



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Brenda Bateman, Senior Policy Coordinator and
Alyssa Mucken, IWRS Policy Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item B, February 17, 2010
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Integrated Water Resources Strategy Update and Discussion

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:

- 2011 Progress Report to the Oregon Legislature
- Updates on IWRS Components
- Public Policy Discussion: Workshop and Feedback Loop

II. 2011 Progress Report to the Oregon Legislature

The four primary agencies involved in the Integrated Water Resources Strategy – the Water Resources Department, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Department of Agriculture – submitted a progress report to the Oregon Legislature on February 1, 2011.

Attachment 1 contains a copy of the report, which describes the institutional capacity, public outreach efforts, project timeline, work products, and funding situation thus far. The Governor's Balanced Budget contains funding to continue the two staff positions for the IWRS. Continued funding will be crucial to ensure the timely production of an IWRS that meets the requirements of HB 3369 (2009).

All 90 legislators received the progress report electronically, with an offer to follow up with hardcopy if desired. The agency directors briefed members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the House Energy Environment and Water Committee during the first week of February, to coincide with the report's release.

III. Updates on IWRS Components

Issue Papers. Version 2 of the issue papers was released for public review and comment last November. The public comment period will remain open until March 1, 2011. Commenters are invited to pay particular attention to the “critical issues,” discussed further below, and provide insight, resources, or expertise to ensure that these critical issues are adequately described and cited in the issue papers. Comments and materials related to the issue papers should be sent to waterstrategy@ wrd.state.or.us.

The Project team has met with a number of partners and stakeholder groups during the past three months to invite input on the issue papers. These meetings have included the:

- IWRS Agency Advisory Group
- Federal Liaison Group
- Various Departments’ Staff, Boards / Commissions
- Assoc. of Oregon Counties, Water Policy Group
- American Waterworks Assoc. – Cascades to Coast Subsection
- WRC/WRD Groundwater Advisory Committee
- Oregon Business Council, Water Policy Group
- Environmental / Conservation Groups
- Oregon Coastal Zone Mgmt. Assoc. (OCZMA)
- Oregon Farm Bureau, Water Committee
- Oregon Water Utility Council
- Oregon Winegrowers Association, Natural Resources Committee
- Regional Water Providers Consortium, Board of Directors

Critical Issues. During the January 5, 2011 Policy Advisory Group meeting, PAG members reviewed the “draft IWRS Framework” developed at their request during Fall 2010. This is the same framework rolled out and discussed during the November 18, 2010 Commission meeting. PAG members advised staff to remove as many “qualifiers” and “caveats” as possible when describing the critical issues that must be addressed in this first iteration of the Strategy. The result is a more simplified list of critical issues.

They also noted that if this two-page framework were the only set of materials seen by policy-makers, the media, or the public, it should contain a few more key terms. Terms like “groundwater,” “surface water,” “ecological health,” and “natural and built storage” are a few examples.

The draft framework included in Attachment 1 reflects the discussions that occurred during the January 5 meeting. Note that no formal votes were taken and this document remains in draft.

Recommended Actions. Also during the January 5 meeting, the Policy Advisory Group spent several hours beginning to identify and discuss potential recommended actions. Having spent previous meetings identifying data and information gaps, as well as planning gaps, the group spent most of its time brainstorming recommended actions to address Objectives 6 and 7 “Meet Oregon’s Instream and Out-of-Stream Needs.”

The discussion focused on a half-dozen broad topics: water conservation and water management

strategies, integrated planning / decision-making, approaches to natural and built storage, instream / restoration efforts, education and outreach, and funding.

The Group continues its work on-line between meetings. The members have been asked to participate in a “homework” assignment that allows them to provide feedback on several dozen potential recommended actions. Specifically, they have been asked to:

- Highlight 10-15 possible actions that they feel the state should pursue as priorities within the first five years (2012-2017). A series of follow-up questions probes for more detail.
- Note any possible actions that they feel should not be pursued.
- Note if there are any actions that are missing from the list that should be seriously considered.

The entire “homework” assignment is included as Attachment 2 and will form the basis of today’s discussion with the Commission.

IV. Public Policy Discussion: Workshop and Feedback Loop to the PAG

During this meeting, Commissioners will be asked to comment on the contents of Attachment 2. This exercise, modified to fit today’s time constraints, will give Commissioners an opportunity to identify one or two “top pick” recommendations, one or two recommendations to avoid, and any missing recommendations that should be added.

These discussions will help the Project Team draft recommended actions, so they will be ready for inclusion in the draft IWRS, scheduled for public review and comment during fall 2011.

V. Conclusion

Components of the IWRS continue to develop with the input of advisory groups, members of the public, commissioners, and staff.

Recent work products have filled in more detail to the framework first crafted by the Water Resources Commission and Department more than a year ago. Next steps will include using feedback from this meeting to further shape the recommended actions to address Oregon’s most critical water resource issues.

Attachment 1: IWRS Progress Report to Oregon’s 76th Legislative Assembly

Attachment 2: PAG “Homework” Assignment: Help Identify Potential Recommended Actions