

**Oregon Water Resources Department  
Quarterly Report**

**October 2004**

**Summary**

Our 2003-2005 Sustainability Plan lays the foundation for viewing our existing mission and goals in the context of sustainability. Some of the actions identified in the plan build on efforts that were already underway while others represent new actions to advance the State’s sustainability objectives (ORS 184.421). The plan identified a total of nine goals and related actions our Department will undertake over two years. Of that total, four new goals were identified to implement the Governor’s Executive Order 03-03.

**Goal 1: *Reduce our Department’s impact on the environment***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>
<p>Over the next year, we will query our field offices to identify ongoing sustainable office practices and opportunities to improve our practices.</p> <p>We will quantify energy costs and paper use at each regional office and then identify and implement two actions at each regional office to reduce energy and paper use.</p> <p>We will continue to look for ways to move to web-based, rather than paper notifications. Over the next year, we will also implement paper-saving practices wherever possible.</p>	<p><b>June 2005</b></p>	<p><b>In Progress</b></p>	

<b>Progress update</b>			
<p><b>Q1:</b> Sustainability Coordinator visited each regional office and participated in division staff meetings to 1) educate staff about the Sustainability Plan and 2) to identify ongoing and potential practices to reduce energy and paper use.</p> <p>Our Administrative Services Division initiated a shift from paper to electronic notification for comp time and personal business time notices and to reduce the copies of personnel actions printed, and are investigating sustainable options for other reports.</p> <p>The Department continues to look for ways to reduce the number of documents mailed. This includes distributing Commission agendas, minutes, and staff reports via the web, and publishing all Department rulemaking notices, new administrative rules and public notices, and a variety of other publications via the web unless a hard copy is specifically requested. This has resulted in a reduction of over 200,000 sheets of paper mailed in the last year.</p> <p>Approximately 1500 water right permit holders are required by statute or permit condition to annually report the amount of water diverted. The Department has created an Internet web page that provides for on-line reporting of annual water use by these permit holders. Prior to the development of the water use reporting web page, the information was provided on forms supplied by the Department. The ability to report water use on-line simplifies the process for permit holders and, during the course of the year, will eliminate the need to use at least 1500 sheets of paper.</p> <p><b>Q2:</b> In May 2004, each regional office began implementing two new practices to reduce energy and paper use. To the extent possible, we will quantify savings from these actions over the next year.</p> <p>We have initiated a number of other internal waste reduction activities. Our Water Rights Section initiated a pilot project to share documents between our headquarters office and our Northwest Region field staff for electronic review of documents and for sharing electronic copies in lieu of mailing hard copies for filing at field offices.</p> <p>Our Water Rights Extension Team also initiated a peer review process for reviewing their documents electronically rather than using paper. We anticipate this new approach will save at least 10 boxes of paper per year (plus toner, pens, printer wear, etc.).</p> <p>Our headquarters staff also initiated a pilot project to compost coffee grounds for the North Mall Office Building.</p> <p>Our Department has also completed a project with the Office of Administrative Hearings to create a web-based, searchable database of administrative decisions on OWRD contested case hearings. Attorneys and consultants constantly seek information about past administrative proceedings before our Department and Commission. Prior to April 2004, administrative hearing decisions were only available on paper at the Department. Implementation of this project will likely eliminate the use of as much as 2,000 sheets of paper during the course of a year.</p> <p><b>Q3:</b> Information not yet available.  <b>Q4:</b></p>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			

<p>Q1: Quantifying energy use at regional offices was difficult and, in some cases, not possible due to shared facilities and rental agreements.</p> <p>Q2: Ongoing challenge has been to provide sufficient follow up and support to divisions interested in pursuing these energy and paper reductions.</p> <p>Q3:</p> <p>Q4:</p>			
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**Goal 2: *Manage new ground water withdrawals in the Deschutes River Basin in a sustainable manner***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>
<p>To ensure the Deschutes Ground Water Mitigation Program is successful, the Department must help applicants clearly understand the mitigation requirements and ensure that adequate mitigation credits are available to offset new ground water withdrawals.</p> <p>To accomplish these goals, we will develop fact sheets for our website that will help our applicants better understand the program.</p> <p>We will also expedite processing mitigation project applications to help “jump start” the mitigation bank.</p>	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>In Progress - Mitigation target met but efforts ongoing</b>	

