

STATE-SUPPORTED REGIONAL WATER PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT WORK GROUP

DRAFT Meeting Summary

June 7, 2022 from 10:00am-3:30pm

ACTION ITEMS:

ACTION	BY WHOM?	BY WHEN?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Draft work plan based on Work Group learning and inputs to date; enable next step in developing concepts	OC, OWRD, and CC	Before the next meeting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Facilitator's Note: A survey was sent out to the Work Group after the meeting to help prioritize the workload and focus for the coming months' of work. The high-level notes captured in small groups as well as the large group discussion, and past summary notes, will be used to draft initial ideas for each of the issue areas determined to be important by the Work Group to address in this process.</i>		

Meeting Attendees:

Work Group Members: Adam Denlinger, Anton Chiono, April Snell, Bob Rees, Bobby Brunoe, Caylin Barter, Chandra Ferrari, Chrysten Rivard, Courtney Crowell, Dan Thorndike, Daniel Newberry, Holly Mondo, Illeana Alexander, Jeff Stone, Jennifer Wigal, Kate Fitzpatrick, Kelly Timchak, Kimberley Priestley, Margaret Magruder, Mary Anne Cooper, Niki Iverson, Peggy Lynch, Tom Byler, Calla Hagle (via Zoom), Jason Fenton (via Zoom), and Donna Beverage (via Zoom)

OWRD Staff: Kim Fritz-Ogren, Lili Prah, Bryn Hudson

Facilitation Team: Robin Harkless and Jennah Stillman, Oregon Consensus

MEETING SUMMARY:

Welcome and Introductions

Robin welcomed the group to the first in-person meeting and shared her appreciation for everyone that was able to gather there together. She then invited the work group members to introduce themselves. Following this, Robin provided a high-level overview of the work group's progress to date in honing in on a scope directed by the broad legislation, engaging in shared learning, creating and strengthening relationships, and building upon past efforts to move forward. She shared that the work was now shifting to identifying what needs to change in the system in order to optimize state-supported regional planning. That approach would first look at the phases of the system (pre-planning and planning), then moving from planning to action, and finally, taking a whole system view. She clarified that the conversation today was not about reaching consensus or conclusions, but about identifying key areas for the work group to generate options and solutions going forward.

Getting Grounded in the Learning

Tom Byler, OWRD, shared his excitement for the opportunity at hand for this work group to think bigger and pursue ideas for a new system of collaborative water planning and investments that supports the diverse needs of Oregonians as we enter an era of water scarcity and moves planning into action to create projects that benefit communities over time. He also addressed the spectrum of water planning and level-set on the scope and scale for this group, using a water supply planning typology document developed by the Dept. as a reference. He suggested the importance of taking a comprehensive view (not single issues) and looking at the larger regional and basin geographic scale (not single communities).

Lili Prael, OWRD, shared a synthesis review of the materials provided to work group members in advance of the meeting, to provide context from a state lens and identify connections to help frame the forthcoming discussion. The materials she discussed included: 1) a reference document identifying ‘essential elements’ or features of a state-supported regional water planning system that emerged from previous work related to water planning (e.g. IWRS, 100-Year Water Vision, PBP evaluation and findings); 2) a document with suggested definitions of pre-planning and planning phases and the state of those phases currently existing in Oregon; 3) the American Water Resources Association (AWRA) overview of state water plans and comparisons between different features and structures; funding mechanisms, etc.; 4) the Place-Based Planning Pilot FAQ Evaluation sheets that highlighted recommendations for improvements to and use of the PBP model.

Following this, Robin invited work group members to share any additional reflections or findings from the pre-reading materials. Additional themes were shared, including, but not limited to:

- The root issues around funding and state investments;
- Acknowledgement that unlike many other states, Oregon does not have an official state water plan;
- How to address needs for regional flexibility;
- Trust building as a key principle for success;
- Clear sideboards needed at the outset;
- Determining alternatives to regional planning - what is the backstop?

Small Group Work Session: Pre-Planning + Planning

Robin provided an overview of the workshop approach and objective for the work group to explore the features of an ‘ideal’ or high functioning system, and how to get there. Small groups first focused on the phases of pre-planning and planning, and reflected upon the following questions: What essential elements, features or principles should be present for regional groups to do this phase? What should the state be responsible for? What should the regional groups be responsible for? Based on the understanding of the current Oregon system, where are there gaps or needs? She noted that items related to broader system strategies found in the IWRS, any suggested follow-up requests to OWRD, or research or information gathering needs would be captured as ‘parking lot’

ideas. Robin also clarified that the workshop brainstorm sessions were intended to tee-up the afternoon large group conversation about how to move the identified gaps, needs, and ideas forward. **A summary of the flip chart notes from the small groups can be found in the appendix.**

Facilitator's Note: A survey was sent to the Work Group after the meeting which will help prioritize the workload and focus for the coming months' of work. The high-level notes captured in small groups, as well as the large group discussion, and past meeting summary notes will be used to draft initial ideas for each of the issue areas determined to be important by the work group to address in this process.

Full Work Group Discussion: What to Do About It?

