State of Oregon
DEQ Department of Environmental Quality

Appendix A: Recommended Governance Plan

Oregon Water Data Portal, June 2025

Introduction

Oregon has an unprecedented opportunity to transform water management through improved data integration. By bringing together the wealth of water data currently distributed across numerous state agencies, the Oregon Water Data Portal project promises to unlock new insights, enable more informed decision-making, and foster collaborative solutions to complex water challenges. This initiative will create a foundation for innovation in how we understand, protect, and sustainably manage the state's vital water resources.

This recommended governance plan outlines an interagency governance structure for the OWDP project. The creation of such a structure was included as a key recommendation in the 2023 legislative report on the OWDP and identified as a project objective in the OWDP's Funding Level and Authorization for the 2023-25 biennium. These recommendations assume a project similar in scope to what is proposed in HB 3106-A. Due to the project's cross-cutting nature, which requires coordination among multiple agencies with different missions, priorities, and data management practices, a clearly articulated governance structure is essential for effective management.

This recommended plan was developed through a structured, collaborative process consisting of four 1.5-hour virtual roundtable discussions. These sessions were facilitated by staff from the Internet of Water at Duke University's Nicholas Institute and included representatives from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Institute for Natural Resources (INR), Water Resources Department, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, and Center for Applied Systems and Software. One session featured a presentation from a representative of the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, who shared valuable insights from the New Mexico Water Data Initiative's approach to interagency collaboration. Detailed information on these governance planning engagements is provided in the appendix.

The document was further informed by previous governance planning work, including recommendations from Olympic Consulting, earlier work by DEQ staff, and lessons learned from similar projects in other Oregon agencies and other states. This comprehensive approach ensures the governance structure incorporates diverse perspectives and proven practices.

By establishing clear roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes, this recommended governance plan creates the institutional framework needed to sustain this innovative initiative over time. The OWDP has the potential to revolutionize how stakeholders access and utilize water data, leading to more efficient resource allocation, enhanced environmental protection, and greater resilience in the face of changing conditions. Through this coordinated approach, Oregon is positioning itself at the forefront of modern water data management and creating a model that can inspire similar efforts across the nation.

Executive summary

The Oregon Water Data Portal will integrate water data currently distributed across multiple state agencies, enabling better-informed decision-making, unlocking new insights, and supporting more efficient resource allocation. This governance plan establishes the institutional framework needed to coordinate this complex, multi-agency initiative and ensure its long-term sustainability.

Governance structure

Lead agency staffing (5-10 FTE recommended)

- Project Lead (0.5-1 FTE): Strategic planning and oversight; interagency coordination
- Technical Lead (1 FTE): Technical development oversight and decision-making
- Project Manager (1 FTE): Scope, schedule, budget, and administrative management
- Project Associate (0.5-1 FTE): Communications, stakeholder engagement, and grant writing
- Business Analyst (0.5-1 FTE): Requirements translation and strategic planning
- Data Management Staff (1-3 FTE): Agency data preparation and technical support
- Portal Developers (1-2 FTE): Platform development, maintenance, and enhancement
- Student Data Interns (variable): University partnership for data management support

Project teams

1. Technical Implementation Team: Portal development, data management, and user testing
2. Administration and Outreach Team: Planning, communications, and stakeholder engagement
3. Integrated Water Data Team: Interagency coordination and data sharing
4. Executive Steering Committee: Strategic oversight and guidance
5. Strategic Task Forces: Time-limited, targeted groups addressing specific technical challenges

Engagement strategy

Four complementary approaches ensure comprehensive stakeholder involvement:

- Tribal and Interested Party Engagements: Broad events to build awareness and gather feedback
- Targeted Usability Testing: Small-group and one-on-one sessions to refine portal functionality
- Interagency Convenings: Annual cross-agency relationship building and collaboration
- Ongoing University System Engagement: Deep partnerships leveraging academic expertise, research capacity, and student involvement

Critical success factors

- Building Internal Capacity: Investing in Oregon's technical workforce creates sustainable expertise and reduces long-term costs compared to contractor dependency.
- Program vs. Project Approach: Treating OWDP as an ongoing program ensures continuous value delivery and adaptability to Oregon's evolving water management needs.

Investment rationale

Successful implementation will:

- Enhance decision-making through comprehensive, reliable data access
- Maximize value from existing water data investments
- Position Oregon as a national leader in integrated water data management
- Support sustainable water management
- Improve interagency collaboration

Recommended staffing for the lead agency

It is proposed that the OWDP Project would be managed by a lead agency (to be determined). The lead agency staffing recommendations outlined below are designed to enable the project to achieve the recommendations and tasks described in the 2025 OWDP Final Report, and assume a project scope similar to what is proposed in House Bill 3106-A. This level of staffing would support the maintenance of existing infrastructure and strategic expansion of capabilities and data integration over time.

To foster the continued success of the OWDP, it is recommended that the following staff and contracted positions be established at the lead agency:

- **Project Lead (0.5-1 FTE):** Provides oversight, leadership and general direction for the entire project, serves as point of contact for agency leadership, conducts long-term project planning, facilitates interagency coordination and alignment, and advances collaboration with Oregon university system representatives. Responsible for setting strategic direction, including identifying strategic partners and external engagement needs for collaboration and input.
- **Technical Lead (1 FTE):** Provides oversight, leadership and general direction for the technical development of the portal and data management processes, orchestrates development work (including coordinating across contractors, staff, and other agencies), executes key tasks related to portal development.
- **Project Manager (1 FTE):** Plans and organizes tasks, resources and deliverables, and ensures the project remains on schedule and budget. This work includes tracking action items, establishing contracts, completing required administrative documentation, managing contracts and grants, scheduling meetings, creating agendas, and maintaining notes. Identifies and proposes solutions to address project risks. Currently, the Center for Applied Systems and Software (CASS) at Oregon State University supports project management, while DEQ staff supports contracts and administration. It is recommended that the lead agency have one internal staff member with experience in software development projects who is primarily responsible for project management.
- **Project Associate (0.5 - 1 FTE):** Serves as the primary project communicator, including developing written materials (such as legislative reports, whitepapers, or project planning documents), supporting the Project Lead in long-term project planning and policy development, serving as the primary point of contact for interested parties, facilitating collaboration with the Oregon university system, leading agency communication and public engagement, and writing grant proposals.
- **Business Analyst (0.5 - 1 FTE):** Ensures the project aligns with statewide data system requirements and meets project goals, including translating business needs into technical requirements, supporting the Project Lead in medium and long-term project planning, and creating flexible data project implementation plans that other agencies can adapt to their own projects.
- **Data Management Staff (1-3 FTEs):** Executes data management and agency support tasks by working with agencies across the state to prepare their data for integration into the portal. This could include digitizing legacy data, implementing data standards, cleaning datasets, setting up APIs, and providing technical support to partner agencies. The data management staff should also work with the portal developers to ensure data integration and management processes are designed to meet agency needs.
- **Portal Developers (1-2 FTE):** Maintains, refines, and improves the pilot data portal, including developing new features and engaging with users to improve usability. Currently, this work is split between two contractors: the Internet of Water at the Center for Geospatial Solutions (IoW-CGS) and the Institute for Natural Resources at Oregon State University (INR) at Oregon State University. It is

recommended that the lead agency have at least one internal staff member who is directly involved in portal development (this could be the Technical Lead).