<b>Progress update</b>			
<p><b>Q1:</b> We developed “one-pagers” that describe the ground water mitigation program and how to get mitigation credits for new ground water withdrawals.</p> <p><b>Q2:</b> We also hosted one-on-one local sessions where applicants can sit down with our staff and work through the process together.</p> <p>In keeping with our paper reduction goals and to expedite approval of mitigation projects, we have also initiated an on-line process for reviewing mitigation projects. By rule, the Department must consult with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Department of Agriculture, Division of State Lands, and Parks and Recreation Department when evaluating each mitigation project submitted for mitigation credits. To complete this evaluation, we were sending each agency a hard copy review package for each mitigation project proposed. These packages were quite bulky and took significant staff time to compile and copy. In April 2004, we modified the process so that mitigation project packets are now sent to each review agency electronically. We also established a Department web page to store information about mitigation projects and provide the web-link to project information to each review agency via email. This new approach will speed up the review, evaluation, and approval time for each mitigation project proposed, and will save paper and staff time as well.</p> <p><b>Q3:</b> We also recognized the need to expedite the processing of mitigation project applications in order to “jump start” the mitigation bank. So far in 2004, we have approved 142 permanent mitigation credits. That is six times more credits than were generated in 2003. We have also generated approximately 1900 temporary credits to date in 2004, roughly three times the number generated in 2003. We have issued 14 water right permits with approved mitigation and approximately 30 preliminary and final orders authorizing new water uses that are linked to proposed mitigation projects.</p> <p><b>Q4:</b></p>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
<p>Q1:</p> <p>Q2:</p> <p>Q3:</p> <p>Q4:</p>			

**Goal 3: *Promote long-term water supply planning, water use efficiency, and conservation***

Action	Target Date	Current Status	Revised Target Date

<p>The Department will expeditiously review water management and conservation plans submitted by agricultural and municipal water suppliers.</p> <p>Address backlog of plans that have been submitted to our Department to date.</p> <p>Our goal in the future will be to issue a preliminary review of each plan within 90 days of receiving it.</p> <p>The Department will partner will the Oregon Water Resources Congress to develop resources for use by irrigation districts for conservation planning.</p>	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>In Progress</b>	
<b>Progress update</b>			
<p><b>Q1:</b></p> <p><b>Q2:</b> The biggest challenge to meeting this sustainability goal is ensuring adequate staff resources to process plans submitted to the Department in a timely manner, especially given the large number of plans we expect to review over the next few years.</p> <p>To that end, our Department assigned a limited duration position to review and process these water management and conservation plans.</p> <p><b>Q3:</b> This staff person and a team of other staff from multiple divisions within the agency are working through the backlog of plans that have been submitted to the Department to date. Addressing this backlog will help ensure that plans submitted to the Department in the future are processed in a timely manner.</p> <p>To date, this backlog reduction team has public noticed 25 plans, reviewed 21 plans, and issued 16 preliminary and final decisions on plans. Because of these efforts, the Department has taken action on 68% of the backlogged plans.</p> <p>The Department is also pursuing potential funding opportunities with the Oregon Water Resources Congress to develop guidance and model plans to aid conservation and management planning by irrigation districts.</p> <p><b>Q4:</b></p>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
<p>Q1: Limited staff resources remains a challenge in meeting this goal.</p> <p>Q2: Limited staff resources.</p> <p>Q3: Limited staff resources.</p> <p>Q4:</p>			

**Goal 4: *Sustainable ground water – surface water management***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>
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Our Department has convened a subcommittee of the Commission's Ground Water Advisory Committee to develop policy direction relating to long-term and cumulative effects of new ground water rights on hydraulically connected surface water sources.	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>On going</b>	
<b>Progress update</b>			
Q1: Subcommittee meeting Q2: Subcommittee meeting Q3: Q4:			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
Q1: Q2: Q3: Q4:			

**Goal 5: *Implement voluntary streamflow restoration to meet instream flow needs***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>
Department will continue to look for ways to implement its voluntary streamflow restoration tools and to build partnerships with water users and other interests.  Our target is to achieve approximately a 2% increase annually in the percent of high priority areas where voluntary efforts have resulted in increasing streamflows.	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>On going</b>	
<b>Progress update</b>			
Q1:  Q2: We have evaluated data from the 2003 water year and were able to meet our target of restoring flows in 16% of the watersheds that have the greatest needs for flow restoration. Flow restoration activities included water right leases, water right transfers, and allocations of conserved water from irrigation efficiency and other projects.  Q3: In September, our Department received a grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Columbia Transactions Program to help irrigation districts and others restore flows through irrigation efficiency projects in the Walla Walla River Basin.  Q4:			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
Q1: Q2: Q3: Q4:			

