

Redmond Open House Discussion – May 13, 2010



Integrated Water Resources Strategy Spring 2010 Open House Events

Redmond Fire and Rescue, 341 NW Dogwood Avenue, Redmond, OR 97756

Facilitation provided by Matt Shinderman, Instructor at Oregon State University – Cascades Campus.

This document reflects public input gathered during the open house event held in Redmond. Participants were asked to identify the water resource challenges facing their community as well as any policies, projects, or approaches that they would like to see as part of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The event facilitator also asked audience members to share their vision, hopes, and goals for the state and to provide any education or outreach ideas that would help the public gain a better understanding of water resource issues facing Oregon. The discussion that took place reflects a true brainstorming session where no efforts were made by agency staff to rebut, debate, or prioritize any of the ideas, suggestions, or comments shared during the event.

4:00 Session

Challenges

1. Defining what “use it or lose it” means.
2. Fear about hammering down on junior water right holders.
3. Concern about requirements regarding fish passage.
4. Invasive species.
5. Impact of peak and ecological flows on storage projects.
6. A budget for the Water Resources Department that allows them enough people to respond.
7. Peak and ecological flow language in HB 3369 is not good and not representative of this region.
8. No flow data to support the groundwater withdrawal moratorium in the Deschutes Basin.
9. The need to deepen wells.
10. North Unit Irrigation District, which has the most productive farmland in the region, needs more water while at the same time has to give away water for conservation. This does not work.
11. Water is getting more expensive because of energy costs.

12. Water marketing and pricing of water is of concern because some industries can pay a lot more than the agriculture community can.
13. We do not want to lose water rights.
14. Is it worth investing time in studying the potential reservoir sites since there are many challenges with the federal requirements?

Solutions and Opportunities

1. Emphasis on local planning, not a top down approach.
2. Need more conservation of water.
3. Need to keep flexibility in mind at all times. People in this region have been doing good things for years.
4. Develop upstream impoundments.
5. Develop contingency plans for drought years rather than rules that apply for all times.
6. The impact of juniper trees on water. Managing juniper on all lands will improve water availability and quality.
7. Social and environmental justice is a big topic currently being discussed and everyone should pay attention to it.
8. Focus on uplands for above ground storage projects.
9. Infrastructure for the Water Resources Department to respond to inquiries, permits, and transfers.
10. Emphasize the importance for local plans.
11. Recognition of the large aquifer in the Deschutes Basin. The area should be able to use it. Need science behind it.
12. Revisit the term "peak and ecological flows." The term should be removed.
13. Look for leaks in urban areas to save a lot of water.
14. Determine and monitor how much water is used for all uses and how much water is wasted.

15. Provide more support and incentives for water conservation.
16. Engineered hydraulic water systems in homes to conserve water.
17. Cities should take a harder look at plumbing codes to encourage water conservation.
18. Standards and guidelines to encourage cities to adopt tiered water pricing systems.
19. Build a mechanism in the plan that helps basins quantify their unique water plan. For example, how they can conserve. Outreach to local people to help develop local solutions.
20. Projects to provide cheaper water.
21. Create incentives to “do the right thing.” For example, funding for projects.
22. Provide grant funds to every city for projects.
23. Fix the “system” as a whole by allowing water management in the basin.
24. Look at how the Energy Trust operates and helps to fund projects. For example, the “public purpose fund.” There are opportunities to use that for irrigation districts.
25. Measurement is key and should not be cut when budgets are bad and should be enhanced.
26. Basin-wide approach helps with trust and success.
27. Need to keep the price of water for agricultural at a reasonable price.
28. Have a water bank that is capitalized (similar to the Umatilla project).

Education and Outreach

1. Build opportunities for a “Master Watershed Steward” program for watersheds.
2. Provide more information on how climate change will impact water.
3. More education in town regarding rain catchment systems and water conservation in homes and landscaping.
4. Older people (40’s and 50’s) do not believe there is a problem. Target education toward old people.

5. Need to educate people on where their food comes from. Need to show the connection between water usage and food. It takes water to grow food! Should occur in the schools (in the 1st grade) and for adults.

Vision

1. Protection of prior appropriation doctrine.
2. Emphasis on local planning, not a top down approach
3. Respect the importance of agriculture and its link to national security.
4. Need to understand and plan for the needs of wetlands.

5:30 Session

Challenges

1. Water markets place a value on water based on scarcity, not for beneficial uses.
2. Federal takeover of water in Oregon.
3. No borders for rivers until they reach the ocean.
4. Other people that want to appropriate water that flows through Oregon. We need a plan for that.
5. Money always wins. Watch where the water and the money is (e.g. Colorado and Southern California).
6. Pollution in the water that originates from mining.
7. Potential population growth in this area.
8. The impacts of climate change.
9. Movement toward additional impoundments for water storage.
10. Fracturing of agriculture lands into residential areas and the resulting transfer of water rights. This is very wasteful and excludes beneficial uses for agriculture.
11. All of the water in this area is allocated. The difficulty is how to deal with water needs in a system that is already allocated.
12. The potential impact of canal lining on wells (some of the wells are going dry).

13. Well levels drop for many reasons (snowpack, more wells in the area). General concern about declining well levels.
14. SB 100 resulted in prime agricultural lands being paved over.
15. Inadequate funding for education and outreach.

Solutions and Opportunities

1. Change what has been happening for the past 5-10 years related to water marketing.
2. Keep groundwater clean from all of the stormwater runoff and mining activities. Remember that many areas are porous.
3. Keep a very close eye on the mines and potential pollution issues.
4. Treat agriculture as an imperative commodity.
5. Collaborative work from the Deschutes Basin should be used statewide.
6. Need more education.
7. Create an understanding of water use patterns.
8. Measure water usage.
9. Define success—what is the watershed supposed to look like and function?
10. The state's gaging network and precipitation data is critical to understanding how we can improve water usage.
11. Storage is important.
12. Protect and restore natural storage capacity (wetlands and such).
13. Keep the stored water clean.
14. The more natural the better.
15. Look down when planning for subdivisions and growth. Pay more attention to geology for development.
16. Remove barriers for the use of graywater.

17. Enhance the value of water for the next stage.
18. Promote water recovery as an important component in the agricultural process.
19. Dedicated funding for education and outreach.
20. Incentive programs work.
21. Low interest loans for energy conservation work. Do something similar for water and water conservation.
22. Expand instream water leasing.
23. Good management of piping.
24. Promote permanent water transfers.
25. Promote longer term water leases.
26. Take a systems view.

Education and Outreach

1. A statewide educational program for kids and adults on water.
2. A Peculiar River – book about this region, available at the library.
3. Education on irrigation water management and the most efficient ways to use water is key. Consult with the local Soil and Water Conservation District.

Vision

1. Treat water as a resource and not as a commodity.
2. Water catchments.
3. Water is all interconnected. In this area, groundwater and surface water are connected.