

Long Tom Watershed Council
Landowner Stewardship Policy
Approved February 4, 2010
Reviewed by Operations Committee July 16, 2014

The Landowner Stewardship Policy summarizes existing actions and new actions the Council will implement to improve the success of project implementation and long term stewardship.

Purpose

The intent of the Landowner Stewardship Policy is to ensure the long term success of restoration and enhancement projects. Long term success of Council projects achieves our core habitat and water quality goals, meets obligations to our funders, and preserves our reputation for high quality of work and fiscal accountability. Meeting funding obligations and maintaining our reputation enables the Council to continue bringing grant dollars to the community and to attract landowners to participate in making long term progress on water quality and habitat improvement.

Policy goals

- Foster a clear understanding with each landowner of project goals, rationale behind project actions (for major project components), watershed council roles & responsibilities, and landowner roles & responsibilities
- Create implementation and maintenance schedule check-ins that helps landowners move through projects in a successful and timely manner
- Encourage clear lines of communication throughout the project
- Identify mechanisms to solve problems when a landowner is unable or unwilling to meet his/her original commitments to the project

Written Agreements, Meetings, & Inspections

The primary instruments for communicating and implementing these goals are:

- The *Cooperative Agreement* signed by each landowner at the beginning of a project
- *Addendums* to the Cooperative Agreement when more clarity is needed on landowner/Council roles as the project evolves
- *Project meetings and inspections* scheduled throughout the duration of the project
- *Maintenance agreements*

Actions to be implemented for all projects

Assessment

- Evaluate and document landowner's ability and motivation to contribute to a project during initial site/project assessment.
- If site and project type are suitable, query landowner's interest in permanent protection or rental payments for the portion of their land that is being restored or taken out of production. If there is interest, connect landowner with appropriate agency or organization.

Project Development

- Incorporate establishment costs in grant budget if riparian planting project is too large for a landowner to reasonably undertake alone. This will be determined on a case by case basis.
- Secure maintenance funds, if possible, to assist the landowner if riparian planting maintenance or invasive species control is too large for a landowner to reasonably undertake alone. This will be determined on a case by case basis.

Agreements & Interim Project Inspections

- *Cooperative Agreement* signed within 2 months of grant agreement. Cooperative Agreements will include:
 - Project goals
 - Project tasks, responsible party, timeline for completion
 - A date by when livestock will occupy the pasture if no livestock are present at the time exclusion fencing is installed
 - Clarify the difference between normal maintenance and a catastrophic event that the landowner is not responsible for repairing
 - Permission to access property for project inspections at mutually agreeable times
 - Acknowledgement that any monitoring information collected on the property is public information as required by state statute (condition of OWEB funding only)
 - At the discretion of LTWC staff, a deposit may be requested from the landowner as a bond when the landowner is responsible for all or part of a portion of project implementation, such as planting, fencing, or other activities. The amount will range from \$500 – 1,500 and will be held as a deposit until each project element is successfully completed. Amount will be determined by project size and cost to Council for completing this element of project if landowner is not able to follow through. If appropriate, the deposit may be incrementally reimbursed as project elements are completed.
 - If appropriate, a project inspection schedule, particularly in the case of plant establishment and invasive species control projects
- *Maintenance Agreement* signed at time of Cooperative Agreement, which specifies actions and timeframe for the landowner to promote riparian planting survivorship and control of invasive species. The project manager will do his or her best to provide an estimate of hours for each task and identify how each maintenance task should be accomplished.
 - Create an inspection schedule for the project manager to evaluate maintenance as soon as it is completed.
- A written reminder will be sent to each landowner 4 weeks before maintenance or monitoring inspections needs to be scheduled.

Actions to be implemented when project objectives are not being met after above steps are taken and landowner has not responded to calls from project manager.

- Notify Executive Director
- Send letter to landowner of steps that need to be taken to meet obligations under Cooperative Agreement. This will include a copy of the pertinent agreements.
- Notify key Technical Team members (and/or Board members at Executive Director's discretion).
- Modify or cancel all or part of a project if it cannot be successfully implemented. This option is generally only possible before any funds are expended.
- Site visit by project inspection team, which will include board and technical team members.
- Brainstorm additional ways project could be implemented if catastrophic circumstances beyond the landowners control are preventing him or her from completing the tasks in the Cooperative Agreement.