



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Crystal Grinnell, IWRS Specialist

SUBJECT: Agenda Item F, September 29, 2023
Water Resources Commission

Integrated Water Resources Strategy Work Session

I. Introduction

During this agenda item staff will describe the findings of the public outreach and engagement efforts associated with the IWRS update process in 2023. Staff then will engage the Commission in a work session to obtain input from commissioners on the proposed approach and outline for the 3rd edition of the IWRS.

II. Integrated Water Resources Strategy Recommended Action

- 13.A Fund development and implementation of Oregon's IWRS

II. Background

The next IWRS is anticipated to address climate predictions more holistically, apply an equity lens to the framework, and incorporate findings from the work under the 100-Year Water Vision. Staff conducted an interactive work session with the Commission to inform development of the 3rd edition of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy during Agenda Item A at the June 2023 meeting.

Commission informational sessions were also provided during Agenda Item K at the February 2023 meeting, and during Agenda Item C at the November 2022 meeting. The February 2023 meeting included a presentation on the 2022 IWRS Progress Report and was intended to set the foundation for the update. Materials from these meetings can be found on the Department's website for the Commission: www.oregon.gov/owrd/aboutus/Commission.

III. Public Outreach & Engagement Summary

The Department partnered with Oregon's Kitchen Table to facilitate outreach and engagement. Following the completion of these efforts, Oregon's Kitchen Table provided a Summary Report which includes the findings from a range of engagement activities, including community

conversations and a survey. About 200 people participated in the community conversations and about 1700 people responded to the survey. The Department also conducted a survey of state agency staff, which received 142 responses. Oregon's Kitchen Table summary report as well as a memo summarizing state agency staff feedback are available on the IWRS website: www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/Planning/IWRS.

The summary below highlights just a few of the main themes from Oregon's Kitchen Table's Summary Report.

Commonly shared perspectives include:

- Water issues will require more than technical and regulatory solutions alone
- Concern regarding climate impacts
- Significant concerns regarding water quality and safety
- Need for more water education (both science and management)
- Wide acknowledgement that there are more demands for water than water that is available
- Concern regarding the capacity to sustain fish and other wildlife
- Water governance is too complex (responsibilities spread across many agencies makes it hard to understand and engage)
- Interest in conserving, or learning how to conserve, water in homes

Topics where people disagreed:

- Water rights: some people want water allocation reconsidered in light of modern realities and others want the system to remain in place
- Balance of uses: there was not a consensus on how to balance the needs between agriculture and other economic uses, drinking water, and water instream to protect fish, animals, forests, etc.
- Role of state government: some people do not want state government involved in water rights or local decision-making, while others would like the state to amplify and support local success

A selection of quotes illustrates additional viewpoints:

- "I want the sense of urgency and life and death to be reflected in the discussions."
- "Que tomen accion real y que me dejen saber la acciones (take real action and let me know the action)."
- "Each area of demand (industry/ag/recreation) has potential to improve conservation but without guidance, rulemaking and enforcement, and/or incentives, each area continues existing approaches. These are no longer sustainable."
- "Agriculture and farmers/ranchers are needed to feed the state/country, yet the available water is being taken away from them more and more. More regulations are not always the answer."

In addition to the targeted outreach and engagement associated with the 2023 IWRS update, findings from the 2019-2020 100-Year Water Vision effort are included as well. The 100-Year

Water Vision Assessment Report can be found on the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/Documents/OWV-Oregon-Consensus-Report.pdf>. Input from the 100-Year Water Vision have been incorporated into the 2023 IWRS draft including a heightened need for water education, investment, coordination, and engagement. The 100-Year Water Vision reinforced the IWRS call for water data, informing the need to dedicate a full chapter to the topic.

IV. 2023 IWRS Revisions

There are several ways in which the IWRS might be revised to reflect the input heard during outreach and engagement efforts. The first is a reorganization of the information presented in the IWRS. All efforts to reorganize content are intended to streamline topics and simplify language to increase accessibility to a wide audience. Topics are not being removed but are being reorganized and simplified to reduce duplication. The IWRS Project Team has discussed the following new draft document outline:

Executive Summary

- Current Water Challenges (across the state)
- Strategy Overview
- Funding

Chapter 1 – Oregon’s Water Context

- Current Water Challenges
- Climate Change Overview (formerly “Climate Change”)
- Equity
- Strategy Overview
- Funding
- Water Governance/Institutions (Tribes, Federal, State, Local)

Chapter 2 – Partnerships & Planning

- Education (formerly “Education & Outreach”)
- Collaborative Leadership
- Place-Based Efforts
- Land Use & Hazard Mitigation Planning (formerly “Water and Land Use”)
- Extreme Events

Chapter 3 – Data and Research (formerly Chapters 1 & 2, add climate change, population, land use, economy, and energy considered throughout)

- Water Quality and Quantity Information
- Out-of-Stream Water Needs
- Instream & Ecosystem Water Needs

Chapter 4 – Water Use & Stewardship

- Healthy Ecosystems (add Natural Infrastructure)
- Pollution Management (formerly “Public Health”)

Water Use and Management (formerly “Water Management and Development”)
Water Infrastructure (formerly “Water-Related Infrastructure”)
Water and Energy

Appendices

Strategy Framework
Recommended Action 1-Page Guides
Actions by Public Summary

A draft Framework will be presented to the Commission at the meeting for further discussion.

