



Oregon

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Water Resources Department

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Brenda Bateman, Senior Policy Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item A, August 26, 2010
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Integrated Water Resources Strategy Update

I. Introduction

During this agenda item, Commission members will receive a briefing from the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) Project Team, and will have an opportunity to discuss and provide input on recent events, accomplishments and public policy issues. This is an informational item only.

Topics for this session include:

- Results from the 2010 IWRS Open Houses and Stakeholder Workshops
- Policy Advisory Group Updates
- Public Comments Received (May through July 2010)
- Public Policy Discussion: Ecosystem Services

II. Results from the 2010 IWRS Open Houses and Stakeholder Workshops

During 2010, the Project Team conducted 12 Open Houses, 11 in Oregon Communities and one on-line, as well as 30 workshops at the invitation of stakeholder groups throughout the state.

One key question participants addressed was:

Do you have water resource solutions (policies, projects, or approaches) that you would like to see as part of this Integrated Strategy? What are some successful models from your organization, community, or elsewhere that we should encourage or develop further?

Participants participated in a “brainstorming” format where they were not permitted to question, debate, or rebut each others ideas as part of the event. Instead, participants could choose to build upon a previous idea, offer a different perspective, or address an entirely different issue.

Respondents offered solutions in 20 major categories:

- Water Conservation/Efficiency
- Water Re-Use
- Storage (above-ground, below-ground, natural storage)
- Regionalization / Basin-level Efforts
- Water Quality (including public health and emerging contaminants)
- Restoration Efforts (wetlands, floodplains, forest lands, beavers)
- Regulatory Streamlining and Coordination
- Putting Water Instream
- Integrating Land-Use Planning and Water
- Climate Change Adaptation
- Groundwater Issues
- Funding for all of these Efforts
- Data, Information, Education, Outreach
- Stormwater and Low Impact Development Issues
- The Water - Energy Nexus
- Water and Wastewater Infrastructure
- Transboundary Issues
- Water Markets and Water Banks
- Desalination
- Preparation for Natural Disaster (drought, flood, seismic events, storms, invasive species)

The summary offered in Attachment 1 describes these categories in greater detail and will help the Policy Advisory Group begin to prioritize the areas where the state should place its program efforts and investments.

III. Policy Advisory Group Updates

The IWRS Policy Advisory Group (PAG) met for the third time on July 13, 2010 at the Water Resources Department. The Group revisited previous meeting notes, as well as draft revisions to the PAG Charter, Meeting Protocols, and PAG Vision.

The Group spent the bulk of its meeting engaged with state and local agency officials, who presented their views on already existing plans and strategies related to water. The discussion focused on four key questions:

- What's the basic intent of the plan/strategy?
- How do we as agencies implement it (how does it work, exactly)?
- What does the plan/strategy say (or not say) about water? Where are the "water gaps"?
- What can we be doing as part of an Integrated Water Resources Strategy to partner with, to build upon, and to shore up these already-existing plans?

See Attachment 2 for the original, unedited document. As a result of the meeting discussions, this document will see further revision in the future. Because of the extensive information presented, PAG members were not asked to come to consensus during the meeting. Instead, the PAG will be asked to make a series of recommendations during subsequent meetings.

The Policy Advisory Group is preparing to develop “Recommended Actions” in a number of areas, and has dedicated its next meetings to the following themes:

October 6, 2010: Looking at Public Policy, Statue and Rule
January 5, 2011: Looking at Funding, Education and Outreach

IV. Public Comments Received (May 2010 – July 2010)

The Project Team has continued to receive public comments on the full range of Integrated Water Resources Strategy activities. Comments have arrived via regular mail, email, website survey, and telephone.

As in previous rounds, the comments included here span a wide range of perspectives. The Project Team continues to hear from a very diverse group of people. Some continue to advocate the status quo, while others advocate a complete overhaul of water management in Oregon. Many recognize the budgetary resources currently facing the state’s natural resource agencies. Contained in these comments are a number of public policy suggestions that track very closely with the results from the 2010 Open Houses and Stakeholder Workshops.

Attachment 3 contains the formal public comments received by the Project Team.

V. Public Policy Discussion: Ecosystem Services

The IWRS will consider the role and needs of ecosystems, as they relate to water. Oregon is already building an expertise in this area.

The Willamette Partnership, led by Executive Director Dr. Bobby Cochran, is working on a “Counting on the Environment Program,” designed to develop an accounting system for quantifying impacts and benefits to ecosystem services, in preparation for an ecosystem market in Oregon. To date, efforts have focused on quantifying the salmon and water quality benefits of additional streamflow.

Dr. Cochran will present the work thus far of the Willamette Partnership, including next steps as they relate to water quantity and quality. The Commission will then have an opportunity to engage in discussion about the further potential for ecosystem services as part of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

IX. Conclusion

The Project Team continues to work on multiple projects and components related to the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

Attachment 1: Analysis of Open House and Stakeholder Workshop results **(to be distributed at meeting)**

Attachment 2: Policy Advisory Group July 13, 2010 “Already Existing Plans and Strategies”

Attachment 3: New IWRS comments received between May 2010 and July 2010

Brenda Bateman

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