the current Advisory Group members at least 2 weeks in advance, to ensure adequate review time.
- II. Members will be requested to RSVP prior to the meetings, to ensure sufficient turnout.
- III. There may be interim meeting requests as needed.

Monitoring Protocol

- IV. Specific details for the Year 1 monitoring protocol need to be made by project staff including:
 - A. Scoring Criteria for Aerial Photos:
 - a. Determine if current and past aerial photo imagery scoring should be completed for assessment sites, separately scoring each image to document change. This is not recommended by the project team. The results from monitoring protocol testing shows that significantly different scoring occurs

using this procedure due to the separate review and scoring of much higher or lower quality photos of the same site.

Alternative to above (recommendation from project staff):

- b. Determine if photos should be compared by only scoring change between each plot/polygon. This option is recommended by project team completing monitoring protocol development and would account for many of the discrepancies in the photos such as shading, quality, etc. This will help produce more accurate scores of riparian vegetation canopy cover. This scoring protocol will show loss or growth more effectively, and not when there is simply a different quality photo that provides greater or lesser detail for scoring.
- c. Complete remote monitoring protocol for at least 50 sites using the above scoring criteria across randomly selected sites.
- d. Utilize and update monitoring protocol with Hydro-enforced bare-earth DEMs developed by Watershed Sciences Inc. in which stream centerlines are derived, lakes and reservoirs flattened, and further modifications to the DEM are conducted to allow for continuous downhill surface flow in such a way that it can be utilized for advanced hydrologic and hydraulic modeling.
- e. Addressing ODEQ concerns.

V. Field Analysis

- A. Project staff has developed a set of qualitative questions to evaluate change at the approximate location of sample sites. Next steps include:
 - a. Develop set of qualitative questions that provide reviewer information on riparian vegetation condition (canopy and understory), stream bank condition, human or natural stressors, and other information determined useful for detecting accuracy of remote monitoring protocol.
 - b. Complete site visits to accessible sample site locations and determine (qualitatively) if remote monitoring is providing accurate estimation of riparian vegetation conditions.

- c. Take high resolution photos to begin development of reference that provides the monitoring protocol reviewer(s) with what riparian corridor conditions exist on the ground with given types of elevations and land uses.

Outreach and Education

VI. Prioritize Staff Actions

A. General Public

- a. Continue explanation of program to all interested members of public
 - i. Provide brochure/additional information to non-riparian landowners as requested or determined useful by project staff.
 - ii. Methods for general outreach (e.g., website; public forums; news articles)

B. Riparian landowners

- a. Provide brochure, best management practices recommendation sheet (see below) and other details as determined necessary by project staff to inform and engage landowners.

C. Best Management Practices

- a. Project staff will develop BMPs based on current draft of Stream and Riparian Overlay Zone, along with input from local partners and Advisory Group members.
- b. Provide information to riparian landowners via an updated website that documents best management practices that are applicable to all Benton County riparian resources; focus BMP to type of land use objective (see website schematic).
- c. Methods of distribution: website; conversations with permit applicants;

D. Direct Mailings

- a. Complete mailings to Principal Brokers for real estate companies providing local rural real estate services.
 - i. Mailings will summarize the program and include current informational/educational brochure, and encourage that all information be shared with staff.

- b. Complete similar mailings to major landscaping and building contractors working within Benton County.
 - c. Mailing to all participants in riparian public meetings
- E. Elementary Schools & Extension
- a. Develop and implement presentations to 1-2 priority schools to explain riparian resources
 - b. Collaborate with OSU Extension to explain program through Master programs (watershed, etc.)
- F. Website
- a. Continue updates to county website (see website schematic below) with a focus on implementation and current information.
 - i. Complete advisory group review and as needed updates that are possible given the Benton County website structure.
 - b. Determine if partnership website will occur with support from local partners (Benton SWCD, Marys River Watershed Council, others). See attached partnership website description for details.

Benton County Website Update

Goal: Share and promote projects, programs, and opportunities dedicated to enhancing and restoring watershed resources of Benton County within a website that is shared by all partners (not 'housed' within specific organization).

