

Oregon Source Water Protection Workshops 2022

Protecting Your Drinking Water Source for Communities and Fish: How to Increase Resiliency with Land Conservation and Acquisition

Discussion and Breakout Sessions

11/1/2022 North and Mid-Coast Workshop

Newport, OR Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital Center for Health Education

Discussion: Challenges and Barriers to Land Conservation

Summary of small table discussions regarding potential challenges and other barriers to land conservation identified by communities

Barriers:

- Drinking Water Plant operations – high needs for grey infrastructure limits capacity for green/natural infrastructure projects
 - Water intake regulations
 - Plan review process needed for treatment changes
 - Gray infrastructure
 - City of Newport more focused on grey infrastructure than on land conservation
 - Newport: Dam and Wastewater treatment plant (WWTP)
 - For Newport: How does dam planning change the evaluation of what [which] land is valuable?
 - Toledo: Miller reservoir line replacement
 - Summertime water flow is low which limits growth or tourism
 - High demand during low flow conditions

- Lack of water system jurisdiction over management of watershed
 - Lack of opportunities to provide input on logging activities
 - Unwilling landowners
 - Ag versus conservation versus development
 - Intake locations near private land causes of decreased water quality
 - Potential for partnership with land trust for management?
 - Private ownership:
 - commitment to increase conservation
 - connecting to benefits
 - education: is it in their interest?
 - show “value” of conservation?
 - How to connect to aesthetic values?
 - Increase access to green spaces and water

- Lack of Capacity at public water system, in community, and for partners
 - Small community equals low capacity for planning and action
 - Staff capacity within the agency that is working to implement water quality protection
 - Capacity of technical assistance and pipeline of workers
 - Board development
 - Understaffed
 - Forest that Newport already owns (98 Acres Forest Park) doesn't have a forest management plan

- Needs for Education and outreach to community and city/community leadership
 - Community understanding and awareness
 - Covid has resulted in limited community engagement since pandemic began
 - Municipal awareness and political will
 - Lack of opportunities to provide input activities

- Funding Needs
 - Appraisals - yellow book
 - Poor communication between agencies
 - Timeline for addressing needs mismatch with funding timelines
 - Funding sources to buy land for conservation
 - Rates
 - Negotiating price for land acquisition
 - Cost to study land before acquisition

Break Out Session 1

- 1) Where is Your Community in the Process of Drinking Water Protection?**
- 2) What types of partners or funding sources could support you and your watershed?**

Overall, water systems and their communities are in different phases and have different needs for partners and funding sources. Some are just starting to consider the options, others are developing a plan, and others are working towards implementing protection strategies. Highlights from the group discussion include the following:

- City of Toledo is updating their drinking water protection plan and providing education on the Siletz as their water source.
- City of Newport is developing plans to rebuild their dams and working towards watershed protection. Newport does not have a drinking water protection plan.
- City of Florence has groundwater wells and needs aquifer protection since this is their sole source of drinking water. City of Florence has an approved Drinking Water Protection Plan.
- Panther Creek has a new plant – dealing with impacts from recent wildfire and ash in their drinking water source watershed
- Many are evaluating partners and funding. Recognize need for partners to help with conceptual assistance for funding support. Some have developed partnerships between water supplier and conservation partner.

- Several are making landowner contact and communicating/collaborating with partners. First step is finding out who owns the land and who to approach. Concerns about landowners with no interest in selling. Acknowledge there are challenges with private owners and politics.
- Several are working towards education for community and for public officials or boards. Often, it's left up to local community to find resources to work on drinking water protection
- Recognize need for regional watershed management, need to make source water more reliable.
- Considering using GRAIP Lite analysis to evaluate road sediment reduction
- Turnover in city government means lack of institutional knowledge.
- Evaluating how to include other communities who share the same source water in the planning process.

Break Out Session 2 – Identifying Takeaways, Challenges and Next Steps

1. What's one thing you've heard today that you will use going forward?

- Importance of partnerships and a good plan
- It helps to have federal nexus with Forest Service
- Use funding agency
- Enhancing community outreach
- Florence is special (ground water supply)
- Get help early and often
- Understanding and attaining sustainable forest practices

2. What are your biggest challenges and what can partners do to help?

- Process is long – need to figure out a timeline to achieve source water protection goals
- Need Staff capacity (is there resource assistance for rural environments?) Many are understaffed or job-sharing
- Council turnover and commitment
- Knowing who's out there for partners and funding and how to get to it (time and staff)
- Communication – need to keep ratepayers informed and explain rate increases
- Organization size and time
- Land costs are volatile
- What's the budget? Not just land
- Old infrastructure
- Infrastructure: fire, rebuilding dam
- Learning about stewardship for the system/community – making sure new landowner (city/water system) can sustainably manage forested land they acquire

3. What do you want to follow up on? What are your next steps?

- Collaboration with City
- Connect with people that we met today
- Develop risk reduction plan – include community education for board and rate payers
- Develop drinking water protection plan then Implement!
- Need to boost local interest (provide food and childcare at meetings)

- Create municipal water advisory board - this is a process and should be locally driven
- Funding equals education and community education requires funding
- Consider groundwater back-up to support system
- Moving forward:
 - Follow through
 - Develop capacity needs
 - Where to find money
 - More resource organizations
 - Timing and luck
 - Personal help available
 - Wastewater funding
 - Broad perspective