State of Oregon
DEQ Department of Environmental Quality

Appendix W: Oregon Water Data Portal – Working Glossary of Project Terms

The terms and definitions below reflect their use within the Oregon Water Data Portal project concept. Terms are defined relative to Oregon-specific regulations or guidance where available, and based on reference to water data and information about water. Sources used to inform definitions are provided as footnotes. These Oregon Water Data Portal definitions are intended as a guide for interested parties, and may be revised over time as the project concept evolves or to further clarify specific terms.

Data: Characteristics of water (e.g., water quality, quantity, stream location, groundwater basin boundaries, or water use) that are collected, stored, and made available. Alone, data may have little meaning until they are organized into information. Data includes, but is not limited to, geospatial data, tabular data, data parcels such as FLIR or satellite data.

Data governance: The specification of decision rights and an accountability framework to ensure the appropriate behavior in the valuation, creation, consumption and control of data and analytics (Gartner Data Governance Maturity Model; aligned with the state of Oregon Enterprise Information Systems policy on data governance[1]).

Decision makers: Elected or appointed officials of local, state, federal and tribal governments or special use districts, or individuals within a private company who set priorities based on input from constituents and interested parties, and considering a number of variables, including time constraints, resources available, and the amount and type of information available.

Framework: The agreements amongst data providers (agencies and others) on digital availability, data quality, format, and privacy protections that make it possible to have integrated access to the

data and information water managers are asking for.

Groundwater: Water resources held below ground in soils or spaces between rocks and sediments; specifically, any water beneath the land surface or beneath the bed of any stream, lake, reservoir or other body of surface water, whatever may be the geological formation or structure in which such water stands, flows, percolates or otherwise moves.[2]

Information: Data that have been organized, synthesized, presented, or analyzed in some way that begins to attach meaning to the individual bits of data. Information is often what is needed to support decisions, but you cannot have information without data. Data and information will come from and be accessible to federal agencies, tribes, state agencies, special service districts, local governments, the regulated community, nonprofits, and the general public.

Infrastructure - Built: systems built to store, transport, treat, or manage water, usually in the form of dams, pipes, sewer systems, wastewater treatment plants, dikes, levees, or storm water drainage.[3]

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[1] State of Oregon Enterprise Information Services: Data Governance and Transparency
[2] ORS 537.515
[3] US EPA: Building Effective Water Infrastructure

Infrastructure - Green: A subset of natural infrastructure. It mimics natural systems at the neighborhood, or site scale, and can be part of an integrated approach to addressing water management challenges in residential, municipal, and industrial developments. Examples of green infrastructure include eco-roofs, green street swales, and neighborhood natural areas that filter sediment and other pollutants carried by stormwater runoff.[4]

Infrastructure - Natural: a strategically planned network of natural and working lands, such as forests, rivers, wetlands, and waterways that conserve and enhance ecosystem values and functions, and provide associated benefits for safe and healthy communities and vibrant local economies.[5,6,7]

Internet accessible: Data and information that is made available online, but may have varying levels of accessibility. Publicly accessible data, sometimes called "open data" is data that is made available to all interested parties without restriction. Some internet accessible data and information may have limitations on availability due to privacy or security concerns.

Platform (data and information): The data standards, technological connections, software systems, user interfaces, and other aspects of data and information systems that allow water data to be accessed, organized into information, and used to support decision-making.

Project governance: The activities and guidelines that determine how a project is planned, executed and managed. Includes the responsibilities of the organizations and individuals engaged in the project.

Project scoping and design: The first phase of a collaborative project. Key tasks are to identify and agree upon project elements and a phased approach to planning and completing deliverables.

Portal: internet accessible, single point of access for water data supported by the *platform,* typically a website. The portal is a tool that provides users with access to water data and information, but does not directly host or store the data and information.

Resources – Capacity (capacity, capacity resources): The people and money resources needed to accomplish project objectives.

Resources – Natural (natural resources): General term used to encompass surface or groundwater resources, including water providing fish and wildlife habitat.

Surface water: Any body of water above the ground's surface, including oceans, streams, rivers, lakes, reservoirs, ponds and wetlands. Surface waters sustain ecological systems and processes, and provide habitat for native plants and animals. Surface waters provide our communities with drinking water, irrigation, livestock and industrial uses, wastewater treatment, hydropower, and recreation.

Water budget: A hydrological tool used to quantify the flow of water into and out of a system. If the system of interest is the surface water system, then the budget typically balances precipitation and inflows against evapotranspiration, flow out of the basin, and changes in storage. If the system of interest is the groundwater system, then the budget typically balances groundwater recharge and inflows against groundwater discharge, outflows, and changes in storage. Many water budgets assume that the system is at steady state, such that changes in storage can be neglected, but a water budget must refer to some period of time. Some

[4] Oregon Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership: Definitions
[5] The International Union for Conservation of Nature: Natural Infrastructure in the Nexus
[6] World Resources Institute: Natural Infrastructure
[7] European Environment Agency (Green Infrastructure): What is green infrastructure?

components of the water budget can be refined into sub- components like runoff and snowmelt. See U.S. Geological Survey Circular 1308 for more detail.

Water quality: Evaluation or measurement of the chemical, physical and biological attributes of water to determine suitability for beneficial uses such as drinking, agriculture, recreation, industry, and habitat for aquatic organisms and other wildlife.[8]

Water quantity: Amounts of water are generally described using rate and volume. When discussing water quantity to be diverted, term commonly used is cubic feet per second, or gallons per minute. When discussing volumes of water applied to land or stored in a reservoir, the term used is acre-feet.[9]

Water users (aka water managers): people who manage, plan, and maintain water systems, both built and natural, in communities across the state.

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[8] European Environment Agency (Green Infrastructure): What is green infrastructure?

[9] WRD AquaBook: Water Rights in Oregon