

**2004 INNOVATIONS AWARDS PROGRAM
Application Form**

1. Program Name
Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plan (CIDMP)
2. Administering Agency
Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
3. Contact Person (Name and Title)
Linda Crerar
Policy Assistant to the Director
4. Address
1111 SE Washington Street, 2nd Floor
PO Box 42560
Olympia, Washington 98504-2560
5. Telephone Number
(360) 902-1818
6. FAX Number
(360) 902-2092
7. E-mail Address
lcrerar@agr.wa.gov
8. Web site Address
N/A
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The CIDMP planning process protects and enhances our state's natural resources while simultaneously providing local farmers, through their Irrigation Districts, assurances that completion of their management plans will allow them to achieve compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Clean Water Act (CWA). This groundbreaking process integrates these acts through a voluntary, incentive-based approach.

10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? **Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on May 1, 2004 to be considered.**

Development of the CIDMP guidelines was completed in May 1, 2001.
Initial pilot projects began in March 2002.

11. Why was the program created? (What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?)

In 1998, “Extinction is not an Option” was released by Governor Gary Locke as a plan for salmon recovery in the State of Washington. The three parts to the general recovery strategy (the Forest Module, Agriculture Module, and Urban Module), each were to develop guidelines for improving land and water management practices that would be more sensitive to better protection of rivers, streams and riparian habitats.

The Agricultural Strategy subsequently developed two distinct pathways for addressing endangered species and water quality issues. The first focused directly on farming practices. The second focused on cooperating with Irrigation Districts in the development of a integrated watershed management strategy that would build on the existing watershed and sub-basin planning processes with action plans and assurances.

The securing of environmental assurances and permits is a primary concern for the agriculture stakeholders of Washington State. There are many challenges in securing these assurances in the agricultural landscape. Policy analysts and hands-on practitioners understand that certain landscapes call for integrated solutions.

The CIDMP process is tailored to be flexible to the realities and the limited resources of the irrigation districts, groups of individual farmers and other landowners.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

In July 1999, the Board of Directors of the Washington State Water Resources Association (WSWRA) representing Washington’s Irrigation Districts developed a white paper entitled “Programmatic Response-Irrigation District Operations’ to describe their preferred method for addressing endangered species and water quality issues. In the following months, various participants of workgroups, task groups and an Executive Committee worked to give substance to the outline, which ultimately led to the Guideline for Preparation of Comprehensive Irrigation District Management Plans.

Since the publication of the CIDMP guidelines in May of 2001, this process has emerged as a critical tool to engage stakeholders in conservation measures. Because the CIDMP process is a new approach to integrated watershed management, it is now being tested through a pilot project initiative. The initial round of three CIDMP pilot basins, Dungeness, Nooksack, and Walla Walla were implemented in 2002. Three new projects are planned for 2004.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

The CIDMP process represents an innovative, next-generation approach to ensure Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Clean Water Act (CWA) compliance at the sub-watershed level. The mission of the CIDMP is to blend ESA and CWA compliance into an integrated framework as well as establish a set of steps that can be used by irrigation districts and a variety of other entities. Policy analysts and hands-on practitioners understand that certain landscapes call for integrated solutions. This is especially true for modest, ill-equipped stakeholders facing the unfamiliar canopy of a conservation planning for the first time.

The CIDMP is also tailored to the realities and limited resources of irrigation districts, groups of individual farmers, and other landowners. Its mission flows from the Governor's Agriculture, Fish, and Water Initiative, customizing a shifting focus from the forested upper watersheds to the agricultural landscape in the lower and middle basins. The CIDMP provides a framework for performance based resource management at a watershed or sub-basin scale, providing an opportunity for participants to develop efficient measures for meeting environmental performance standards, rather than apply one-size-fits –all prescriptive requirements. Consistent with the CIDMP's reciprocal and collaborative spirit, participating stakeholders benefit from assurances with the ESA, the CWA, and other regulatory entities.

The CIDMP's centerpiece is a flexible framework for watershed-based environmental management. It presages a spirit of cooperation in agriculture country, generates tangible outcomes and regulatory compliance, and offers a blueprint that can be duplicated both regionally and nationally. CIDMP's broad, potential application — beyond irrigation districts and beyond the ESA/CWA framework—represents the vanguard of performance-based solutions.

14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

Initially, the CIDMP planning process was coordinated with stakeholders statewide by one staff person from WSDA. A combination of Federal and State funds were used to fund the initial pilot projects. Because of the flexible framework of the CIDMP the cost vary from project to project. Initial results indicate, however, that the planning process budget average is \$ 250,000. The implementation of the project plan, that may incorporate funding from many sources, average \$250,000. The total project cost average is \$500,000.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs?

The annual operation cost vary depending on local requirements. Ongoing operational cost becomes the responsibility of the local irrigation district.

16. How is the program funded?

Initial funding has been a combination of State and Federal sources.

However, because the CIDMP is filling a critical need in organizing and engaging ag landowners, CIDMP proponents have been able to secure funding from a number of public and private entities.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

NO

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

No special equipment, technology or software is required.

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

Yes, program development and coordination was initiated by

Linda Crerar,
Washington Department of Agriculture,
1111 SE Washington St.
Olympia, Washington
360-902-1818.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

There has been interest expressed by the State of Oregon. However, to date no programs have been implemented.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

The three original pilot projects have now completed the planning phase and those plans are now being implemented. Three new projects have been funded for 2004.

22. Briefly, evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

Securing environmental assurances and permits is the primary incentive for landowner participation in a CIDMP. The CIDMP was specifically designed to integrate ESA and CWA compliance into a single streamlined set of steps. It is clear, however, that the flexible CIDMP framework can be used to integrate other resource management and environmental requirements as well.

For example, in the Nooksack project located in the northwest corner of our state, 60% of the watershed actually originates in Canada. The local stakeholders, through their newly established Irrigation District, are now able to present a collective voice to officials to the north. As a result, they now have begun discussions to evaluate cross border impacts that may ultimately result in mitigation of those impacts.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

Although it was designed to provide a streamlined and integrated ESA and CWA compliance process for irrigation districts, the CIDMP framework is being used to address more than ESA and CWA compliance. In fact, it has the potential to provide a framework for comprehensive, performance-based management at a much larger watershed scale.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

Because the CIDMP process was designed to be flexible and to accommodate local needs and issues, it should be easily transferable to other states. However, local law and ordinance could represent obstacles.

Add space as appropriate to this form. When complete, return to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2004

The Council of State Governments

2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910

Lexington, KY 40578-1910

innovations@csg.org

DEADLINE: All original applications must be received by April 20, 2004, to be considered for an Innovations Award for 2004.

ApplicationForm04.doc