



Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy

UNDERSTANDING AND MEETING OREGON'S INSTREAM AND OUT-OF-STREAM NEEDS



OUR MISSION

To serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management through two key goals:

- (1) to directly address Oregon's water supply needs, and
- (2) to restore and protect streamflows and watersheds in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's ecosystems, economy, and quality of life.

Background

During 2009, the 75th Legislative Assembly passed House Bill 3369, directing the Oregon Water Resources Department to develop a state-wide, Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRs) to help Oregon understand and meet its water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs, while taking into account coming pressures such as population growth, changes in land use, and future climate conditions.

Development of the Strategy

Although the Oregon Water Resources Department was responsible for development of the Strategy, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture were key partners during the process and continue to be during implementation. Oregon's tribes, along with public and private sector stakeholders, also have an important voice in this process, as do other natural resource agencies at the state and federal level. Early on, the Directors of the four agencies convened a Project Team of senior staff members and formed three advisory groups to help with various technical and policy components: an 18-member citizen Policy Advisory Group, an 18-member Agency Advisory Group comprised of state agency staff, and a Federal Liaison Group consisting of ten federal natural resource agencies.

The public will continue to play a prominent role during implementation of the Strategy, having previously participated in 11 open house events throughout the state, and having also provided public comment through letters, electronic means, and face-to-face meetings during various stages of the project.

What does it contain?

Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy provides a blueprint to help the state better understand and meet its water needs – instream and out-of-stream, above ground and below ground, now and into the future. The state's first Strategy outlines a vision, goals, objectives, and guiding principles; it identifies a number of critical issues that need to be addressed; and it offers recommended actions in 13 different issue areas.

UNDERSTAND WATER RESOURCES, SUPPLIES, INSTITUTIONS

- 1a. Conduct additional groundwater investigations
- 1b. Improve water resource data collection and monitoring
- 1c. Coordinate inter-agency data collection, processing, and use in decision-making

UNDERSTAND OUT-OF-STREAM NEEDS/DEMANDS

- 2a. Update long-term water demand forecasts
- 2b. Improve water-use measurement & reporting
- 2c. Determine pre-1909 water right claims
- 2d. Update water right records with contact information
- 2e. Update Oregon's water-related permitting guide

UNDERSTAND INSTREAM NEEDS/DEMANDS

- 3a. Determine flows needed (quality & quantity) to support instream needs
- 3b. Determine needs of groundwater dependent ecosystems

WATER-ENERGY NEXUS

- 4a. Analyze the effects on water from energy development projects & policies
- 4b. Take advantage of existing infrastructure to develop hydroelectric power
- 4c. Promote strategies that increase/integrate energy & water savings

CLIMATE CHANGE

- 5a. Support continued basin-scale climate change research efforts
- 5b. Assist with climate change adaptation and resiliency strategies

WATER-LAND USE NEXUS

- 6a. Improve integration of water information into land use planning (& vice versa)
- 6b. Update state agency coordination plans
- 6c. Encourage low-impact development practices

INFRASTRUCTURE

- 7a. Develop and upgrade water & wastewater infrastructure
- 7b. Encourage regional (sub-basin) approaches to water and wastewater systems

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

- 8a. Support Oregon's K-12 environmental literacy plan
- 8b. Provide education and training for Oregon's next generation of water experts
- 8c. Promote community education and training opportunities
- 8d. Identify ongoing water-related research needs

PLACE-BASED EFFORTS

- 9a. Undertake place-based integrated, water resources planning
- 9b. Coordinate implementation of existing natural resource plans
- 9c. Partner with federal agencies, tribes, and neighboring states in long-term water resources management

WATER MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

- 10a. Improve water-use efficiency and water conservation
- 10b. Improve access to built storage
- 10c. Encourage additional water reuse projects
- 10d. Reach environmental outcomes with non-regulatory alternatives
- 10e. Authorize and fund a water supply development program

HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

- 11a. Improve watershed health, resiliency, and capacity for natural storage
- 11b. Develop additional instream protections
- 11c. Prevent and eradicate invasive species
- 11d. Protect and restore instream habitat and habitat access for fish & wildlife

PUBLIC HEALTH

- 12a. Ensure the safety of Oregon's drinking water
- 12b. Reduce the use of and exposure to toxics and other pollutants
- 12c. Implement water quality pollution control plans

FUNDING

- 13a. Fund development & implementation of Oregon's IWRS
- 13b. Fund water resources management at the state level
- 13c. Fund communities needing feasibility studies for water conservation, storage, and reuse projects

Implementation

The Strategy has been endorsed by the boards and commissions overseeing Oregon's natural resource agencies, and the Water Resources Commission adopted the Strategy on August 2, 2012. Many of the operational details related to the Strategy, including setting timelines, identifying costs, and determining staffing needs, will occur during the course of preparations for the 2013 Legislative Session.

Producing Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy is an iterative process and successfully meeting Oregon's water needs will mean constantly asking "what if" questions and adapting to changing circumstances and environments. The implementation process will include monitoring progress toward recommended actions, a commitment to resolving conflicts that arise, providing feedback on any successes or shortcomings, and evolving or adapting to new information or resources. All Oregonians have a role to play in the implementation of the Strategy. As the State learns lessons from the first round of implementation, the Strategy can be adjusted as needed through formal adoption every five years.

For More Information

The IWRS website is a place where you can find the Strategy, its Executive Summary, and other project information, including a draft 2013-15 workplan, and visual/audio presentations. The online materials will allow you to gain a better understanding of why the state is preparing for its water future. The project page can be accessed through the Department's website. Joining the electronic mailing list is another easy way to stay informed of upcoming meetings, recent activity, and developments via notices to your email. You can also contact the Project Team directly to share your ideas, concerns, or suggestions.

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