Following lunch, Robin reviewed the high-level themes that emerged from the small groups around how to structure and optimize regional pre-planning and planning phases. Themes that showed up in all small groups were around **data gaps and coordination; drivers and supports needed for planning readiness; and creating a collaborative 'home' for planning that can serve as institutional memory and coordinating function for long term efforts.** The full group then further discussed issues raised in the small groups regarding potential gaps or needs for the Oregon system, and generated ideas about how to address those identified issues. A synthesis of the identified key needs and gaps, and potential ideas to addressing them within this process included, but were not limited to:

Pre-Planning Phase Need/Gap: There is currently no framework to support this phase or guidelines around best practices. As recommended from the Place-Based Planning pilot evaluation to create a step 0, this could include building trust among stakeholders and between the communities and the state agencies; creating an accessible pre-packaged set of necessary data and analyses for a planning effort; providing more training relevant to conducting a multi-stakeholder process; community outreach, facilitation, and consensus decision-making. *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Create a Pre-Planning framework and guide for future regional planning. Essential elements or features could include:
 - a) Creating the conditions for an engaged, inclusive collaborative table and 'trust building'.
 - b) Establishing a coordinating home for planning.
 - c) Baseline information (e.g. current regulatory and sovereign overlays for that region, 'current state' of water for that region, and any particular data gaps that would need to be collected to inform long term planning.)
 - d) Goals and sideboards to set the scope and scale for Planning.
- 2) Develop a framework for a 'one stop shop' approach that would serve as a streamlined and state integrated approach to assess readiness for regional planning; assist communities and regions in determining where they are on the planning continuum to determine the

appropriate pathway and resources needed for a planning effort; connect them to various funding streams or assistance programs; and categorize varying levels of state-support for different types of planning efforts.

Planning Phase Need/Gap: Place-Based Planning pilots and other regional planning efforts have revealed the need for flexibility and a set of state-determined sideboards or guidelines to enable effective planning, based on unique needs and conditions of the region. *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Review the existing Place-Based Planning Guidelines to determine if anything is missing, should be changed, or clarified to address the need for balance of state-established sideboards and standards with regional flexibility. This review and update could integrate a) the Evaluation Recommendations and b) the ‘Essential Elements/Features’ document. Determine which pieces should be ‘required’ and which should be ‘optional or best practice’.

Planning Phase Need/Gap: Learning from past, ongoing and piloted regional planning efforts show that water planning takes time and there is a need for mechanisms or structure that enables continuity of efforts and institutional memory to support success and long term sustainability. *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Develop ideas for establishing regional coordinating ‘hubs’, entities or structures which would provide an institutional place for long term planning related efforts (e.g. data and analysis / updates over time; group norms and decision-making tools; plans and plan updates; place for regional staff and communities to convene; development of project ideas, etc.)

Moving a Plan to Action Need/Gap: The Place-Based Planning pilot evaluation and other regional planning efforts showed a need or gap in determining whether and how a regional plan will be acted on, and how it integrates with the state’s management system. “What does the plan get us?” *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Examine Oregon and other state models that have established structures for state review of regional plans.
- 2) Look at frameworks for establishing more certainty for regional planning efforts, to meet intended goals and align with management requirements. This could be a set of threshold questions or criteria (‘check points’) for review between each phase of the system that specify the deliverables necessary to access investments (funding, ongoing technical support, etc.) from the state for moving a plan to action. This could also identify ideas for resources that could be assured to regions if they meet the necessary thresholds.

Interagency Coordination Need/Gap: This need or gap has been identified within regional planning as well as more broadly with regards to integrated water resources management. *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Review various sources of input that describe the gaps and needs for interagency coordination.
- 2) Examine the type and level of agency staff needed to support regional planning efforts as have been learned from past regional planning efforts.
- 3) Look at frameworks for better interagency coordination on regional planning.
- 4) Look at frameworks for better interagency coordination on IWRS implementation.

Data Need/Gap: “Data gaps” have been identified as a need to address as they relate to regional planning, PBP pilots, and more generally for effective water management. *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Undertake a review of the key data gaps and challenges that have been identified in past regional planning efforts, and hear from state agencies about activities that are aimed at addressing these challenges. Identify remaining gaps or needs and offer ideas for how to address them.

Continuity Need/Gap: Long term planning requires long term investments which do not currently exist. *Work Group members discussed ideas for addressing this need or gap.*

- 1) Conduct a cost analysis of various regional planning efforts to determine what the range of investments are needed to support these efforts over time.
- 2) Look at how other states fund and sustain long term regional planning efforts.
- 3) Create a framework for establishing long term investments in water planning. Articulate the areas of resource support the state should assure to regional planning efforts (could include: dedicated regional staff from various agencies for consistent technical support and ongoing tracking of regulatory and sovereign obligation compliance, providing professional facilitation services, data analysis, etc.)

Public Comment

Public Comment was provided by Harmony Burrig. Harmony commented on the need to understand the level of staff support required to stand-up and provide continuity to regional planning efforts; suggested looking at historical documents to determine what issues have persisted, and why; and made a comment about public outreach related to the IWRS; and data gaps.

Final Thoughts and Questions, Wrap-up, and Next Steps

In closing, Robin reflected on the group’s generative conversation in identifying several issues that could inform subsequent task-related work to develop options for changes to the system. To move

work forward from today's meeting, Robin shared that OC, OWRD and the Coordinating Committee would draft a roadmap through the end of the calendar year with proposed benchmarks and goals for each meeting. **The next work group meeting has been rescheduled to July 12th from 11am-3pm. The September 6th meeting is currently intended to be in-person, location to be determined.**

Robin also reminded the group about the option for ongoing learning opportunities that could be coordinated separately from the meetings going forward, and will be made available to all as a resource and reference, to support any learning needs for this process. She shared that to date, the primary learning topic requests included: 1) What can we learn from other states about their approaches to regional water planning and state integration?; 2) Watershed Council history, funding structure, operation and state relationship; and 3) Water Futures Project and any current/in development water-related, environmental justice policies or policy frameworks. She invited work group members to continue to share additional questions or suggestions as they emerge. The meeting then adjourned.

Appendix

[Small Group Notes Summary](#)