- **Student Data Interns (variable):** Supports data management and portal development activities through a proposed collaborative partnership between the lead agency and Oregon State University. This collaboration would build off an existing university summer internship program that recruits students from across the Oregon University System. Responsibilities could include assisting with data digitization and standardization projects, conducting user testing and usability assessments of the water data portal, and/or developing maps and analytical tools using portal data. Interns would work closely with Data Management Staff and Portal Developers to gain hands-on experience in data science, web development, and user experience design while contributing to the statewide water data initiative.
- **Strategic Consultant (0.5 FTEs, Optional):** Advises on project planning and policy development, including supporting inter-agency engagement, facilitating knowledge sharing with other states, and advising on policy and governance. This role is currently filled by the Internet of Water at Duke University (IoW-Duke). While not required, this role is included in the recommendation because it is currently part of the project and provides a valuable external perspective and connection to national networks.

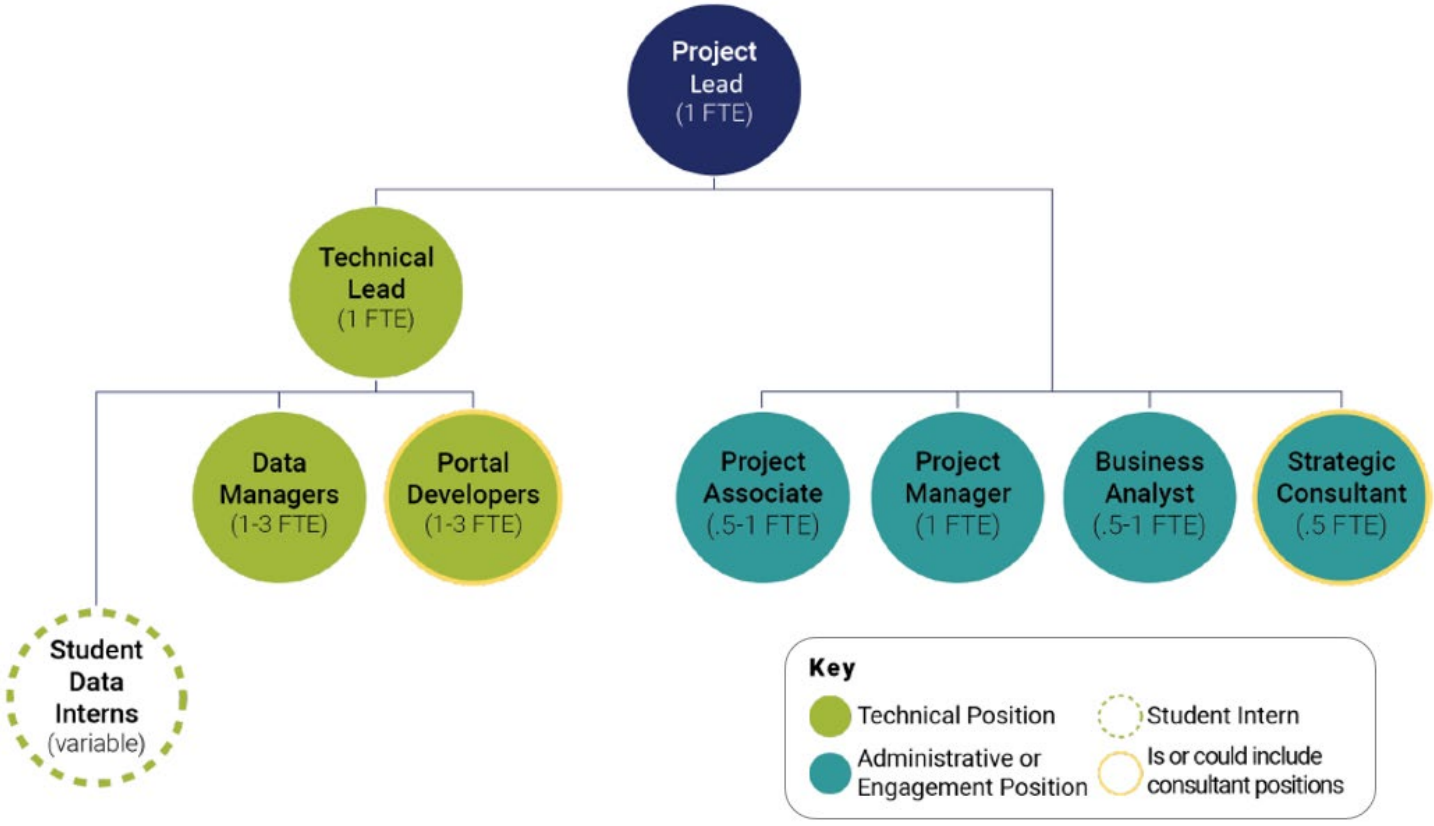

Figure 1: Organization chart for the OWDP staff at the Lead Agency

The lead agency would be responsible for overseeing all aspects of the project, managing and coordinating across the proposed project teams described below, and would be accountable for project deliverables and outcomes. Having these dedicated staff positions within the lead agency would create a solid foundation for the successful implementation of the water data portal and associated data management initiatives.

It is important to acknowledge that participating agencies will also need to determine and allocate their own staffing resources related to data management and IT infrastructure to effectively participate in this initiative. Each agency should assess its specific needs based on its data holdings, technical capabilities, and intended level of participation in the OWDP Project.

Proposed project teams

We propose that the OWDP Project operate through four dedicated project teams. The Technical Implementation Team would manage all technical aspects, including portal development, data management, and user testing. The Administration and Outreach Team would oversee long-term project planning, administrative functions, internal communications, and public outreach. The Integrated Water Data Team would focus on improving interagency coordination and data sharing among partner agencies. The Executive Steering Committee would provide high-level strategic oversight and ensure alignment across all core agencies. In addition to these standing teams, Strategic Task Forces would be deployed to address specific technical challenges, bringing together relevant experts for targeted, time- limited collaboration on discrete issues. This structure balances consistent project management with flexible problem-solving capabilities to efficiently advance the project's goals.

