

Oregon Water Resources Department
Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage Grant Program
Evaluation for September 2, 2008 Applications

APPLICANT:	Lower Powder Irrigation District		
STUDY TYPE:	Water Conservation		
APPLICATION NO.:	GC0030 09		
STUDY NAME:	Keating Valley Water Conservation Assessment		
BASIN:	Powder	WRD DISTRICT:	8
WRD FUNDS REQUESTED:	\$42,500	TOTAL COST:	\$85,000

APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:

The Lower Powder Irrigation District supplies water to 8,085 acres. Due to ditch loss and unmeasured diversions, the downstream users receive only a portion of their water rights.

The Keating Valley Water Conservation Assessment is a cooperative, multiphase project that will produce a plan to assess current conditions, determine desired future conditions, and identify opportunities for water conservation in the Lower Powder Irrigation District. The study will gather data from agency partners and map all existing ditches, headgates, and other structures from Thief Valley Reservoir to the junction of Highway 86 and Powder River at the south end of the valley. The study will gather data on irrigation system types, soils, locate headgates and other structures in the ditch system, and put it into digital format. The data will be used to determine individual site improvements, priority improvement areas, priority water loss areas, water storage sites, condition of current irrigation delivery systems, agricultural wetland areas, energy needs for improvements, and capacity of the system for efficiency improvements, both structural and social. In addition, the study will address the potential benefits to fish, wildlife, and recreationists.

APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM EVALUATION:

The Application Review Team recognized that there could be significant future water savings based on the implementation of projects that would be identified in the feasibility study. The team found the application to be focused primarily on a preliminary data collection phase, which would eventually lead to a water conservation feasibility study. There was additional information included related to increasing the storage at Thief Valley Reservoir that did not appear to have a direct connection to the conservation assessment.

The study is a priority for funding under SB 1069 because it is identified on the Department's statewide water assessment and inventory of potential conservation opportunities. The study could begin immediately and be completed by December 31, 2009.

Application Review Team Funding Recommendation: Do Fund: Contingent on Adequate Funding. If funds are available, fund at \$42,500.

COMMENTS:

Letter of support for this application was received from Walt Jury, President, Lower Powder River Irrigation

District and Joseph and Lois Eckley, residents. Mr. Jury indicated that Thief Valley Reservoir goes dry, even in good water years. When the reservoir is drained, agriculture losses production, and the warm, deoxygenated water kills life in a thirteen mile section of the Wild and Scenic Powder River. Lower Powder River Irrigation District is at the point where their “entire system needs to be overhauled for the benefit of agriculture, wildlife and recreation.” He indicated that the District needs an independent study to determine how to best use their water. The Eckley’s indicated the study would help conserve water, grow better crops and streamline the delivery system.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do Not Fund.