

Policy Implications: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District

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Abstract

Ecosystem restoration (estuarine and other ecosystems) has become one of the three primary missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program (Corps). The Portland District utilizes several Corps authorities to develop and implement ecosystem restoration projects in the Lower Columbia River Estuary. These include the Section 536, Lower Columbia River Ecosystem Restoration Program; the on-going Lower Columbia River Ecosystem General Investigation Study; as well as Columbia River Channel Improvement Project. Primary constraints include the institutional requirements of sponsorship/cost-sharing and annual project funding as well as the identification of suitable sites. Planning principles are utilized to ensure that appropriate, cost effective projects are undertaken. The results and findings of on-going research is utilized to ensure that the best science is applied in the planning, engineering, and construction of restoration projects. Application of data/information to our projects is being institutionalized and improved as Portland District develops its Adaptive Management Plan to make better use of existing data, capture experience and share this with our partners and sponsors. The Corps has participated in inter-agency coordination with State, Federal, Tribal, and non-governmental organizations for many years and is continuing to develop these relationships. The Portland District Outreach Program will further strengthen these relationships and provide a mechanism to help facilitate the development of realistic requirements and programmatic biological opinions to streamline the processes required to get from planning to functioning restoration projects on the ground.