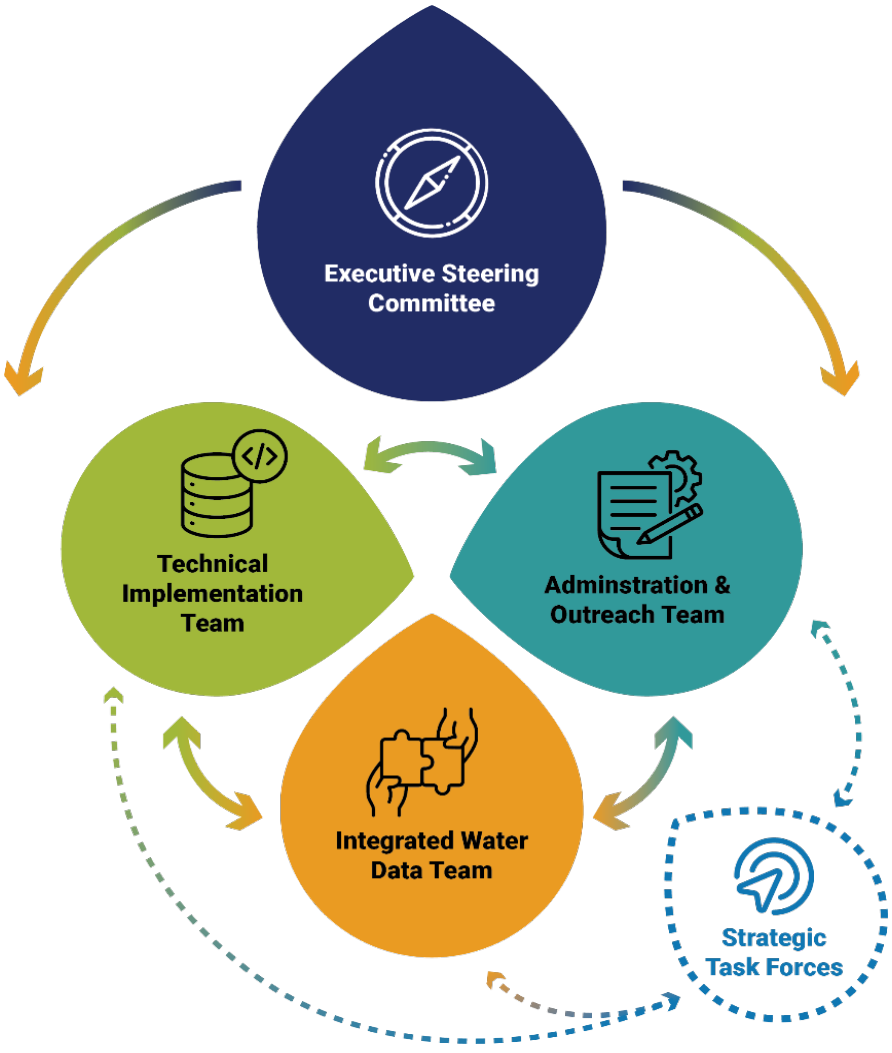

Figure 2: OWDP Project Teams

These teams may need to evolve and change over time as project needs shift, new challenges emerge, and organizational learning occurs. This framework serves as a starting point that should be reviewed and refined as the project progresses.

Technical Implementation Team

The Technical Team would manage all aspects of the project's technology infrastructure, including portal development, data management, and user testing. This team would consist of technical and administrative staff from the lead agency alongside specialized contractors. Team members would convene weekly and would be responsible for completing assigned tasks between meetings.

Team Composition

Position Title	Employment	Role on Team	Responsibilities
Technical Lead	Lead Agency	Team Lead	Orchestrates work, executes key tasks, serves as a key decision- maker on technical matters.
Data Management Staff	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Executes data management and agency support tasks
Portal Developers	Contracted and/or Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Maintains, refines, and improves the pilot data portal
Business Analyst	Lead Agency	Contributor	Ensures project aligns with statewide data system requirements, creates flexible implementation plans for participating agencies
Project Lead	Lead Agency	Oversight	Provides strategic oversight and ensures technical work is in line with high-level goals; primarily observes and offers guidance
Project Manager	Lead Agency	Support Staff	Schedules meetings, creates meeting agendas, maintains notes, tracks action items
Project Associate	Lead Agency	Ancillary	Participates when needed for awareness; supports user engagement activities
Student Data Interns	Lead Agency	Support and Learning	Supports Data Management Staff and Portal Developers on discrete tasks as part of their summer internships

Primary responsibilities

The Technical Team would be responsible for:

- Collecting and implementing user feedback on the pilot portal
- Enhancing the pilot portal through refinements and additional data integration
- Designing and planning the permanent portal architecture
- Supporting agency partners with dataset preparation and improving data literacy

- Maintaining and updating the comprehensive data inventory
- Developing and implementing data standards and protocols
- Creating a timeline for addressing specific technical components of the project
- Leading strategic task forces to address specific technical challenges
- Assisting participating agencies with data clean-up and management operations
- Developing a data governance plan for the permanent portal, which could include data standards, data documentation guidelines, and QA/QC requirements.

Administration and Outreach Team

The Administration and Outreach Team would manage all administrative functions, internal communications, and public outreach aspects of the project. This team would consist of project leadership and administrative staff from the lead agency, specialized contractors as needed and include the Technical Lead for awareness purposes. Team members would convene weekly and would be responsible for completing assigned tasks between meetings.

Team composition

Position Title	Employment	Role on Team	Responsibilities
Project Lead	Lead Agency	Team Lead	Provides oversight and leadership for the entire project, serves as a key decision-maker and point of contact for agency leadership, conducts long-term project planning
Project Manager	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Schedules meetings, creates agendas, maintains notes, tracks action items, establishes contracts, completes required administrative documentation, manages contracts and grants
Business Analyst	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Ensures project aligns with statewide requirements, supports long-term project planning, liaisons with EIS
Project Associate	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Develops written materials, supports long-term project planning, serves as primary point of contact for interested parties, leads agency communication and public engagement, writes grant proposals, coordinates with university system representatives on collaborative projects
Strategic Consultant	Contracted	Advisory	Advises on project planning and policy development, supports inter- agency engagement, facilitates knowledge sharing with other states
Technical Lead	Lead Agency	Ancillary	Participates primarily for awareness, provides technical perspective on long-term planning, informs communication and engagement activities

Primary responsibilities

The Administration and Outreach Team would be responsible for:

- Establishing and managing contracts necessary for project completion

- Completing required administrative and planning documentation
- Developing a plan for the administration of the Integrated Water Data Account[1], if established, in consultation with the Integrated Water Data Team and the Executive Steering Committee
- Writing and submitting grant applications as needed
- Planning and coordinating meetings of the Integrated Water Data Team and the Executive Steering Committee
- Managing communications and outreach with interested stakeholders about the portal
- Preparing and submitting legislative reports
- Developing content about the project (reports and communications materials) for public consumption

Integrated Water Data Team

The Integrated Water Data Team would work to enhance communication and data sharing among agencies while improving interagency coordination. Their efforts would focus on increasing the accessibility, interoperability, and usability of water data to support water and watershed planning and management. This team would include a mid-level representative from each core agency[2], as well as the Project Lead, project staff, and contractors. Members would meet monthly and complete variable amounts of work between meetings.

Team composition

Position Title	Employment	Role on Team	Responsibilities
Project Lead	Lead Agency	Team Lead	Orchestrates work, facilitates interagency collaboration, serves a key decision-maker (with consensus sought whenever possible)
Mid-level Agency Representatives	One from each Core Agency (with alternate)	Core Contributor	Champions project and encourages standards adherence within their agency, advises on planning and data standards, coordinates dataset preparation, maintains agency contributions to the data inventory, supports Integrated Water Data Account management
Technical Lead	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Shares technical development information, seeks feedback from agency representatives to inform technical decisions
Data Management Staff	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Provides technical support to agency representatives, assists with dataset preparation and standards compliance

[1] The Integrated Water Data Account proposed in Oregon HB 3106-A is a separate treasury fund managed by the Lead Agency. Funding sources include legislative appropriations, grants, private donations, and account earnings. Expenditures are restricted to developing the integrated water data portal, implementing Integrated Water Data Team actions, distributing funds to participating state agencies, and providing grants to other entities for water data collection and management supporting the portal. The legislation specifies that the Lead Agency may establish administrative rules as needed.

[2] Core agencies are specified in Oregon HB 3106-A, this document assumes a project scope similar to what is proposed in HB 3106-A. If this legislation is not passed, engagement with the core agencies named in the legislation would remain essential to foster continued progress on the OWDP.

