

OREGON WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
APRIL 2004

Water is the lifeblood of Oregon's economy and environment. As such, any statewide effort to incorporate sustainability principles more fully into how we do business must include our water resources. This *Sustainability Plan* outlines the Water Resources Department's (WRD) participation in Oregon's new sustainability initiative, and lays the foundation for incorporating sustainability as a fundamental part of what we do, rather than as a stand-alone concept.

Over the next year the Oregon Water Resources Department will focus its initial sustainability actions in four broad categories:

- 1) Facilities and Operations,
- 2) Resource Management,
- 3) Education and Outreach,
- 4) Regulatory Streamlining.

Under each of these categories we have identified specific actions that are currently underway or will be initiated over the next year. These actions are outlined below.

Facilities and Operations:

- 1) Identify and implement two actions at each regional office to reduce energy and paper use.
- 2) Move more fully to web-based, rather than paper notifications, including Commission and committee agendas and minutes, staff reports and rulemaking notices.

Resource Management:

- 1) Manage new ground water withdrawals in the Deschutes River Basin in a sustainable manner through use of the recently established mitigation credit and banking system.
- 2) Promote long-term water supply planning, use efficiency and conservation through assisting water suppliers in development of management and conservation plans.
- 3) Develop policy direction relating to the long-term and cumulative effects of new ground water rights on hydraulically connected surface water resources.
- 4) Continue to implement voluntary streamflow restoration to meet instream flow needs through efficiency and conservation, water right leases and transfers and other incentive-based programs.
- 5) Through the Water Resources Commission, initiate a dialog among scientists, stakeholders and agencies regarding the possible effect of global warming on long-term water supplies.

Outreach and Education:

- 1) Increase public understanding of sustainable practices by creating a display in the entry of the North Mall Office Building highlighting the sustainable design features and describing WRD's other sustainability efforts.
- 2) Increase staff awareness of sustainability by creating a *Sustainability Team* to oversee and track progress on internally-oriented sustainability projects, conducting sustainability training for our management team and implementing a regular agenda item at All-Staff meetings on sustainability.

Regulatory Streamlining:

- 1) Streamline regulations and regulatory processes by having each division of the agency review their rules and processes and identify at least one streamlining activity that will produce tangible benefits to customers and stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

In these times of scarce resources, establishing a culture of *sustainability* can provide the road map for successfully negotiating the challenging landscape ahead. Whether it's balancing competing resource needs through our regulatory authorities, or simply finding new ways to get things done in times of fiscal scarcity, operating in a sustainable manner will be a necessity rather than an option in the years to come.

Through the goals and actions in our *Sustainability Plan*, our agency will help lead the state's sustainability efforts. As we move forward under this plan and learn from our experiences, we will continue to fine-tune and elaborate on the actions identified herein to reflect our long-term cultural commitment to sustainability.