**Goal 6: *Anticipate the possible effect of global warming on long-term water supplies***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>
<p>Our Commission will initiate a dialog among scientists, government agencies, and stakeholders regarding global warming and its implications for water supply in the Northwest, building on previous Department staff contacts and conferences.</p> <p>Our Department will continue to implement the Commission’s water measurement and reporting strategy. The Commission’s strategy is to focus limited staff on the largest diversions with the greatest potential impact on streams. We are assessing each of these significant diversions to ensure that water is used within the limits and conditions of the associated water right.</p> <p>Over the next year, we will pursue funding to complete a comprehensive inventory of potential surface water storage sites in Oregon.</p>	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>In progress</b>	
<b>Progress update</b>			
<p><b>Q1:</b> Staff contacted and confirmed participation in a Commission panel presentation scheduled in January 2005. Panelists will include scientists and representatives from representatives from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Oregon Water Resources Congress, Pacific Corp, City of Portland, and other organizations. Our staff have also been participating on the Governor’s Agency Work Group on Climate Change.</p> <p>In 2004, we initiated an electronic reporting system to track our progress in completing these assessments, and our goal is to complete the field assessment of these significant diversions in 2005. Staff worked to complete assessments of significant diversions and enter data into the database.</p> <p><b>Q2:</b> Staff worked to complete assessments of significant diversions and enter data into statewide database.</p> <p><b>Q3:</b> Staff worked to complete assessments of significant diversions and enter data into statewide database.</p> <p><b>Q4:</b></p>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
<p>Q1: Limited staff resources.            Q2: Limited staff resources.            Q3: Limited staff resources.            Q4:</p>			

**Goal 7: *Increase the public’s understanding of sustainable practices***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>

The Department will create a display in the entry of our new building, highlighting sustainable features of the building's design and describing our Department's other sustainability efforts.	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>No Action</b>	
<b>Progress update</b>			
<b>Q1</b> <b>Q2:</b> <b>Q3:</b> No progress to date. <b>Q4:</b>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
Q1: Insufficient staff resources. Q2: Insufficient staff resources. Q3: Insufficient staff resources. Q4:			

**Goal 8: *Increase staff awareness of sustainability***

<b>Action</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Revised Target Date</b>
We will plan several events to educate our managers and staff about sustainability.  We will keep sustainability an ever-present issue within the Department through regular All-Staff meeting reports and other events.  We will also incorporate regular reporting on sustainability activities into our Director's quarterly written reports to the Water Resources Commission.	<b>June 2005</b>	<b>On going</b>	
<b>Progress update</b>			
<b>Q1:</b> (Pre-Q1) Our Department hosted a training event for management staff and invited a state sustainability leader to present at an All-Staff meeting.  Our Director provided two updates on the Department's sustainability activities to our Commission.  Sustainability Coordinator meet with two divisions to discuss sustainability and the Department's Sustainability Plan. <b>Q2:</b> Our Director provided an update on the Department's sustainability activities to our Commission.  <b>Q3:</b> <b>Q4:</b>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			

Q1:			
Q2:			
Q3:			
Q4:			

**Goal 9: Streamline regulations and regulatory processes**

Action	Target Date	Current Status	Revised Target Date
The Department will have each programmatic subdivision of the Department review their regulations and regulatory processes. Each section will be asked to identify streamlining and customer service improvement opportunities and to specifically identify one streamlining activity that will produce tangible benefits to our customers and stakeholders.	June 2005	On going	
<b>Progress update</b>			
<p><b>Q1:</b> Our Department has been working with the Regulatory Streamlining office to identify a number of regulatory streamlining initiatives and has also developed legislative concepts to streamline its statutes and related processes.</p> <p><b>Q2:</b> We are continuing to develop and test a process to provide irrigation districts the opportunity to submit water right transfer applications and maps digitally and to automate the majority of the water right transfer review process. Our Commission amended our administrative rules to allow holders of “five-year permits” to apply for new water right permits that do not require “renewal” every five years. These rule changes improve the predictability of the regulatory process and reduce the cost of maintaining the permit by allowing the opportunity for a permanent water right permit.</p> <p>Our Commission completed a public rulemaking to eliminate rules that were obsolete due to statutory changes. Repealing these obsolete rules removed unnecessary and conflicting regulations and made the regulatory process more streamlined and easier to understand.</p> <p><b>Q3:</b> Reimbursement Authority – HB 2551 (2003, Oregon Laws) established a pilot project that provides our Department the authority to enter into a voluntary agreement with an applicant for expedited Department action on an application or other request for regulatory action. Under such an agreement, the applicant pays the cost to hire additional staff, contract for services, or provide additional services to the applicant not otherwise available. To date, there has been much interest in the Reimbursement Authority program and the Department has entered into numerous agreements for expedited review of water right transfers, permit extensions and development of water right certificates.</p> <p><b>Q4:</b></p>			
<b>Barriers/Potential Risks</b>			
Q1:			
Q2:			
Q3:			
Q4:			