Position Title	Employment	Role on Team	Responsibilities
Project Associate	Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Shares project information, gathers feedback, coordinates agency representatives for funding requests and grant applications, coordinates with university system representatives on collaborative projects
Portal Developers	Contracted and/or Lead Agency	Core Contributor	Shares portal development information, gathers feedback on functionality, provides strategic guidance on technical questions
Strategic Consultant	Contracted	Facilitator; Advisory	Provides strategic guidance on planning and policy, facilitates interagency collaboration and interstate connections
Project Manager	Lead Agency	Support Staff	Schedules meetings, creates agendas, maintains notes, tracks action items

Primary responsibilities

The Integrated Water Data Team would be responsible for:

- Expanding the number of water datasets included in the pilot portal
- Maintaining and updating the inventory of existing water data, identifying gaps, and prioritizing investments
- Developing internal agency processes to strategically sequence datasets for portal inclusion
- Promoting adherence to protocols and common water data standards within respective agencies
- Supporting interagency coordination and public outreach activities related to water data
- Advancing efforts to secure and manage funds from the Integrated Water Data Account
- Contributing to and advising on biennial legislative reports

Executive Steering Committee

The Executive Steering Committee serves as the strategic cornerstone for the project, providing essential oversight and ensuring all core agencies and organizations are aligned toward shared objectives. This committee includes executive-level leaders from each core agency as well as leaders from the university system and tribal governments. Members meet quarterly, with no work required between meetings.

Team composition

Position Title	Employment	Role on Team	Responsibilities
Executive-Level Agency Representatives	One from each Core Agency and Organization (with alternate)	Core Contributors	Establishes strategic direction for portal development, determines priority initiatives and key data types the portal will support, makes consensus-based decisions on high-level strategic matters, stays informed on project progress, removes barriers within their own agencies

Position Title	Employment	Role on Team	Responsibilities
University System Representatives	3-4 Representatives from across the University System[3]	Core Contributors	Contributes to strategic direction setting, advises on academic initiative alignment with portal capabilities, recommends priority research data types, makes consensus-based decisions on high-level strategic matters, stays informed on project progress, identifies opportunities for collaboration with their universities
Tribal Representatives	Representatives for OR tribal governments (as available)[4]	Core Contributors	Contributes to strategic direction setting, identifies culturally important initiatives for portal support, advises on data priorities, makes consensus-based decisions on high-level strategic matters, stays informed on project progress, identifies opportunities for collaboration with their tribal government agencies
Project Lead	Lead Agency	Primary Project Representative	Shares information on project progress, identifies barriers, poses strategic questions to executive-level representatives, implements strategic direction as established by the committee
Technical Lead	Lead Agency	Secondary Project Representative	Provides updates on technical progress and challenges, offers technical context and details, translates strategic priorities into technical requirements
Other Project Staff (as needed)	Lead Agency	Tertiary Project Representative	Participates as needed when aspects of the project relevant to their work are being discussed
Project Manager	Lead Agency	Support Staff	Schedules meetings, creates agendas, maintains notes, tracks action items
Strategic Consultant	Contracted	Advisory	Provides strategic guidance on planning and policy, facilitates interagency collaboration and interstate connections, supports strategic direction development

Primary responsibilities

The Executive Steering Committee is responsible for:

- Establishing the overarching strategic direction for portal development and improvement
- Prioritizing initiative and programs the portal should aim to support
- Identifying key data types that warrant enhanced focus and resource allocation
- Providing high-level strategic guidance to the project team
- Generating buy-in and alignment across participating agencies
- Removing barriers to progress within their respective agencies

[3] It is recommended that the composition of these representatives be as follows: 1 representative from a land grant university, 1 representative from a community college, and 1-2 representatives from regional colleges.

[4] Once a lead agency is designated, it is recommended that representatives from the lead agency reach out to representatives from Oregon tribal governments to assess their interest and availability to participate as members of the Executive Steering Committee.

- Making consensus decisions on high-level strategic matters
- Reviewing and responding to recommendations provided by the integrated water data, technical implementation, and administration and outreach teams
- Promoting the project to stakeholders within and outside their agencies

Strategic Task Forces

Strategic Task Forces would serve as targeted, time-limited groups deployed to address discreet technical challenges. Each task force would operate with clear objectives and timelines, disbanding once its specific goal is achieved. This approach would conserve valuable human resources by focusing expert attention only where and when it is needed. This model evolves from the Subject Matter Expert (SME) Team used in stages 1 and 2. While that larger team worked well for the planning stages, it is not as efficient for implementation. The Strategic Task Force approach would selectively convene relevant experts from the original SME team or similar qualified individuals to provide targeted input on specific implementation challenges, rather than requiring ongoing participation.

Team composition

Task Force membership would be tailored to each specific challenge. Typically, a Strategic Task Force would include select Technical Implementation and Integrated Water Data Team members alongside subject matter experts who are the primary collectors or users of the specific data type or portal feature being addressed. Technical Implementation Team members would perform the bulk of the development work, while the subject matter experts would primarily serve in advisory and review capacities, completing discrete tasks only when necessary. For example, a task force developing a data standard for groundwater monitoring might include hydrogeologists from partner agencies, technical staff from the implementation team, IT staff and/or data stewards from agencies that collect key groundwater datasets, and staff at key agencies or organizations that regularly use groundwater data for decision-making. The Technical Implementation Team, in collaboration with the Integrated Water Data Team, should develop a timeline for addressing specific technical challenges to allow for the identification of task force members well in advance. This early planning would give managers sufficient notice to designate staff members and allocate time appropriately, rather than making last-minute requests. This planned and targeted approach would prevent expert fatigue while ensuring that those who will ultimately implement and use the data and portal features have direct input into their design.

Primary responsibilities

The Strategic Task Forces would tackle clearly defined challenges requiring specialized expertise. Their responsibilities might include developing and/or adapting statewide data standards for particular data types, creating technical specifications for new portal features, or documenting appropriate uses and limitations for specific data types to prevent misinterpretation. For instance, a task force might spend three months developing a standardized format for stream flow measurements across all participating agencies. Before developing new solutions, task forces would inventory existing standards, protocols, and/or approaches across their agencies to build on and improve established practices. It is essential to have in depth participation from key representatives across all relevant agencies in order to both understand what currently exists at different agencies and deliver a harmonized approach that will be acceptable to all the involved parties. The utilization

of strategic task forces as a focused approach would not only improve the technical quality of solutions but would also foster inter-agency relationships that would strengthen long-term collaboration on water data initiatives.

Engagement strategy

It is recommended that the OWDP project employ three distinct engagement approaches to ensure comprehensive stakeholder involvement, user-centered design, and interagency collaboration. These complementary strategies—annual interested party engagements, targeted usability testing, and interagency convenings—address different aspects of project development and implementation while collectively ensuring the portal meets diverse user needs, functions effectively, and facilitates cross- agency coordination. Each approach serves specific purposes and engages different participant groups to maximize the value and impact of the water data initiative.

Annual Tribal and interested party engagements

The OWDP project would conduct two annual interested party engagements to ensure comprehensive stakeholder involvement and culturally appropriate engagement practices.

General annual interested party engagement

The general annual interested party engagement would be a forum for knowledge sharing and feedback, ensuring the project remains responsive to user needs and provides regular opportunities for input from a diverse range of perspectives. This engagement would be open to anyone interested in the project, including tribal government representatives. Outreach in advance of the meeting should be shared as broadly as possible, with a specific focus on data users and contributors from state and local agencies, tribal governments, academic institutions, and relevant nonprofit organizations and community groups.

