



# Oregon

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## Water Resources Department

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### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Water Resources Commission

**FROM:** Tom Paul, Deputy Director  
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**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item R, November 15, 2013  
Water Resources Commission

### Update on the Willamette Basin WaterSMART Plan of Study

#### I. Introduction

In March 2013, the Department submitted a proposal to participate in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Basin Study Program. This competitive program is designed to help water users address 21<sup>st</sup> century water supply challenges. As part of a basin study, Reclamation works with basin stakeholders to study options for meeting future water demands in river basins where imbalances in supply and demand exist or are projected. WaterSMART basin studies address the following four objectives:

- 1) Develop projections of water supply and demand, including climate change risks, such as changes in snowpack, timing and quantity of runoff, impacts to groundwater, and increase in demand for water.
- 2) Examine how climate change and other pressures could affect existing infrastructure, operations, and facilities.
- 3) Develop options for meeting future water needs.
- 4) Identify trade-offs and analyze possible alternatives.

The Department is interested in the WaterSMART program to support and inform the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study. The Corps has funding to scope the Reservoir Study activities during federal fiscal year 2014. If the Corps receives funding and approval to carry out the Reservoir Study tasks, it is anticipated that it would begin in October 2014, continuing through September 2017. The WaterSMART program includes a comprehensive look at all water demands and climate-related risks in the Willamette Basin; information that is necessary to complete the Reservoir Study.

#### II. Background

In late May, the Department was selected to complete a Plan of Study, with Reclamation acting as a project partner. Reclamation will contribute up to \$50,000 toward these efforts, with a required cost match (cash or in-kind) from the Department, for a total project cost up to \$100,000. Developing a plan of study is the first step to complete a basin study. A plan of study outlines: the purpose and objectives of the study, available data and models, roles and

responsibilities of project partners, methods for communication and public involvement, and study tasks.

### **III. WaterSMART Workshop in September**

The Department worked with Reclamation staff to develop a Draft Plan of Study, which outlines previous work, available data, and current activities in the Willamette Basin. The Draft Plan of Study was shared with stakeholders during a workshop in late September. Workshop participants included municipal, agricultural, and instream interests in the basin, and included state and federal agency staff from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Agriculture, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. During the workshop, time was spent discussing possible data gaps, particularly related to agricultural, municipal, self-supplied industrial, and instream flow needs. An analysis of agricultural demands has been identified as a key data gap that could be addressed through a WaterSMART basin study.

Willamette Water 2100 team members and HDR Engineering also attended the workshop. The Willamette Water 2100 team members provided a status update on climate change analysis conducted under this National Science Foundation funded project. HDR Engineering provided a summary of how agricultural demands were developed as part of the 2008 Oregon Water Supply and Conservation Initiative Statewide Demand Assessment.

Stakeholders suggested developing a side-by-side comparison of the WaterSMART program and Reservoir Study requirements, along with other ongoing activities in the basin, such as Willamette Water 2100. Doing so will help evaluate how these efforts fit together and can potentially complement one another.

### **IV. Next Steps/Conclusion**

The Department will work with Reclamation and stakeholders over the next several months to further revise and finalize the plan of study. Monthly, or possibly more frequent, stakeholder meetings are planned for this fall. During this time, the Department and stakeholders will need to decide whether to pursue a Basin Study through the WaterSMART program. Letters of interests will likely be due in January 2014.

To implement the Plan of Study, the Department would need to submit an application proposal to Reclamation in early 2014. If the Department's proposal is selected, it is anticipated that work could begin in late May or early June 2014.

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