



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 L, September 30, 2011
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Key Performance Measure Report

I. Issue Statement

Each year, the Water Resources Department submits a report that tracks the Department's Performance in key areas and is an essential part of the Department's budget presentation to the Governor's Office and Legislature. The Department submitted its most recent report on August 15, 2011.

II. Background

The Water Resources Department has 14 Key Performance Measures (KPMs). These performance measures cover agency programs related to: surface water restoration, protection, and measurement; groundwater monitoring; and regulatory and outreach actions. The Department has had most of its measures in place since 2005 or earlier, so we are building a solid data set that helps track how the Department is doing and identifies areas for improvement. The 2010-11 report in its entirety is in Attachment 1.

III. Discussion

Nine measures (690-1 through 690-5, 690-8 through 9, and 690-12 through 690-13) relate to the practice and promotion of responsible water management, while the remaining measures relate to efficiency and customer service. The Department has made great strides improving process, information technology and training, resulting in quicker processing times and reduced backlog.

KPMs MAKING PROGRESS: at or trending toward target achievement

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| #1 - Flow Restoration | #10 - Promote Efficiency in Water Right Application Processing |
| #2 - Protection of Instream Water Rights | #11 - Promote Efficiency in Transfer Application Processing |
| #5 - Assessing Groundwater Resources | #12 - Promote Efficiency in Field Staff Regulatory Activities |
| #8 - Water Measurement | #13 - Increase Water Use Reporting |
| #9 - Promote Efficiency in Water Management and Conservation Plan Reviews | #14 - Customer Service (biennial survey) |

KPMs NOT MAKING PROGRESS: not at or trending toward target achievement

- #3 - Monitor Compliance (holding steady at 94 percent)
- #4 - Streamflow Gaging
- #6 - Equip Citizens with Information (holding steady at 89 percent)
- #7 - Equip Citizens with Information (holding steady at 2 million hits)

There are three measures, KPM #3, #6, and #7 that are not performing at or in the direction of their targets, but are still very high. An additional measure, KPM #4, is cause for greater concern, because it is indicative of reduced state, federal, and local resources.

- Analysis of KPM #4: Streamflow Gaging

The goal is to increase the positive percent change, compared to a 2001 baseline of 215 gaging stations. The Department has a statutory responsibility to measure the surface waters of the state. Gaging stations strategically placed through Oregon collect information that can be used to more efficiently manage and understand water availability. This measure has fluctuated from a five percent increase in 2007 to a six percent decrease in 2009. This year's measure is a decrease of four percent from the baseline target.

The Department generally purchases and manages these gages in cooperation with other entities, sometimes federal, but usually local agencies. As budgets and interests change at the state and local level, so does the composition of the stream gage inventory.

The four gages that were dropped were in different regions, and no region lost more than one. The Department sought funding and partners to help replace aged gaging equipment and gage houses. Although the Department looked for partners in each case, no other entities could provide funding. Ultimately, one of the four gages was taken over by the US Geologic Survey (USGS).

An evaluation of the existing gaging system network is in process, to determine if the network provides the necessary information for understanding and managing Oregon's

water resources. Preliminary results indicate that a significant number of gages should be added to the network to provide needed data.

In addition, budget reductions in the 2009-11 biennium eliminated two staff in this program area, which further limited the Department's capacity to gather and process stream data. Lost positions included the Northwest Region Hydrotech, responsible for services gaging stations in the northwest corner of Oregon, and a records processor in the Measurement and Reporting section.

TWO KEY PERFORMANCE MEASURES OF NOTE

In 2009, the Legislature created two new measures for the Department. Both showed improvements in the past year, which merits discussion.

- Analysis of KPM #13: Increase Water Use Reporting

Water-use reporting by public entities is required by statute and as a condition on newer water right permits. The Department maintains an on-line reporting form and encourages water-use reporters to enter their data on-line. Water-use results are publicly available and are used by Department staff, water users themselves, and public, private and non-governmental organizations for future water planning and protection of streamflow. In the past, when the Department's water-use reporting position was funded and filled, staff mailed an annual reminder with the appropriate forms and instructions for recording and entering water use information online or in hardcopy, and then followed up with a personal phone call when necessary.

A new Key Performance Measure established by the Oregon Legislative in 2009 sets targets to "increase the percent reporting by 5 percent each year." When this measure was established and targets set, the Department still had funding authority for its Water Use Reporting Coordinator position, and the target for 2009 was 70 percent. However, the 2009 Legislature removed funding for the Coordinator position, and the reporting rate dropped back to 20 percent, commensurate with results before the position was filled.

During 2010-11, the Department updated the webpage with additional answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), which helped customers who were trying to submit data. In addition, we set up several on-line accounts for new users and tried to respond to questions asked by phone or email. These actions helped to bring response rates up to 27 percent.

Although the Department has implemented an online reporting system, there is limited technical assistance available for new customers or those with questions. Loss of this position has also reduced the Department's ability to process reports that are submitted.

Reinstating this position would provide necessary staffing contact to water users required to report, perform quality checks of submitted data, provide technical assistance, and analyze water use.

- Analysis of KPM #8: WRC's 2000 Water Measurement Strategy

In 2009, the Oregon Legislature established another new Key Performance Measure for the Department, entitled "Fully implement the Water Resources Commission's 2000 Water Measurement Strategy."

By way of background, the Water Resources Commission embarked on a Measurement Plan in 2000 to strategically improve water measurement statewide. With resources scarce, the Commission wanted to "major on the majors" by prioritizing the installation of measuring devices. The Water Resources Commission directed the Department to focus its limited resources on "significant diversions" within "high priority watersheds¹."

As a result, the Department has identified more than 2,300 significant diversions that represent about 10 percent of the overall number of diversions in high priority watersheds, and account for about 50 percent of the volume of water diverted. These diversions were inventoried by staff between 2001 and 2008. The Department is working with landowners to install water measuring devices (e.g., weirs, flumes, and meters) on these significant points of diversion (SPODs) in high priority watersheds around Oregon.

The original target was to have a cumulative total of 250 measuring devices installed by end of calendar year 2009. Staff efforts, underway since 2000, resulted in 504 measuring devices installed by end of calendar year 2009 and 596 by the end of calendar year 2010. However, future progress may be frustratingly small, without the dedicated measurement staff and cost-share funding that the Department has requested of the Legislature.

IV. Conclusion

Achieving the Department's performance targets is a challenge, given state budget limitations that affect the recruitment and retention of technical staff. All of these challenges will influence our ability to meet performance targets for our measures in the future. To meet these challenges, we continue to streamline processes, develop technological solutions, and strengthen partnerships with water users and other stakeholders. We also continue to request the budget resources necessary to provide timely and accurate service to WRD customers.

Attachment 1: Department's Annual Performance Progress Report for 2010-11.

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¹ Significant diversions are those that have a permit condition that require a measuring device; or divert more than five cubic feet per second; or divert a high percentage of streamflow. The Department identified high priority watersheds with the help of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, as those with the greatest biological need and the greatest restoration opportunities.