Annual Tribal government engagement

A separate annual interested party engagement will be conducted exclusively for representatives from tribal governments. This dedicated forum recognizes the unique sovereign status of tribal nations and provides a culturally appropriate space for tribal representatives to share their perspectives, data needs, and concerns regarding water data management. This engagement acknowledges the government-to-government relationship between tribal nations and state agencies and ensures tribal voices are meaningfully incorporated into the project development process. The forum will also explore opportunities for collaboration and data sharing, as appropriate and in accordance with tribal data sovereignty principles.

Primary goals

Both annual engagements share the following primary goals:

- Increasing awareness of the project
- Growing a network of project champions within various communities
- Ensuring diverse stakeholder interests are represented in the development process
- Collecting suggestions for new features or enhancements based on practical use cases

- Discovering potential applications and use cases for the water data
- Obtaining input on how the portal can best serve decision-making processes
- Identifying priority datasets from user perspectives

Targeted usability testing

Usability testing would involve small group meetings of 5-8 participants and one-on-one meetings with individuals who represent priority user groups. These structured sessions would ask users to complete specific tasks on the water data portal while sharing their thoughts out loud. Members of the technical team would observe where they succeed, where they struggle, and collect their feedback on the experience. Sessions could be conducted both in-person and remotely to include diverse perspectives. The team could use tools like screen recording and eye tracking to see exactly how users interact with the portal. Testing would happen before launching major new features or making significant changes to the design. Student data interns could also be involved in these testing sessions to provide additional perspectives and work through specific workflows.

Primary goals

- Finding specific points where users get confused or stuck when using the portal
- Measuring how easily and quickly users can complete important tasks
- Evaluating whether users can find information and features without assistance
- Assessing how easy the system is to learn for both new and experienced users
- Ensuring the words and labels used in the portal make sense to water data users
- Testing how well the portal works across different devices and browsers
- Measuring user satisfaction with standard, easy-to-understand questions
- Identifying which issues should be fixed first based on their impact on users
- Creating ongoing communication between users and developers throughout the project
- Ensuring that key user groups and perspectives are reflected in the portal's design by identifying priority user groups and ensuring their participation in user testing

Interagency convenings

Interagency convenings would be annual or semi-annual in-person events bringing together diverse staff from multiple agencies and organizations, including agency leaders, decision-makers, IT specialists, data managers, program managers and leaders, and subject matter experts. This forum would connect professionals who rarely have opportunities to work directly together, fostering relationships while addressing shared water data challenges. Representatives from other states who are engaged in similar water data projects could be invited to share insights and lessons learned. The format could include pre-engagement surveys to identify current needs, open space workshops to explore ideas, and facilitated roundtable discussions to develop solutions. These sessions would focus on breaking down institutional barriers and creating actionable recommendations for improved water data management and use.

Primary goals

- Building cross-agency relationships and trust among staff at various organizational levels
- Identifying common challenges and shared priorities across different agencies
- Aligning water data initiatives to reduce duplication of efforts and resources
- Developing collaborative solutions that address multi-agency needs
- Breaking down data silos and institutional barriers to information sharing
- Enabling knowledge transfer between technical, policy, and subject matter experts
- Generating consensus-based, actionable recommendations for water data improvements
- Establishing ongoing communication channels between participating agencies
- Fostering a community of practice around water data management and use
- Increasing agency buy-in and commitment to shared water data standards and practices

Ongoing university system engagement and collaboration

The OWDP project should pursue deep and ongoing engagement with the Oregon university system to leverage academic expertise, research capacity, and student involvement to advance water data initiatives. The Project Lead and Project Associate would serve as primary liaisons with university system representatives to identify and develop collaborative opportunities. Initial collaborations could include summer data internship opportunities or partnerships with specific professors to incorporate the OWDP into class projects, allowing students to utilize the portal to answer research questions while providing valuable feedback on their user experience. Over time, these relationships could evolve to encompass broader research collaborations, joint data creation initiatives, and efforts to create connections with local governments—including counties, municipalities, and water districts—to integrate local data into the portal.

Primary goals

- Building sustained partnerships between the lead agency and the university system
- Leveraging academic expertise and research capacity to advance water data initiatives
- Creating meaningful opportunities for student engagement through internships and academic projects
- Developing collaborative research projects that benefit both the portal and the academic community
- Facilitating connections between the lead agency and local government entities
- Generating innovative analytical tools and applications using portal data
- Establishing feedback loops between academic users and portal developers
- Creating pathways for ongoing knowledge exchange between practitioners and researchers
- Supporting capacity building within both academic and agency communities
- Fostering long-term institutional relationships that can adapt and grow over time

Decision authority matrix

The following table provides recommended guidance on how decisions could be made across the OWDP Project. These are broad categories of decisions, and there will inevitably be nuances where specific decisions don't fit clearly into these categories. Nevertheless, this framework offers a general breakdown of suggested decision authority to guide the project governance. It is recommended that decision-making be informed by feedback gathered through the annual interested party engagements and targeted user testing described in the Engagement Strategy section. This would ensure decisions remain responsive to stakeholder needs and user experiences.

In this proposed decision framework:

- **Decision Maker (Final Authority):** The person or group with ultimate authority to make the final decision and accountability for the outcome.
- **Recommender (Prepares Decision):** Those who prepare for the decision by gathering information, analyzing options, and making formal recommendations.
- **Consulted (Provides Input):** Stakeholders whose expertise and perspectives are sought before the decision is made.
- **Informed (Notified After):** Those who need to know about the decision after it's been made but don't participate in the decision-making process.

Decision Authority Matrix Table

Decision Type	Decision Maker (Final Authority)	Recommender (Prepares Decision)	Consulted (Provides Input)	Informed (Notified After)
Strategic direction	Executive Steering Committee	Project Lead, Integrated Water Data Team	Technical Lead, Project Associate, Business Analyst, Portal Developers, Strategic Consultant	Project Manager, Data Management Staff
Technical architecture	Technical Lead	Portal Developers, Data Management Staff	Project Lead, Integrated Water Data Team, Business Analyst	Executive Steering Committee, Project Manager, Project Associate
Data standards for the portal	Technical Lead	Integrated Water Data Team, Data Management Staff, Portal Developers	Project Lead, Business Analyst	Executive Steering Committee, Project Manager, Project Associate
Partner agency engagement	Executive Steering Committee	Project Lead, Project Associate, Data Management Staff	Technical Lead, Executive Steering Committee, Integrated Water Data Team, Business Analyst	Portal Developers, Project Manager

External engagement	Executive Steering Committee	Project Lead, Project Associate	Executive Steering Committee, Technical Lead, Integrated Water Data Team, Portal Developers, Data Management Staff, Project Manager	
Initiative, Program, or Data Type Prioritization (high-level)	Executive Steering Committee	Integrated Water Data Team, Technical Lead	Project Lead, Data Management Staff, Portal Developers, Project Associate	Project Manager, Business Analyst
Portal feature prioritization (specific)	Technical Lead	Integrated Water Data Team	Executive Steering Committee, Project Lead, Portal Developer, Data Management Staff, Business Analyst, Project Manager, Project Associate	
Dataset Prioritization (specific)	Technical Lead	Integrated Water Data Team	Executive Steering Committee, Project Lead, Portal Developer, Data Management Staff, Business Analyst, Project Manager, Project Associate	
Communications strategy	Project Lead	Project Associate	Integrated Water Data Team, Technical Lead, Project Manager	Executive Steering Committee
Project timeline changes	Project Lead	Project Manager	Technical Lead, Portal Developers, Data Management Staff, Business Analyst, Project Associate	Executive Steering Committee, Integrated Water Data Team

Conclusion

The Oregon Water Data Portal (OWDP) represents a transformative opportunity for Oregon's approach to water management. This governance plan proposes a framework that would help ensure this initiative can flourish and deliver lasting value to the state, its agencies, and its citizens. As Oregon considers how to move forward with implementation, we recommend several key considerations that will be critical to the project's success.