Chapter 1 will set the context for water challenges and solutions in Oregon. This chapter will be used to elevate the importance of climate change and equity considerations throughout decision-making. This chapter will also provide a thorough explanation of the various responsibilities regarding water, relative to federal and state agencies, Tribes, local governments, industry, and individuals. This chapter will build upon the 2017 IWRS sections titled “Further Understand Our Water Management Institutions” and a portion from “Place-Based Efforts,” but will notably include more context regarding Tribes. Additionally, “Funding” will be moved from its location at the end of the 2017 IWRS to an earlier chapter to emphasize the critical role investment plays in all of the recommended actions.

Chapter 2 will focus on the elements necessary to successfully address water challenges through partnerships and planning. These include education, collaborative leadership, place-based regional planning, land use and hazard mitigation planning, and extreme events. Public engagement efforts for the 2023 IWRS update and during the 100-Year Water Vision in 2019 revealed a strong public interest and need for more education, and agencies recognize this as important throughout all stages of a project. The topic of “Education and Outreach” was included as a “Coming Pressure” in the 2017 IWRS but has been moved to elevate its importance and role in building relationships and knowledge for community led decision-making. The chapter will include revised and relocated narrative from the 2017 IWRS. The new section “Collaborative Leadership” combines text found elsewhere in the document that addresses partnership and inter-agency collaboration, another topic highlighted during 2023 engagement. The “Water and Land Use” critical issue (a “Coming Pressure”) from the 2017 IWRS is proposed to be renamed “Land Use & Hazard Mitigation Planning” to more accurately describe the existing content and expand to include a discussion on hazard mitigation planning. Additional narrative will describe the implications of land use planning on water quantity, quality, and ecosystem needs.

The 2017 IWRS Chapter 3 “Understand the Coming Pressures that Affect our Needs & Supplies” will be redistributed to other chapters of the 2023 IWRS. The reason for this is that the title suggests Oregon is not already faced with these challenges, and many of the actions are more closely related to actions in the 2017 IWRS Chapter 4 objective “Meet Oregon’s Instream and Out-of-Stream Needs.”

Chapter 3 will center on the need for data and research. This chapter will resemble the 2017 IWRS Chapter 1 content of “Further Understand Limited Supplies & Systems” and “Improve

Water Quality and Quantity Information.” New content will clarify the need for ongoing data and new data collection, and research needed to advance our understanding of current and future climate impacts, population growth, energy demand, and a changing economy.

Chapter 4 will focus on solutions in both the built and natural environment. The chapter will reflect Chapter 4 from the 2017 IWRS, with some topics relocated from Chapter 3 of the 2017 IWRS. Topics have also been slightly shifted in the order that they are discussed. Healthy Ecosystems will begin the chapter, with additional narrative added regarding natural infrastructure. Both “Water and Energy” and “Water-Related Infrastructure” will be added to Chapter 4. “Water-Related Infrastructure” will be renamed to “Water Infrastructure” and narrative will be added to better describe drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.

The IWRS Framework will be updated to reflect the change in chapter topics/headings: Partnerships & Planning, Data & Research, and Water Use & Stewardship. All recommended actions are shown under one of these headings, with many of the 2017 IWRS recommended actions carried forward, and some new ones added (e.g., Engagement). To acknowledge the overarching role of investment needed to implement the IWRS, 2017 IWRS Funding recommended actions have been repeated, but are shown as an “umbrella” to all other elements.

In addition to reorganizing the document, the IWRS Project Team has identified some new tools that will increase accountability, and support workplan development needed to implement the IWRS. The first is a recommended action “1-page Guide” that will be created for each recommended action. A second tool will be a summary of recommended actions that could be acted upon by members of the public, intended to support the feedback we heard during outreach and engagement that the public wants to know how to contribute.

V. Discussion

The proposed new document structure strives to make the Strategy more accessible to a wide audience by grouping topics into categories (Partnerships & Planning, Data & Research, and Water Use & Stewardship) that reflect common language heard throughout the 2023 engagement process.

Legislation passed in 2023 changes the required frequency of IWRS updates from five years to no more than every eight years. This increase in time between the updates elevates the importance of making a durable document that minimizes the inclusion of information that will quickly become obsolete. It also supports the decision to develop the recommended action “1-page Guides” that could more easily be updated and posted online.

During the work session, the Department would like input from Commissioners about the proposed approach and changes described above for the 3rd edition of the IWRS. Questions for the Commission to consider may include but are not limited to:

1. What do you think about the proposed change to the Framework by grouping actions into “Partnerships & Planning,” “Data & Research,” and “Water Use & Stewardship?” Does it appear approachable to the general public?
2. Are there any headings/topics you feel are missing, or confusion about where a certain topic would be located?
3. In addition to the 1-page recommended action summaries, do you have other ideas for assisting agencies with translating the IWRS into action?

VI. Conclusion

The Department, with support from the interagency IWRS project team, will continue to develop a draft IWRS and plans to release a version for public review and comment in October. The Commission will have the opportunity to provide the Department with additional feedback during the November Commission meeting.

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