



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

## Water Resources Department

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Water Resources Commission

**FROM:** Douglas E. Woodcock, Acting Director

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item G, June 16, 2023  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### Project Implementation Update

#### I. Introduction

Staff will update the Commission on Department efforts to implement numerous projects associated with the 2021-2023 budget and legislation. This is an informational report.

#### II. Background

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature made water a major focus area, adding significant new staff capacity across many Water Resources Department programs as well as creating new responsibilities for the agency. The Legislature made additional water resources-related investments during the second Special Session in December 2021.

Over the course of the biennium the Department has focused substantial energy on recruiting, hiring, and onboarding people into many positions and carrying out the added tasks. Staff have made an ongoing effort to keep the Commission, Legislators, stakeholders, and the general public informed about the status of implementing this significant workload.

In February 2023, the Commission was briefed by managers in the Field Services Division and Information Services Section, and by the Records Officer for the Records Management Section, on work priorities and projects.

During this agenda item the Commission will receive a detailed briefing by the manager of the Planning, Collaboration, and Investments Section (see Attachment 1).

#### Attachments:

1. Planning, Collaboration, and Investments Section 2021-2023 Biennium Work Priorities and Projects

# Planning, Collaboration, and Investments Section

## 2021-23 Biennium Work Priorities and Projects

The Planning, Collaboration, and Investments (PCI) Section within the [Oregon Water Resources Department](#) (OWRD) builds partnerships and incentivizes Oregonians to pursue integrated and innovative solutions for addressing complex water challenges and an uncertain water future. We work to achieve a secure and sustainable water future, addressing instream and out-of-stream needs for all Oregonians and Oregon's environment, economy, communities, and cultures as outlined in [Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy](#) and OWRD's [2019-24 Strategic Plan](#). To transparently communicate what we are doing and what we are currently not be able to do our priorities and projects for July 2021 through December 2023 are summarized below. Work anticipated during the 2023-25 biennium is dependent on the outcomes of the 2023 Legislative Session.

### Ongoing Operations - Day-to-day work and standard section business that spans the biennium

- Annual funding cycles for [Feasibility Study Grants](#) (applications due fall 2021 and 2022)
- Annual funding cycles for [Water Project Grants and Loans](#) (applications due spring 2022 and 2023)
- Grant administration
- Partner with the [Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Planning Partnership](#), supported efforts to finalize the plan and seek state-recognition (achieved March 2022); now supporting plan implementation
- Partner with the [Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership](#), supported efforts to finalize their plan and seek state-recognition (achieved June 2022); now supporting plan implementation
- Partner with the [Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership](#), supported efforts to finalize their plan and seek state-recognition (achieved June 2022); now supporting plan implementation
- Partner with the Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative, supporting efforts to complete a draft groundwater plan, partner on next steps after the groundwater basin study, and transition focus to surface water planning
- Provide *very* limited technical assistance to the place-based planning groups; only what is necessary to help them finalize their plans
- Provide internal Department coordination in other priority basins (Deschutes and Willamette)

### Work on Hold - Efforts put on hold due to lack of capacity and other priorities

- Additional recommended actions in the funding opportunities [Continuous Improvement Plan](#)
- Planning Assessment - Element D (Assess the planning status, assets, and needs of the state and places across Oregon)
- Planning Assessment - Element E (Together with partners, chart a path forward with specific recommended actions for future water resources planning in Oregon based on information gathered during assessment) *\*note: some of this work was done in the water planning legislative concept development work and State-Supported Regional Water Planning and Management Work Group*
- More robust reactive technical assistance to place-based planning groups
- Proactive technical assistance (e.g., compilation of data packages for future planning)
- Monthly [virtual conversations](#) for shared learning by those interested in, doing, or supporting water planning



## 2021-2023 Planning, Collaboration, and Investments Projects

The following are PCI projects planned for July 2021 through December 2023, completed in coordination with others at OWRD and external partners. **Please note** all future timelines are tentative and will likely change.

