

## Klamath Falls Open House Discussion – May 12, 2010



Integrated Water Resources Strategy Spring 2010 Open House Events

Oregon Institute of Technology, 3201 Campus Drive, Klamath Falls, OR 97601

Facilitation provided by staff and students from Oregon Institute of Technology's Dispute Resolution Team – Professors Kevin Brown, Dan Peterson, Cindy Staunton, and Julianne Murray, students Connie Austin, Joseph Spurlock, Christina Nichols, Salvador Garcia, Rachel Stephens, Crystal Ross, Christina Silva, Linda Weatherspoon, and Steve Barto.

---

This document reflects public input gathered during the open house event held in Klamath Falls. Participants were asked to identify the water resource challenges facing their community as well as any policies, projects, or approaches that they would like to see as part of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The event facilitators also asked audience members to share their vision, hopes, and goals for the state and to provide any education or outreach ideas that would help the public gain a better understanding of water resource issues facing Oregon. The discussion that took place reflects a true brainstorming session where no efforts were made by agency staff to rebut, debate, or prioritize any of the ideas, suggestions, or comments shared during the event.

### 4:00 Session

#### Challenges

1. The Lost Creek agricultural information is wrong on the open house map.
2. The loss of irrigated agricultural lands in Oregon.
3. Regulatory issues, such as conflicting biological opinions.
4. Proposed biomass plant in this area will have water (aquifer) and air pollution issues in Klamath Falls.
5. Concerned that this strategy will change Oregon water law.
6. Presence of the federal government.
7. If “peak and ecological flows” and “environmental public benefit” are added to the strategy, it will be the death of agriculture in Oregon.
8. Public representation process.
9. Biological Opinions, TMDLs, and instream flows are not based on true science. They are based on political science.
10. Forest around Klamath Falls is not managed.

11. Invasive juniper in the region.
12. Concerned about the biomass plant and associated water use and discharge.
13. Lack of funding for a review of TMDLs every 5 years.
14. Groundwater problems in the Klamath area and both states generally.
15. Parasites on fish.
16. Unintended consequences of mandated flows.
17. We do not know the results (science) of dam removals until after they occur.
18. Regulation of flows that impact storage.

### **Solutions and Opportunities**

1. Ensure there is an accurate inventory of water availability and land type.
2. Water storage
3. Storage conservation activities.
4. Water management that accounts for a growing population.
5. Federal agencies need to be held accountable for the problems that have been created.
6. Regulations need to make sense.
7. Site the proposed biomass plant in another location. Have the state help regulate.
8. Use the doctrine of prior appropriation as the basis for the strategy.
9. Local participation is key. This meeting is great.
10. Make certain that the terminology used (including peak and ecological flows, 303d list, etc.) is not included in the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.
11. Place an emphasis on protecting and improving riparian areas in this area as a way to improve water quality.
12. The strategy should be different for each region.

13. Encourage dialogue among competing interests.
14. Look at storage not from a vacuum (look at biological opinions).
15. Utilize more graywater.
16. Use empirical science, not just models.
17. Include water quality standards for agriculture that makes sense. For example, the TMDL now does not allow for any human impact.
18. Return flows are very important for wildlife.
19. Forest management and rangeland management is critical for water quality.
20. Eradicate juniper in this region. This would help water management.
21. The Integrated Water Resources Strategy should be based on property rights. If water is re-allocated, people need to be paid for it.
22. Exempt wells are water rights.
23. Maintain water rights and property rights.
24. "Mandated water conservation" is not good.
25. Building social justice is not a good idea.
26. A periodic review of biological opinions over a certain timeframe.
27. Mandated review of the TMDLs every 5 years.
28. Regulate interstate groundwater and surface water.
29. The committee on instream flows and peak flows should be broadly represented and include users.
30. Figure out a way to make sure that only the water used is allowed to be transferred, not all of the water authorized on the water right.
31. Determine the empirical science of any dam removal prior to removal and not after.

32. Local control needs to be a big part of the implementing the strategy.
33. More storage for multiple purposes, not just in one area.
34. Regulation needs to be revised to encourage more water storage.
35. Provide incentives or mandatory water conservation activities for homes, businesses, and agriculture.

### **Education and Outreach**

1. Education on the importance of irrigated agriculture. Loss of irrigated agricultural lands is happening and we need to know what the situation is here in Oregon.
2. Make sure people understand the benefit of agricultural water for wildlife.

### **Vision**

1. Process and strategy should be driven by the people of Oregon, not the Legislature, or the Governor.
2. Have the federal government turn over all water control in the Klamath Basin to the state of Oregon.

## **5:30 Session**

### **Challenges**

1. Providing sufficient irrigation to utilize all of the farmland.
2. A general concern about the development of the IWRS process.
3. Potential reservoir site map is concerning, especially on the Sprague River where the Chiloquin dam was just removed.
4. Climate change.

### **Solutions and Opportunities**

1. Complete the adjudication process for the whole state.
2. An emphasis on protecting groundwater resources.
3. An accurate inventory that shows places with prime agriculture land to ensure those lands are not discounted (responding to the map on page 6 on the handout).
4. Protection of instream flows.

5. Monitoring of well use and new well development, include metering of water used.
6. Making sure there is enough water instream to protect fish.
7. More resources to understand the water situation in the community. Language should be used that all people can understand.
8. Irrigation solutions to prevent dry farm fields.
9. Match up power rates with the best technology available for irrigation to conserve power and encourage efficient irrigation.
10. Cheap power.
11. Encourage conservation through power rates.
12. A Groundwater Management Area in the Klamath area and generally more designated groundwater management areas across the state.
13. Make it clear that this process is not a back door attempt to change western water law.
14. Quantify what impacts local communities, water use, and what is realistic for each use to sustain the economic situation. Monitor the uses as well.
15. Make sure the plan is updated every 5 years. We will need to update it once we realize the impacts of climate change.

### **Education and Outreach**

1. An easy to use website that uses language that people can understand.
2. A public or residential campaign for water conservation.
3. Start conservation challenges in the schools.

### **Vision**

1. Quantify water uses to the economy of the state and the financial and tax benefits they provide.