Building internal capacity through strategic staffing and workforce development

We believe that a key determinant of OWDP's success will be the development of internal technical capacity within Oregon's agencies. While the plan outlines specific staffing needs for the lead agency, the underlying

principle applies more broadly: Oregon should invest in skilled technical professionals who can maintain ownership of the state's digital water infrastructure.

Rather than primarily relying on external contractors, the state would benefit from investing its own expertise, professionals who understand both water management and modern data systems. This internal expertise would allow agencies to maintain ongoing stewardship of digital assets, adapt quickly to changing needs, and avoid the pitfalls of procurement-heavy approaches that tend to create dependencies on contractors and cost more over time. The recommended staffing structure, which includes roles like the Technical Lead, Data Management Staff, and Portal Developers, reflects this recommendation.

Building this capacity isn't just about addressing current needs—it would create a foundation that can evolve as technology, policy needs, and environmental conditions change. When agency staff understand the systems they oversee, they can continuously adapt them to meet changing needs.

Embracing the program model for sustainable development

The governance structure recommended here is designed to support a “program” approach to digital infrastructure development, as opposed to a traditional "project" model. Government technology initiatives typically use a project approach, which entails a large upfront investment followed by long periods of minimal maintenance, leading to eventual obsolescence. We recommend that the OWDP adopt a more sustainable program approach.

By establishing persistent teams like the proposed Technical Implementation Team and the Integrated Water Data Team, the OWDP could continuously evolve its capabilities through incremental improvements. This approach would treat the water data portal not as a one-time deliverable, but as an ongoing capability that requires steady attention and refinement. The teams would be able to respond to user feedback, incorporate new data sources, and adapt to policy changes as they emerge, rather than waiting for a major system overhaul.

This approach would ultimately deliver better value for Oregon's investment. Instead of experiencing the repeated spikes in spending that characterize traditional IT procurement—where systems are built, become outdated, and then require expensive modernization—the OWDP could maintain relevance through continuous improvement at a more predictable cost. The proposed governance structure, with its emphasis on cross-functional teams and regular engagement with stakeholders, would provide the foundation for this more sustainable model.

Transformative opportunities for Oregon

Successfully implementing the OWDP as recommended in this plan would present Oregon with extraordinary opportunities. By making water data more accessible and interoperable, the state could:

1. Enhance Decision-Making: Enable policymakers, water managers, researchers, and the public to make more informed decisions based on comprehensive, reliable data.
2. Maximize Existing Investments: Leverage the substantial resources Oregon has already devoted to water data collection across agencies, extracting greater value from these investments through integration and improved accessibility.

3. Establish a Model Program: Position Oregon as a leader in integrated water data management, creating an approach that other states could learn from and adapt to their own contexts.
4. Support Sustainable Water Management: Provide the information foundation necessary to address complex water challenges, from drought management to habitat conservation to equitable water access.
5. Enhance Agency Collaboration: Foster a culture of data sharing and cooperation across agencies, breaking down traditional silos that have constrained water managers' ability to effectively assess the systems they are responsible for.

The structured governance approach outlined in this plan would provide the institutional framework necessary to achieve these outcomes. By bringing together diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources through the proposed team structure, Oregon could transform how water data is managed and utilized across the state.

Appendix: Meeting Agendas and Summaries

Agenda: OWDP governance planning

Engagement 1, Lead entity assessment

Feb. 13, 2025 | 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PT | Virtual

9 - 9:05 AM Welcome and Intro

A brief introduction about the focus and goal of the meeting and ground rules for the discussion.

9:05 - 10:25 AM Discussion: Lead Entity Assessment

For each potential lead entity (DEQ, INR, OWEB, EIS, OWRD), answer the following questions:

1. How do the OWDP project's goals align with the agency/organization's existing mission?
2. Has the agency/organization completed any similar efforts in the past? If so, what were the results of those efforts?
3. How is the agency/organization perceived by key stakeholders (other agencies, the public, etc.)? Would it be considered a trusted partner capable of convening the necessary partners and facilitating collaboration across them?
4. Does the agency/organization have the technical capacity and capability to develop the OWDP and manage it in the long term?
5. What kind of support (financial, political, or in capacity/capability) would the agency/organization require to enable it to successfully complete the project?
6. Are there any other significant factors, not covered by the above questions, that might influence the agency/organization's ability to conduct the project successfully?
7. Could the OWDP be successfully co-led by a Coalition of two or more agencies/organizations? If so, which agencies/organizations would need to have a role, and how would responsibilities and decision-making authority be shared between agencies?

10:25 - 10:30 AM Wrap-up and Adjourn

A summary of next steps for the OWDP governance planning discussion series.

Key takeaways: Lead entity assessment

Oregon Water Data Portal Governance Planning | Engagement 1
February 13, 2025 | Virtual

A virtual engagement was held on February 13, 2025, to assess potential lead entities for the Oregon Water Data Portal (OWDP). The meeting was facilitated by staff from the Internet of Water project at Duke University's Nicholas Institute. Representatives from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Institute for Natural Resources (INR), Oregon State University (OSU), Water Resources Department (OWRD), Center for Applied Systems and Software (CASS), and Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) participated in the discussions.

Key takeaways

No agency currently possesses all necessary capacities. Success requires technical implementation capabilities, water subject matter expertise, and partner coordination skills—a combination no single agency currently holds. Significant additional funding and staffing would be required regardless of which entity leads.

Legislative mandate is crucial for success. Agencies need clear legislative directives requiring their participation in OWDP. This includes both active engagement in the interagency team and internal preparation of data systems and processes.

Agency representatives need decision-making authority. Each participating agency must designate a representative to the interagency team that has the authority to make decisions about their agency's involvement in the project.

Director-level leadership is imperative. The project requires a dedicated director-level position with decision-making authority to represent the lead agency and coordinate effectively with partner organizations.

Lead agency assessment

Five organizations were evaluated as potential OWDP leads: the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Institute for Natural Resources (INR), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Enterprise Information Services (EIS), and Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD). Each was assessed for mission alignment, relevant experience, stakeholder trust, technical capability, and overall capacity.