	Project	Timeframe
Administration	Position planning	Sept - Oct 2021
	Grant Management Analyst recruitment	Nov - Dec 2021
	Regional Planning Coordinator recruitment (limited duration)	Oct 2021 - Feb 2022
	Basin Coordinator recruitment (Northwest Region focused)	Jan - Mar 2022
	Basin Coordinator recruitment (Central Oregon focused)	Jan - Jun 2022
	Well Fund Coordinator recruitment (limited duration → became job rotation)	Feb - Jun 2022
	Engagement Coordinator recruitment (East Region focused)	Mar - Jul 2022
	Grant Coordinator recruitment	Jun - Jul 2022
	Grant Management Analyst recruitment	Nov 2022 - Jan 2023
	Engagement Coordinator recruitment (North Central Region focused) <sup>1</sup>	Mar 2022 - Apr 2023
	Engagement Coordinator recruitment (Southwest Region focused)	Jan - May 2023
	Senior Technical Analyst recruitment	Apr - Jun 2023
	Planning Coordinator recruitment <sup>2</sup>	On Hold Pending 2023-25 Budget
	Technical Analyst recruitment <sup>2</sup>	On Hold Pending 2023-25 Budget
Strategic Investments	Direct awards ( <a href="#">HB 5006</a> ) – setup/manage grants receiving general fund or lottery bond proceeds (Deschutes Basin Board of Control irrigation piping, Wallowa Lake Dam, Big Creek Dams, CRUST II, Nesika Beach Ophir Water District, place-based planning)	Jul 2021 through grant close out
	Stand up new Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund ( <a href="#">HB 2145</a> ) - Stage 1	Jan - Jun 2022
	One-time American Rescue Plan Act appropriations ( <a href="#">HB 5006</a> ) – setup and manage grants (place-based planning, Ordnance Project, and fish passage funding for local government dam upgrade projects)	Apr 2022 -through grant close out
	Stand up new Harney Domestic Well Remediation Fund ( <a href="#">HB 3092</a> )	Oct 2022 - Dec 2023
	Implement <a href="#">HB 3293</a> (multi-agency rulemaking to provide support for water project community engagement plans)	Jan - Dec 2023
	Revamp of Water Measurement Cost Share Fund	Mar - Dec 2023
Adaptive Planning	Establish Seasonally Varying Flows for City of Stayton’s ASR Project	Jul 2023 - Jun 2024
	<a href="#">Planning Assessment</a> – Preliminary work on Element C (Evaluate OWRD’s past and current approaches to water resources planning)	Jul - Nov 2021
	Support independent evaluation of pilot phase of place-based integrated water resources planning ( <a href="#">Final Report</a> and <a href="#">Fact Sheet</a> )	Mar 2021 - Mar 2022
	Staff the <a href="#">State-Supported Regional Water Planning and Management Work Group</a> <a href="#">Water Planning legislative concept</a> – relating to a water planning fund	Jan - Dec 2022 Mar 2022 - Jul 2023
Accessible Information	<a href="#">Water Planning Explorer</a> and <a href="#">Oregon Water Data and Reporting Tools</a> (collaboration with OSU Institute for Natural Resources Oregon Explorer)	Mar 2021-Dec 2021
	Update and begin implementation of engagement plan for the <a href="#">Walla Walla Groundwater Study</a> and Walla Walla Water 2050 Plan	May 2023 start
	Develop and implement engagement plan for HB 2018 water budgets	Jun 2023 start
Effective Coordination	Willamette Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement – Cooperating Agency	Aug 2022 - Jun 2024
	Willamette Basin Reallocation Study implementation workplan (see Agenda Item E)	Apr 2022 - 2027
	Willamette situation assessment and workplan development (Agenda Item E)	May 2022 - Jan 2023
	Willamette Basin projects (identified in basin workplan in Agenda Item E)	Jun 2023 - 2027
	Deschutes situation assessment and workplan development (February 2023, Item C)	Aug 2022 - Jan 2023
Deschutes Basin projects (identified in work plan in February 2023 Agenda Item C)	Jan 2023 - 2027	

<sup>1</sup> This position had two failed recruitments and was further delayed by the manager’s parental leave.

<sup>2</sup> Position initially held open for vacancy savings to fill the partially funded Engagement Coordination positions sooner. Then they were delayed further due to uncertainty with the 2023-25 budget and bills in front of the Legislature.