Objectives:

1. Partners compile and provide current images of watershed restoration with a focus on streamside and riparian resources (several already provided for brochure). Updates as necessary based on the final web page goals.
2. Describe the watershed health and shared goals for improving watershed health.
3. Develop map providing general locations of riparian enhancement completed by:
 - a. Watershed Council
 - b. Benton SWCD

c. Benton County

General Timeline:

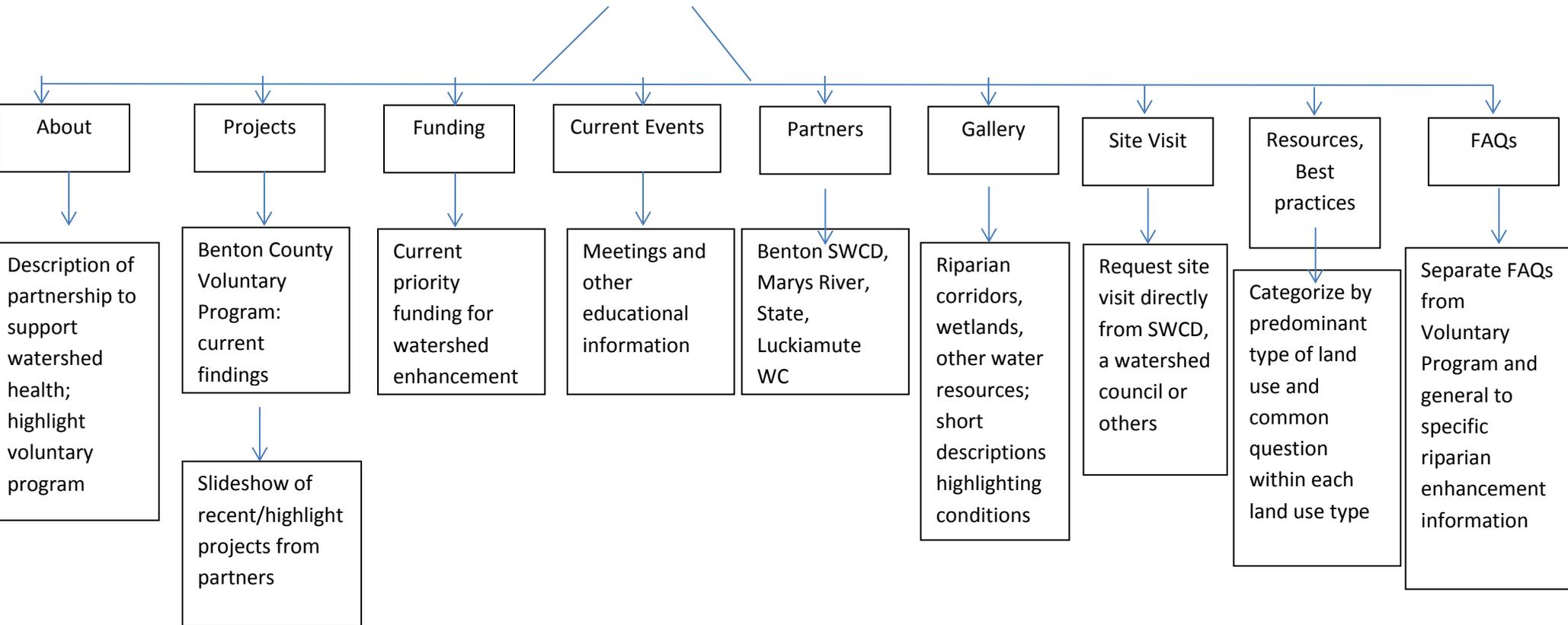
November-February:

- Complete updates to county website
- Complete outreach mailings to real estate companies;
- Finalize monitoring protocol;
- Completion of random sample monitoring locations;
- February Advisory Group Meeting (2/25/13 with quarterly meetings on the last Tuesday of each month)—cancelled

February 2014-July 2018:

- Written approval from DEQ on monitoring protocol and continued implementation of program with

Benton County Watershed Partnership or
 County only updated Website
 blog website option: Wordpress, Community Theme



Other web resources to add

SUMMARY: Streams that are designated as ESH are those necessary to prevent the depletion of indigenous anadromous salmonid species during their life stages of spawning and rearing. ESH also includes off-channel rearing or high-flow refugia habitat with a permanent or seasonal surface water connection to an ESH stream. According to OAR 141-102-0040, the Department must consult annually with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) on the accuracy of the ESH designations and revise the maps to reflect the best available data and the newest version of Fish Habitat Distribution Data Standard. This update resulted in addition of new stream reaches and deletion of others. There was a net increase of 617 stream miles (or roughly 3%) over the current 2010 ESH designation.

The proposed 2013 ESH designation maps can be viewed online:

<http://chetco-new.dsl.state.or.us/esh/index.html>

WEBSITE: The Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Hearing, Statement of Need and Fiscal Impact, and the Proposed Rules are available at:http://www.oregon.gov/DSL/rules_activity.shtml