Lead Agency Assessment Overview Table

Agency or Organization	Element: Water Domain Knowledge	Element: Mission Alignment	Element: Relevant Experience	Element: Stakeholder Trust	Element: Technical Capability	Element: Overall Capacity
DEQ	High	High	Medium	Low	Medium	High
INR	Medium	High	Medium	High	High	Medium
OWEB	High	High	Medium	High	Low	Low
DAS/EIS	Low	High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
OWRD	High	High	Low	Medium	Low	Low

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

DEQ brings substantial technical infrastructure and the largest relevant staff capacity among potential lead agencies. Its mission to restore, maintain, and enhance Oregon's air, land, and water quality aligns well with the goals of the OWDP project, however, its regulatory role creates challenges around stakeholder trust and data-sharing relationships. While DEQ has experience implementing large database projects like AQWMS, these efforts have highlighted the significant challenges of coordinating multi-purpose water data systems via a regulatory agency.

Institute for Natural Resources (INR)

INR demonstrates strong technical capabilities and enjoys widespread trust as a neutral convener. It established the spatial data library for Oregon and continues to support data management for various state initiatives. However, its status outside the state agency system presents barriers to the long-term hosting of state data and integration with other state data systems. Historically, INR has successfully helped stand up such efforts before transitioning them to state agency partners.

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)

OWEB has established itself as a trusted partner and effective convener of state, local, and tribal government agencies and community organizations across Oregon. Its mission to protect and restore healthy watersheds that support thriving communities and strong economies aligns well with the project goals. While it has some foundation in this work through its existing data collection and watershed restoration inventory, OWEB is not a data agency. Most of the data OWEB collects is currently managed and shared via Oregon Explorer. In addition, OWEB is a relatively small agency and would need significant additional staffing capacity to manage the project.

Enterprise Information Services (EIS)

EIS possesses critical technical expertise and hosts the state's open data portal. Its mission focuses on maturing enterprise technology governance, optimizing investments, ensuring transparency, and delivering secure and innovative solutions. However, its lack of water subject matter expertise creates challenges for project

leadership. Lack of staff capacity and its perceived bureaucratic nature present additional obstacles to convening partners.

Regardless of which agency ultimately leads the project, EIS will need to be closely involved given their enterprise technology responsibilities.

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)

OWRD shows strong mission alignment through its focus on water planning and stakeholder engagement. It maintains high credibility for raw water data but faces trust challenges around water use information. Current capacity constraints and sensitivity around water rights data create obstacles to leadership. However, recent initiatives at OWRD are increasing stakeholder engagement and water planning support, suggesting the potential for an expanded role in data sharing.

Conclusion

Regardless of lead selection, robust cross-agency collaboration is essential. The project demands a combination of water science knowledge, technical implementation skills, and coordination and engagement capabilities that no single agency fully possesses. Participants agreed that while one agency must lead the effort and coordinate across core agencies, success requires substantial involvement from all five of the organizations considered.

Clearly defined partner roles and responsibilities are key to facilitating collaboration and ensuring steady progress.

Agenda: OWDP governance planning

Engagement 2, Interagency Collaboration

March 6, 2025 | 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PT | Virtual

9 - 9:05 A.M. Welcome and Intro

A brief introduction about the focus and goal of the meeting and ground rules for the discussion.

9:05 - 9:15 A.M. Interagency Collaboration in New Mexico

A brief overview of how the New Mexico Water Data Initiative has facilitated interagency collaboration.

Discussant: Stacy Timmons

9:15 - 9:45 A.M. Discussion: Existing Interagency Partnerships in Oregon

A roundtable discussion focused on the interagency partnerships that currently exist in Oregon. What is working well about those partnerships? Are there barriers that limit the effectiveness of those partnerships?

9:45 - 10:25 A.M. Discussion: Interagency Collaboration on the OWDP

A roundtable discussion focused on interagency collaboration on the OWDP. What is working well about the existing interagency teams? Are there barriers that limit the effectiveness of those teams? What new mechanisms for collaboration should be implemented in the next biennium?

10:25 - 10:30 A.M. Wrap-up and Adjourn

A summary of next steps for the OWDP governance planning discussion series.

Key Takeaways: Interagency collaboration

Oregon Water Data Portal Governance Planning | Engagement 2 March 6, 2025 | 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. PT | Virtual

This virtual meeting focused on interagency collaboration for the Oregon Water Data Portal (OWDP). The session began with a presentation from a representative of the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources (NMBGMR), who shared insights from the New Mexico Water Data Initiative's (NMWDI) approach to interagency collaboration. Participants then discussed existing interagency partnerships in Oregon and explored opportunities to enhance collaboration in the OWDP moving forward. The meeting was facilitated by staff from the Internet of Water project at Duke University's Nicholas Institute. Representatives from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Institute for Natural Resources (INR), Oregon State University (OSU), Water Resources Department (OWRD), and Center for Applied Systems and Software (CASS) participated in the discussions.

Key takeaways

Mid-level agency managers should drive implementation while executives provide strategic guidance and decision authority. Each core agency needs a designated mid-level manager to serve as an implementation point person who coordinates work within their agency. The NMWDI's success demonstrates the value of this approach. Their agency points of contact organized staff, prepared datasets, and worked both up and down their organizational chains to facilitate decision-making and implementation. Executive involvement should be restructured to be less frequent but more impactful, with meetings designed to focus on strategic decisions rather than implementation details. Participants suggested bringing executives specific questions and asking them to establish guiding principles rather than involving them in day-to-day mechanics. This approach leverages executives' strategic vision while acknowledging their limited bandwidth for technical details, which created bottlenecks in the current biennium.

Short-term strategic task forces should be deployed to address specific technical challenges rather than maintaining large standing teams. Creating targeted, time-limited task forces to tackle specific issues, such as developing a statewide data standard for a particular data type, would improve efficiency and conserve valuable human resources. These task forces would include implementation team members alongside subject matter experts who are primary users or collectors of that specific data type. The NMWDI's experience with data standards highlighted the importance of having "the right specialized people for these conversations" rather than involving everyone. To make this approach successful, the implementation team should develop a timeline for addressing different data types to allow for the identification of task force members well in advance. Early planning would give managers sufficient notice to allocate staff time appropriately, rather than making last-minute requests. This approach prevents expert fatigue by not requiring attendance at irrelevant meetings while ensuring that those who will ultimately implement and use the results have direct input into their design.

University partnerships offer untapped potential for both implementation and workforce development. Universities can play several crucial roles in advancing the OWDP beyond just sharing their data. They can serve as connectors to municipal government agencies, which are key data sources that have not yet been engaged. The NMWDI has successfully embedded student engagement into its approach, with students using the portal

to answer research questions in their classes and providing valuable user feedback. Their approach includes giving students specific use cases to solve, creating real-world learning opportunities while generating insights for portal improvement. Students could also help prepare data for inclusion in the portal, addressing resource constraints at participating agencies. Oregon participants highlighted the statewide OSU Extension system as an underutilized resource that could provide representation across diverse regions. Additionally, university collaborations could solve critical workforce challenges through internships and by creating graduate pipelines into agencies.

The initiative should be communicated as an ongoing collaborative program that delivers sustainable value to agencies, not a finite project that extracts value from agencies. The group recognized the need to shift the perception of the OWDP from a finite project to a long- term program about organizing and sharing water data. This reframing acknowledges that data integration is a continuous process that creates sustainable value through more efficient processes and better-informed water decisions across all agencies. Equally important is the challenge of quantifying how data collaboration impacts agencies' bottom lines. The NMWDI found success when its executive steering committee received updates framed around staff accomplishments and cross-agency benefits. Oregon participants noted that when technical staff "looked up from their day-to-day" to see how their data might benefit other projects, they became more enthusiastic contributors. Communication strategies should emphasize concrete use cases and organizational outcomes rather than technical specifications or idealized potential. As one participant noted, agencies "really need to see and understand how the data collaboration would impact their bottom line and their agencies' effectiveness." Illustrating these benefits through specific examples and success stories creates more compelling narratives than abstract discussions of data infrastructure.

