

Beaverton Open House
Beaverton Community Center
June 30, 2016
Meeting Notes

Q1 & Q2: How has the recent drought affected you? In what ways did the drought affect your community?

- Many municipal customers used a lot of water irrigating gardens and were surprised when receiving their September water bills, didn't believe they had used so much. This involved a lot of education, will be interesting to see if customers use less this coming summer.
- Some trees died.
- Worried about the sockeye.
- From the amphibian and turtle surveys I've conducted over the years, our watersheds are in bad shape.
- Stream temperature concerns this year and in past years, due to low streamflows – instream flow is important.
- There is a relationship between temperature and water chemistry for drinking water. Temperature affects almost every element of water quality concerns (even lead release). Early warm temperature spikes affect treatment. Addressing temperature pollution is really a holistic approach.

Q3: How did you respond to drought? Please share any successes or strategies.

- Reduced outdoor water use.
- Stream temperature monitoring is important during droughts. Many groups are monitoring, but there are still many places where it would be valuable to have more monitoring. Many USGS gages have almost real time temperature, and other water quality parameters.

Q4: What actions should be pursued to better prepare for future droughts?

- Water efficiency needs to be a stronger component of the conversation. There has to be a better way to make more efficient use of water in agriculture (referenced irrigation guns).
- More emphasis on urban strategies – there hasn't been enough discussion in IWRS on urban water use. Not much urban representation on policy advisory group. The issues and strategies in urban areas will be very different in than in rural areas. The strategy has been heavily focused on agriculture.
- Need more focus on water, wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water challenges in small municipalities around the state. The IWRS can incorporate those issues – the "One Water Concept" is one way that communities across the country have been considering and incorporating these issues.
- Promote water reuse. California rules accommodate direct potable reuse, but nobody in Oregon is doing it. Clean Water Service customers spend a lot of money for water treatment, but then it's discharged, not reused. Promote reuse, particularly in irrigation.
- In the urban environment, look at local municipal codes and laws that serve as barriers for water conservation and reuse innovation.
- Composting toilets.
- Rainwater capture.

- Look at college campuses as places to save water. Inefficient use of water for irrigating lawns and water-intensive plants
- Consider conservation for lawns and golf courses. It's a large part of municipal use.
- Because of significant population growth in Portland Metro areas, we need to incentivize reuse, efficiency.
- Price water appropriately. Water should be charged for – it's a valuable resource – if there was a price on it, conservation would make economic sense.
- Take advantage of existing tools. Need to start implementing other plans and strategies – water measurement and monitoring strategies – should take advantage of other tools that have been developed but haven't been able to be funded, etc.
- Put continuous recorders in all of your monitoring wells. Seems like a very cost-effective measure.
- Appropriate and adequate funding and staffing of natural resource agencies. Especially for water quality and instream flow. Compared to California, Oregon has poor staffing for water issues. ODFW, DEQ, WRD do not have enough staff to deal with water quality and instream flow. No staff will mean continuing to struggle.
- Need for more peer-to-peer education in agriculture about innovative water efficiency for irrigation. Farmers will listen to farmers. Pesticide Stewardship Program (IWRS funding helped to fund new partnerships). Helps farmers reduce impacts of pesticide use on streams. Possible model for water efficiency? Model for fertilizer application to prevent groundwater and surface water contamination.
- Cooperation/urban communities helping agricultural communities. We do need to think about how we use water in our homes. The urban population needs to help the agricultural community adopt more efficient uses because urban conservation/efficiency alone won't solve the problem. It involves cooperation and education.
- Highlight the work done by local agencies to manage water – share stories and experience.

Q5: What most concerns you about the future with regard to water?

- Missing the recreational fishing industry voice in this process. It contributes \$1.5 billion a year to Oregon's economy.
- Prescription and illegal drug contamination in water. Salmon with trace elements of cocaine, estrogen, etc. "Emergent contaminants" – don't know much about impacts on human health yet.
- Groundwater drinking water quality. In Jackson County, well water testing at the Master Gardner spring fair found that 23 percent of wells tested had high or moderate levels of nitrate. One of the families in attendance had a child experiencing blue baby syndrome. Nitrate issues are a public health concern. Agriculture and failing septic systems are a contributing problem. People need protection and knowledge about contamination. This is both an urban and rural issue.
- Extreme events, like the Cascadia Subduction Zone Event – will have huge impacts on water infrastructure. Some places may not have water or electricity for over 2 years after event.
- The amount of irrigation in Eastern Oregon with more hot and dry conditions in the future. Concern regarding the growth of water on inefficient crops in Eastern Oregon. Example, a lot of hay grown in Eastern Oregon, which has high water demands. It's a pattern all across the western United States. Look at growing more efficient crops that still provide income for farmers. Can there be partnerships with the Oregon Department of Agriculture? ODA needs to look at water demand issues, rather than water supply issues.

Q6: Any other thoughts or comments you would like to share with the IWRS Project Team?

- Need better outreach for public involvement to really get Portland perspectives and recreation perspectives – through Next Adventure and other recreation mailing list. Think about location next time, for example, have a meeting in downtown Portland and start it later in the evening.
- Disappointed not to see the Oregon Department of Agriculture at this meeting. IWRS development should involve input from all state agencies. Every agency in the state touches water. For example, even the Department of Education plays a role with lead issues in school drinking water.
- Reach out to environmental justice communities. The IWRS policy advisory group has one environmental justice representative and one tribal representative.
- The OWRD Statewide Demand Forecast should include instream flows, and we need to define instream demands for both water quality and fish.
- There are many ways to integrate issues (most of the comments discussed a singular issue). Vertically – from locally to state level, socially (across interests and user types), and horizontally (across the landscape). Place-based planning allows us to consider these interconnections, and not just focus on singular issues.
- Oregon Lands at Work – Goal to take the temperature statewide about water use in agriculture, partnering with other organizations to find out what water use projects agricultural interests are involved in related to water use monitoring, streamflow/habitat restoration, increasing efficiency of/updating irrigation systems. Works to find stories at the local level and share them via local media, newsletters, and collaborative meetings within the community. Many communities feel like there's not as much collaboration as there is head-butting, but the state could really play a role here to help highlight successes.
- For newly funded projects that increase water use, what is the impact on water quality? At what level are those considerations taken into account?
- Oregon is way ahead of the curve on aquifer storage and recovery. There is a lot of innovation here in our state. Regulations in Oregon are very cooperative – conducive for making ASR projects work.
- Place-based planning is a good approach. This program and other related efforts need popular support to get funding from the legislature.
- How to elevate the water discussion in the State Legislature and public eye, to ensure funding? How do you deal with water issues that need money when you have schools, law enforcement, crime and other very important social issues? How do we get public and legislators to fully understand the gravity of water issues? A possible solution – water education, people think that Oregon is rich in water – but richness is cyclical (need to understand Mediterranean climate), use of PSA's (e.g. TV commercials) - Forestry people get state money to do TV advertisements, for example.