



# Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning



## Helping Oregon communities plan for their current and future water needs

Water is important to all Oregonians. It is vital to community well-being, economic development and a healthy environment. The 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRs) recommends that the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) help communities collaboratively develop solutions to address water needs within a watershed, basin or groundwater area. Place-based planning provides an opportunity for people with an interest in water to better understand local water resources and to coordinate efforts so that they are working towards a shared vision of their water future.

### What is place-based planning?

Place-based planning provides a framework for communities to understand and meet their water needs now and into the future. It involves a five-step process, in which a community will:

1. Build a collaborative and inclusive process;
2. Gather information to understand current water resources and identify gaps;
3. Examine current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment;
4. Develop and prioritize strategic, integrated solutions to meet water needs;
5. Create a local integrated water resources plan.

### Why place-based planning?

Place-based planning helps foster cooperative relationships between individuals and groups that value water differently. Through a collaborative process planning groups will build upon existing knowledge, identify and fill information gaps, coordinate efforts, and explore innovative solutions to meet multiple needs. Place-based planning can help communities develop a shared understanding and vision, prioritize actions, and gather the support and resources they need to implement those actions.

### Key Planning Principles

- Locally-initiated and led collaborative process
- Voluntary, non-regulatory approach
- Includes a balanced representation of water interests
- Conducted in partnership with the state
- Addresses instream and out-of-stream needs
- Looks at water quantity, quality and ecosystem needs
- Open and transparent process that fosters public participation
- Builds on and integrates existing studies and plans
- Does not infringe on existing water rights
- Adheres to IWRs principles and state laws

### Place-based planning pilot areas

In 2015, the Legislature provided OWRD with resources to pilot place-based planning, including grant funding to assist communities with planning. After soliciting and evaluating 16 letters of interest from around the state, grants were awarded to organizations in four areas: the John Day Partnership in the Lower John Day Sub-Basin, Union County in the Upper Grande Ronde Sub-Basin, the Harney County Watershed Council in the Malheur Lake Basin, and the City of Newport in the Mid-Coast Region.

During the pilot phase, each of these places will partner with the Department to test a set of [draft planning guidelines](#), identify best practices, and improve the planning approach. The first step for the pilots is to bring together interested partners in a collaborative, locally-led process that is open to the public.

See page two for more information on the pilots.

### Learn More!

- Visit the web page: <http://bit.ly/owrdplanning>
- Contact Planning Coordinators Harmony Burright (503-986-0913) or Steven Parrett (503-986-0914)
- E-mail to: [placebasedplanning@wrd.state.or.us](mailto:placebasedplanning@wrd.state.or.us)

# Summary of Place-Based Planning Pilot Areas

## Lower John Day Sub-Basin

Convener: John Day Partnership  
Funding Award: \$190,000

The Lower John Day Sub-Basin supports a robust agriculture-based economy and important wild anadromous fish habitat, both of which depend upon reliable water resources. The lower river and its tributaries rely heavily on the watershed's ability to capture, store, and slowly release 8-20 inches of precipitation in a given year. Several years of drought and the potential impacts of climate change further threaten limited supplies.

Through this place-based planning effort the John Day Partnership and other basin interests will identify solutions to efficiently develop, conserve, store, and utilize water in the region to meet instream and out-of-stream needs. The Partnership is also completing a basin-wide Strategic Action Plan with Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board funds, offering the opportunity to explore how to integrate these planning processes.

## Mid-Coast Basin

Conveners:  
City of Newport & OWRD  
Funding Award: \$135,000

The Mid-Coast Basin is characterized by smaller watersheds that are distributed along the coast line. These coastal watersheds support out-of-stream needs for municipal drinking water, agricultural and industrial use, and instream needs for various aquatic species, water-based tourism and commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries.

Through this place-based planning effort the City of Newport and the Mid-Coast Planning Group will initiate regional planning among coastal water interests. This collaborative group will address current and future water challenges, looking at quantity, quality and ecosystem needs while identifying ways to increase resilience. This effort may serve as a model for communities facing similar water challenges up and down the Oregon coast.

## Upper Grande Ronde Sub-Basin

Convener: Union County  
Funding Award: \$197,000

The Upper Grande Ronde Sub-Basin is a vital ecosystem that supports ranchers, farmers, and urban residents as well as an array of fish and wildlife species. Water supply shortages for instream and out-of-stream uses currently exist in this sub-basin and may be intensified by climate change and increases in future demand.

Through place-based planning Union County will bring together a broad group of partners to understand where water needs are not being met and develop a focused plan that will help meet current and future needs. While there is a significant body of knowledge on water quality, quantity, and ecological demands in the watershed, this presents an opportunity to integrate that information. This effort will build on current work to identify and prioritize innovative solutions to address current and future water needs.

## Malheur Lake Basin

Conveners: Harney County  
Watershed Council & Court  
Funding Award: \$135,000

The Malheur Lake Basin is a large basin that supports hay and cattle industries as well as a dynamic high desert ecosystem. Recent drought years have contributed to declining groundwater levels in several areas of the basin and designation of a "groundwater area of concern." The citizens of Harney County have a history of successful collaborative planning efforts to address complex natural resources issues. Place-based planning presents an opportunity to develop a long-term water plan using a collaborative approach.

Through this place-based planning effort the Harney County Watershed Council will bring together a broad group of partners to share their collective wisdom and develop innovative, community supported solutions that balance water supply and demand in a more integrated manner.



For additional information about the Integrated Water Resources Strategy sign up for our mailing list:  
<http://listsmart.osl.state.or.us/mailman/listinfo/iwrs>