



Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

Water Resources Department

North Mall Office Building
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301-1271
503-986-0900
FAX 503-986-0904

MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Brenda Bateman, Senior Policy Coordinator

SUBJECT: Work Session Item A, November 19, 2009
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Integrated Water Resources Strategy Update

I. Introduction

During this work session, staff will update the Commission on the activities that have taken place related to the “Integrated Water Resources Strategy” since the close of the 2009 Legislative Session. We have progress to report on several fronts:

- selecting Project Team members,
- fleshing out in more detail a process design,
- developing public outreach materials,
- meeting with stakeholders in preparation for 2010,
- drafting an Ecology and Ecosystems Issue Paper, and
- receiving comments on the Preliminary Workplan and Draft Issue Papers.

This staff report will discuss each item in turn.

II. Selecting Project Team Members

The Project Team conducts the day-to-day operations of developing a strategy. This includes staffing various advisory groups, preparing outreach and project materials, and meeting with stakeholders, legislators, department officials, and their boards and commissions. The Project Team is led by Brenda Bateman of the Water Resources Department. There are senior staff members from three other agencies as well: Christine Svetkovich from the Department of Environmental Quality, Bruce McIntosh from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Ray Jandl from the Department of Agriculture.

The 2009 Legislature provided funding for two full-time, limited duration staff, a policy coordinator and science coordinator. The Water Resources Department has filled both slots with internal hires. The Policy Coordinator is Alyssa Mucken, who has previously served with the Department's Field Services, Technical Services, and Water Right and Adjudication Divisions. She began her duties on September 15. The Science Coordinator is Ken Stahr, who has served in the Department's Technical Services Division since 1989, as part of the Hydrographics Section, where his work has focused on surface water records, water availability modeling, peak flow estimation, and the storage inventory conducted under the Oregon Water Supply and Conservation Initiative.

The team also includes a policy intern, Ryan Vanden Brink, a graduate of Lewis and Clark Law School. He is seeking potential grants to help fund future efforts.

III. Fleshing out a Process Design in More Detail

The Water Resource Commission's Planning Committee had asked staff to build on the descriptions and timeline in the September 10, 2009 Preliminary Workplan, adding more detail and a better visual representation of the overall process that will be used. Attachment 1 contains an overview of the process between 2009 and 2012, when the first rendition of the strategy is due to the Oregon Legislature.

This overview maps out the five phases of the process and lays out more clearly the roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to participate for six groups: the Public, the Policy Advisory Group, the Technical Advisory Group, the Agency Advisory Group, the Water Resources Commission, and the Project Team. At each phase of the process, each of these groups will have an opportunity to review work completed thus far and to provide input.

IV. Developing Public Outreach Materials

Every few weeks, the Project Team plans to produce a one-page briefer to provide updates, announce upcoming events, and provide links to project-related information. These briefers are sent out to the project listserv and are also posted on the project website: www.wrd.state.or.us, click "Integrated Water Resources Strategy." As the Advisory Groups begin to organize, their meeting calendars will also appear in the briefers, keeping both members and the public apprised of scheduled events.

Already, these briefers have inspired community groups and associations to call, offering to host workshops or requesting additional information. See Attachment 2 for a sample of briefers produced thus far.

V. Meeting with Stakeholders in Preparation for 2010

The Commission's Planning Committee has also requested information about the kinds of stakeholder meetings the Project Team has held. While most have focused on providing "information updates," several have also included a workshop component, where group members conducted brainstorming exercises and provided input to the Project Team. These early workshops served to help the Project Team hone its format and questions, in preparation for Water Workshops planned for 2010 and 2011. The dates and venues for these Water Workshops are not yet set.

See Attachment 3 for a list of the completed and upcoming stakeholder meetings for 2009.

VI. Drafting an Ecology and Ecosystems Issue Paper

During Fall 2009, the Commission's Planning Committee continued its work, writing issue papers that help "state the problem." The seventh and final issue paper, drafted by Commissioner John Roberts, "Ecology and Ecosystems," is now ready for Commission—and public—review and comment. See Attachment 4, or the project website, for a draft copy of the "Ecology and Ecosystems Issue Paper."

This paper highlights the state of Oregon's ecosystems today, and notes the potential consequences of neglecting ecological considerations in water resources planning. It also notes some of the benefits that may accrue if the state carefully considers ecosystems as part of its long-term strategy.

The Project Team will accept public comment on this paper, and the others, through January 2010, in order to prepare for the Commission's first meeting in 2010.

VII. Receiving Comments on the Preliminary Workplan and Draft Issue Papers

Several groups have submitted comments related to the strategy via mail and email (using waterstrategy@wrd.state.or.us). The formal, written comments received through October 31 fall into three categories: (1) response to the "preliminary survey" placed on-line for stakeholders who did not have an opportunity to meet with the Commission's Planning Committee in January 2009; (2) review of the Sept. 10, 2009 Preliminary Workplan; and (3) review of the Sept. 10, 2009 Issue Papers.

The comments offer a wide range of perspectives, most of them positive and supportive of the overall need for an Integrated Water Resources Strategy. Many offered concerns or warnings,

based on the shortfalls observed in other projects of this type. Several had very specific suggestions regarding process and/or content.

During this work session, Commissioners will have the opportunity to review a detailed summary of these comments and discuss next steps in the revision of the workplan and issue papers. Comments are included in Attachment 5.

VIII. Conclusion

The Integrated Water Resources Strategy is moving into Phase II, when Advisory Groups will begin to meet on a regular basis to shape their policy and technical agendas. The Project Team will begin to conduct public meetings throughout the state, and begin to collect wider input from stakeholders and the interested public. Future work sessions will include summaries of these events, as well as ongoing updates of the items covered in today's discussion.

Attachment 1: Draft Process Design

Attachment 2: Briefers produced during September, October, and November 2009

Attachment 3: Stakeholder Meeting Calendar through December 2009

Attachment 4: Ecology and Ecosystems Draft Issue Paper

Attachment 5: Comments

Brenda Bateman
503-986-0879