A clear roadmap with achievable steps will help deliver tangible benefits while building toward long-term goals. The OWDP needs a practical roadmap that breaks the larger vision into manageable, immediate actions. As one participant suggested, "taking a part of the state and using it as a template" could demonstrate early wins and build momentum. This approach would help participants see the OWDP as both ongoing and achievable, not an overwhelming, impossible task, but rather a series of pragmatic steps that deliver immediate, tangible benefits while building toward a transformative future. The roadmap could address data sequencing and clearly define which agencies are responsible for specific actions in the near term. Executing this plan would then demonstrate to agencies concrete ways their participation translates to improved efficiency and decision-making. This roadmap would address the tension between implementation needs and strategic vision. Clear, achievable short-term milestones, coupled with an explicit framing of this work as an ongoing program for continuous improvement, would demonstrate its value and make it more accessible and compelling for leadership without losing sight of the long-term goal.

Agenda: OWDP governance planning

Engagement 3, Project staffing and teams

April 24, 2025 | 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m. PT | Virtual

8:30 - 8:35 A.M. Welcome and Intro

A brief introduction about the focus and goal of the meeting and ground rules for the discussion.

8:35 - 8:45 A.M. Document Review

Quiet reading time for all participants to review the draft governance plan.

8:45 - 9:20 A.M. Discussion: Project Staffing

A roundtable discussion focused on the proposed project staffing. Do the roles proposed seem adequate to effectively execute the project? Are additional roles required? Could any of the proposed roles be reduced or combined?

9:20 - 9:55 A.M. Discussion: Project Teams

A roundtable discussion focused on the proposed project teams. Does the proposed approach seem adequate to effectively execute the project? Do you believe the proposed approach will foster strong collaboration across core agencies? Are there additional actors who should be incorporated into the approach?

9:55 - 10:00 A.M. Wrap-up and Adjourn

A summary of next steps for the OWDP governance planning discussion series.

Meeting summary: Project staffing and teams

Oregon Water Data Portal governance planning

Engagement 3, April 24, 2025 | 8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m. PT | Virtual

A virtual engagement was held to discuss project teams and staffing for the Oregon Water Data Portal (OWDP). The meeting was facilitated by staff from the Internet of Water project at Duke University's Nicholas Institute. Representatives from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Institute for Natural Resources (INR), Oregon State University (OSU), Water Resources Department (OWRD), Center for Applied Systems and Software (CASS), Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), and Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) participated in the discussions. Participants reviewed the draft governance plan, which was edited after the meeting to incorporate comments.

Project staffing

- Current roles in draft plan: Project Lead, Technical Lead, Project Manager, Project Associate, Data Management Staff, Portal Developers, and Strategic Consultant
- Recommendations:
  - Add a Business Analyst position.
  - The project manager should be a dedicated full-time position at the lead agency. CASS could still be utilized to manage technical development.
  - Agencies need to build internal IT capacity, rather than contract all of this work out.
  - Strong partnerships with Oregon universities, particularly OSU, should be explicitly included in policy statements from the legislature. These partnerships can provide student resources, research capacity, and connections with stakeholders across diverse regions of the state.

Project teams structure

- Current proposed teams: Technical Implementation, Administration and Outreach, Integrated Water Data Team, Executive Steering Committee, and Strategic Task Forces
- Recommendations:
  - Team structures should be designed with flexibility to evolve over time
  - Clear communication processes between teams is essential, particularly between the Technical Implementation and Integrated Water Data teams
  - Some teams may have overlapping membership
  - Establish either an Advisory Board or an annual Interested Party Engagement mechanism with diverse representation of potential user groups. This group should meet annually (virtual and/or in-person) and should focus on gathering feedback rather than education.

Next steps

Additional sections to be developed before next call:

- Decision authority matrix (explaining who is responsible for which decisions)
- Introduction describing project background and process
- One additional governance planning meeting to be held, at which participants will review a final draft of the governance plan

Agenda: OWDP governance planning

Engagement 4, Decision-authority matrix and recommendations

May 27, 2025 | 1 p.m. – 2 p.m. PT | Virtual

1 - 1:05 P.M. Welcome and Intro

A brief introduction about the focus and goal of the meeting, ground rules for the discussion, and an overview of changes and additions to the governance plan.

1:05 - 1:10 P.M. Document Review: Decision-Authority Matrix

Quiet reading time for all participants to review the decision-authority matrix starting on page 11 of the draft governance plan.

1:10 - 1:30 P.M. Discussion: Decision-Authority Matrix

A roundtable discussion focused on the decision-authority matrix. What areas of the matrix need further clarification or adjustment to reflect actual organizational practices? Are there any decision types or authority levels missing from the current matrix?

1:30 - 1:35 P.M. Document Review: Concluding Recommendations

Quiet reading time for all participants to review the overarching recommendations included in the conclusion, starting on page 12 of the draft governance plan

1:35 - 1:55 P.M. Discussion: Concluding Recommendations

A roundtable discussion focused on the overarching recommendations included in the conclusion. Are there any recommendations that participants disagree with or have concerns about implementing? Are there any critical recommendations missing that should be added to strengthen governance?

1:55 - 2:00 P.M. Open Question/Comment Period and Wrap-up

An opportunity to ask questions or make comments about any aspect of the governance plan.

Meeting summary: Decision-authority matrix and concluding recommendations

Oregon Water Data Portal governance planning

Engagement May 27, 2025 | 1 - 2 p.m. PT | Virtual

A virtual engagement was held to discuss the Decision-Authority Matrix and concluding recommendations for the Oregon Water Data Portal (OWDP) governance plan. The meeting was facilitated by staff from the Internet of Water project at Duke University's Nicholas Institute.

Representatives from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Institute for Natural Resources (INR), Water Resources Department (OWRD), and Center for Applied Systems and Software (CASS) participated in the discussions. Participants reviewed the draft governance plan, which was edited after the meeting to incorporate comments.

University and student engagement

- Recommendation that the role of university systems and students needs to be more explicitly recognized in the governance plan
- Proposal to include 3-4 university representatives on the executive steering committee, specifically: 1 land grant university, 1-2 regional colleges, and 1 community college
- Proposal for a phased approach to university system involvement, beginning with initiatives like a student internship program and evolving over time to become more research-based
- Proposal for a cross-campus summer internship program focusing on portal testing, data readiness, and development activities

Tribal engagement

- Recommendation to include tribal representatives on the executive steering committee
- Proposal to maintain the existing annual interested party engagement (where tribal government representatives remain invited alongside other stakeholders) while adding a separate annual engagement session specifically for tribal government representatives

Operational recommendations

- Preference for consolidating project management under a single 1.0 FTE position
- Request for more flexible user testing approaches that allow for both group and one-on-one testing, with the goal of including at least one representative from each priority user group

General consensus

- Broad support for the overall governance plan
- Recognition of strategic staffing and workforce development as critical success factors and appreciation for incorporation of staffing considerations at other agencies

- Agreement that adopting a program model (rather than project-based approach) is essential for long-term success

Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in the administration of its programs and activities. Visit DEQ's Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page.