



Lower Columbia Solutions Group

In July 2002, the Governors of Oregon and Washington convened a diverse, bi-state group of local, state and federal organizations interested in and affected by dredge material disposal activities in the Lower Columbia River. The Lower Columbia Solutions Group (LCSG) now includes representatives from local, state and federal government, crabbing and fishing interests, developers, and conservationists.

The LCSG serves as the key bi-state clearinghouse to coordinate policy, projects and research related to the management and disposal of dredged sand on the Lower Columbia River and in the littoral cell. The group conducts research, finds sustainable solutions and implements projects that integrate economic, social and environmental objectives.



Current activities – Regional Sediment Management

This year, the LCSG is beginning development of a Regional Sediment Management Plan for the Lower Columbia River, using the contributions and expertise of LCSG members. This plan will help implement the West Coast Governor's Agreement on Ocean Health, which calls for a Regional Sediment Management Plan to maximize the beneficial use of sand to protect critical community economic and environmental infrastructure.

Restoring near-shore areas off the Columbia River South Jetty in Oregon

As part of Regional Sediment Management Planning, the LCSG is doing projects to demonstrate how dredged sand can be beneficially used at the mouth of the Columbia River near the South Jetty. This work will replenish sands in the eroding littoral cell to protect the jetty, restore crab and other fishery habitats and provide information to guide long-term beneficial use of sand in the area.

Restoring near-shore areas off Benson Beach in Washington

The LCSG is also developing a beneficial-use demonstration project near the North Jetty at Benson Beach in Washington to use dredged sands to restore the eroding littoral zone, fishery habitats and coastal beaches. Scientists and policymakers reached consensus on conducting the project in 2007, and the LCSG is seeking congressional funding to conduct the work.

Disposing contaminated sediments in the Lower Columbia

Some sands in the Lower Columbia are contaminated with heavy metals, pesticides and other toxics, and when dredged, these sediments require careful disposal and permitting to protect the environment and people's health. The LCSG is assisting the Port of Astoria and other ports in developing options for contaminated sediment disposal to reduce the burden on lower-river ports to deal with contaminants from up-river, and to explore cost-sharing possibilities to reduce costs overall.

The LCSG is facilitated by the National Policy Consensus Center. For more information, please contact Mikell O'Mealy, LCSG Program Manager, at 503-229-6590 or mikell.omealy@state.or.us.