

Powder Valley Water Control District – Place-Based Planning Letter of Interest

Letter of Interest for Place Based IWRS Planning Grant

Powder Valley Water Control District

P.O. Box 189- 690 E Street
North Powder, OR 97867

Section A. Cover Page

Powder Valley Water Control District (referred to as “District” hereafter) is very interested in applying for consideration for this Planning Grant as referenced in the continuation of Oregon’s Integrated Water Resource Strategy program. Contact person for this initial application will be: Curtis W. Martin, President of PVWC Dist. At 51840 Hwy. 237, North Powder, OR 97867. Phone 541-898-2361 office, 541-962-9269.

Location

Area to be considered is within the Powder/Brownely watershed. Specific to the sub-basin of the North Powder, Anthony Creek, Wolf Creek, and other minor drainages contained within this area.

Key Partners

Anticipated partners will be Union and Baker County governments, Baker Valley SWCD, Oregon Water Resources Baker City District office, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Powder Basin Watershed Council, Northeast Economic Development District, City of North Powder and Haines to name but a few of a broad, collaborative effort.

Executive Summary

Since the inception of the “District” (1968, first recorded minutes and establishment of District) the need for better management of uncontrolled flows of water was very apparent. Excessive floods were destroying agricultural land, and also threatening dwellings, infrastructure and municipalities within our sub-basin. Also the need for extended season of available water for economic and production agriculture, the spin-off benefit of consistent stream flows for environmental concerns were achieved by the impoundment structures of Wolf Creek and Pilcher Creek Reservoirs. The accomplishment of these projects, along with the vastly improved efficiency structures, have greatly increased our communities economic base, productivity, employment, and sustainability. It is a realization that these existing components can be expanded for even greater multiple use benefits for not only our local communities economy, but to further address aquatic/environmental concerns. Truly is an opportunity for all facets of water issues, within our area to be further addressed in a complimentary fashion, and we are grateful for this opportunity. In the interest of brevity, for now, we will not go into longer explanation of all the benefits this grant presents.

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Section B. Description of the Convener

Proposed Conveners well would include the “District” and Baker Valley SWCD, Whitney Collins, manager. This would be building on past and existing coordinated efforts for water conservation, efficiency, along with improving water quality projects. Again the geographic area would be the east face of the Elkhorn Mountains, encompassing the sub-basin watershed of Wolf Creek, North Powder River, Anthony Creek, plus other minor tributaries. The past successful collaborative and coordinated efforts we have been engaged in exhibit our attributes for facilitating and convening an open, transparent, and encompassing process.

Section C. Integration, Partnerships & Stakeholder Engagement

Anticipated partners will be Union and Baker County governments, Baker Valley SWCD, Oregon Water Resources Baker City District office, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Powder Basin Watershed Council, Northeast Economic Development District, City of North Powder and Haines to name but a few of a broad, collaborative effort. These partners illicit the collective, productive efforts achieved of past projects, successfully completed and current ongoing partnerships. Again, please refer to the (partial) list enumerated entities under “A.” of preceding page. The mission and goals of these varied members, provide an expansive ability for multiple inputs of concerns.

Section D. Statement of Need

The need expressed here with this application for the increased water management capacity are: consistently reoccurring “Drought” declarations, possible climatic conditions with less snow pack available that have been relied upon in the past, transitioning into more rain occurrences, with earlier season runoff. The very apparent need to diversify our “capture events and containment” encapsulates our efforts to adapt to different management possibilities.

Section E. Proposed Approach

We propose following the Place-Based Planning Guidelines, beginning with building a collaborative process. Through the planning steps, we may look at potential future projects such as (1) expanding our existing structures, (2) possible other “off-stream” impoundment projects. We do have and are pursuing renewal of existing, documented Oregon Department of Agriculture Powder Basin Water Reservations, that have been recorded and evaluated for “50% Excedance” level within OWRD’s protocols.

Section F. Anticipated Outcomes

Outcomes that would be expected from this multi-faceted and partnered approach: **(1) Ability to address current and future water needs** (a) recent “short” water/snowpack years (drought?) could be mitigated with increased capacity to capture “rainy” events, (b) augment late season stream flows for aquatic habitat, improve water quality limitations from the existing limited water availability, (c) increase our rural communities economic viability/sustainability that are 85%

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dependent on Agricultural production, (d) and, provide expanded opportunities for tourism with aquatic recreational locations (boating, fishing, camping experiences near water)

Section G. Request for Department Resources

For this beginning phase, we envision that \$350,000.00 would be of great assistance for feasibility, engineering potential, comprehensive evaluation of past records/documentation of USGS records, compilation of reasonable expectations, and outcome projections. Most likely a multi-year effort, with long lasting commitment to see project(s) through to completion. Between our Powder Valley Water Control District, and Baker Valley SWCD, we could attain a 25% “in kind” match, with the contracted agreement to fulfill our commitment.

In closing this brief application, please bear in mind that we look forward to expanding our explanations, including further details of: (1) basin wide participation and collaboration/consultation, (2) depth of experience and capacity for realistic problem solving approaches, (3) proven coordination with agencies and partnerships, (4) the availability of reserved water quantities(5) Powder Valley Water Control District and Baker Valley Soil and Water Conservation District’s collaborative and coordinating abilities, with history, of leading (a Convener) in an effort to proactive engage multiple parties for positive natural resource solutions, (6) and possibly the most important factor for our serious consideration is the complete, complimentary, dovetailing into the Oregon Water Resources Integrated Water Strategies initiative, with truly a Placed Based Planning conceptuality within our Basin, achievable within 2 to 5 years.

Thank you for your consideration,
Curtis W. Martin, President, Powder Valley Water Control District