



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Alyssa Mucken, IWRS Program Coordinator *AM*

SUBJECT: Agenda Item P, March 7, 2014
Water Resources Commission

Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy – Implementation Update

I. Introduction

During this agenda item, Department staff will update the Commission on implementation of Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS). The 2013 Legislature provided the Department and its partner agencies a modest investment in the Strategy to carry out several recommended actions.

Staff from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife will join the Department during this agenda item, sharing progress on IWRS-related recruitments and thoughts on agency priorities for implementation during the biennium.

The Willamette Basin Reservoir Study (relates to Recommended Action 10.B) and the Department's Water Supply Development Initiative (Recommended Action 10.E) are topics of discussion under separate agenda items. An update regarding the establishment of additional scenic waterways (Recommended Action 11.B) is included in the Director's Report.

II. Status of IWRS Related Recruitments

The 2013 Oregon Legislature approved 14 new positions to support existing Department programs and develop new initiatives to implement the IWRS. The Department is currently recruiting for a Water Supply Development Team Leader. Eleven positions have been filled in the following sections:

Water Right Services Division

- A Water Right Application Analyst will review complex permit applications and assist with protested instream water rights and new instream applications.

Technical Services Division

- A Hydrologist, Hydrographer, and a Business Application Developer will improve the Department's capacity for collecting, monitoring, and sharing surface water data and improving inter-agency coordination.
- Two Hydrogeologists will assist with groundwater monitoring, investigations, and review groundwater applications.
- A Water Measurement Analyst will coordinate the Water Use Reporting Program by assisting waters users, reviewing water use reports, and monitoring compliance.

Field Services Division

- An Assistant Watermaster located in the Klamath Basin will assist with increased workload in the wake of the Klamath Adjudication.

Administrative Services Division

- A Program Coordinator will support the Water Conservation, Reuse, and Storage Feasibility Study Program (SB 1069 Grants).

Director's Office

- The Water Supply Development Initiative will evaluate and pursue water supply development options and support various task forces created under Senate Bill 839 (2013).
- The Integrated Water Resources Strategy Coordinator will lead implementation efforts, including the development of guidelines for place-based approaches to integrated water resources planning and coordinating the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study. The Coordinator will lead development of the 2017-2022 IWRS.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is filling three new Integrated Water Resources Strategy Coordinator positions to support local integrated water resources planning efforts and enable DEQ to become more involved in water resource management and supply projects. DEQ recently filled positions in its Medford and Portland regional offices and the recruitment for the Pendleton office is currently underway. DEQ also received funding for two positions to collect water quality and biological data to assess watershed health and two positions to implement a statewide groundwater monitoring program. These positions will be phased in during April 2014 and November 2014, respectively. DEQ is currently reviewing existing data and consulting internal and external stakeholders, including OWRD, to develop a strategic plan for use of these monitoring resources.

Oregon Department of Agriculture

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) will be filling a water quantity position, the first of its kind for the agency. The individual hired for this position is expected to begin during the first week of March. ODA also received funding to hire three staff for monitoring the effectiveness of the state's Agricultural Water Quality Management Program. All three positions have been filled and staff are undergoing training. ODA's 2013-15 budget also includes \$50,000

to assist efforts of the Oregon Invasive Species Council. Efforts of other state agencies to address invasive species are noted below.

In addition, both ODA and DEQ received new positions to expand the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) program. DEQ received four positions to collect and analyze water quality data as well as one half-time position to coordinate with ODA and work with pesticide users to reduce pesticide movement into waterways. ODA also recently filled a new position to support agricultural water quality monitoring under the PSP Program. ODA's Pesticides Outreach and Compliance Program recently hired two staff to perform pesticide outreach and compliance monitoring.

The state's inter-agency Pesticide Management Team is currently identifying new watersheds (or sub-basins) for the Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Program. The team is also scheduling pesticide collection events and identifying technical assistance needs across the state. These efforts help implement IWRS Recommended Action 12B: "Reduce the use of and exposure to toxics and other pollutants."

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Instream Flows & Invasive Species)

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) received funding to hire one biologist and two part time field staff (1.67 FTE) to work on instream flow studies (Action 3A & 11B). Originally, ODFW had planned to hire the biologist this spring to prepare for field work and hire the remaining staff this summer to begin studies. Due to budget shortfalls, tasks have been reevaluated. ODFW, working with the Department, will first address the backlog of unresolved instream water right protests before beginning new instream flow studies. ODFW then expects to conduct 5-10 instream flow studies this biennium, using existing staff resources.

The IWRS includes a recommended action to address invasive species. The Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Program is co-managed by ODFW and the Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) with the primary objective of keeping Oregon's waters free of invasive species. When the AIS Program began in 2010, it operated with only one watercraft inspection team. Funding was provided to hire additional staff to inspect watercraft for invasive species.

During 2013, ODFW was able to deploy five watercraft inspection teams in Ashland, Klamath Falls, Lakeview, Ontario, and Brookings. These teams conducted 7,441 watercraft inspections and 279 watercraft decontaminations, 17 of which involved quagga or zebra mussels. Boater inspection compliance rates were 72 percent, an increase of 2 percent from 2012. ODFW and OSMB participated in 15 public events and sponsored 29 trainings for fishing groups, agency staff, concerned citizens and school groups. Since 2009, more than 800 Oregonians have attended watercraft inspection training classes.

In 2014, ODFW will open an inspection team station in February with four more inspection stations opening in May. A sixth inspection station may open in the summer, which would provide full coverage for Oregon's southern and eastern entry points.

III. Expanding our Groundwater and Surface Water Programs (Action 1.B)

In addition to the staff resources mentioned above, the Department received funding to install 13 monitoring wells to increase the Department's capacity for collecting and analyzing groundwater data, assessing options for new groundwater appropriation, and responding in a timely manner to customer requests for assistance.

The Department is currently soliciting qualified well drillers to construct these monitoring wells. Groundwater Section staff are working to identify well locations that will provide valuable geologic and water level data. Target areas for wells at this time include Harney County, in the Deschutes Basin near the Metolius headwaters, the Umatilla Basin near Hermiston, the Klamath Basin, and sites throughout the Willamette Valley.

The Department also received additional resources to install 16 stream gages to improve the Department's capacity for surface water data collection and monitoring. The Department is currently soliciting bids from equipment manufacturers. Selection of new gaging station locations will be based on an evaluation of Oregon's stream gaging network, completed in 2008, and recent input from regional field offices. At this time, the Klamath Basin is a likely location for installation of additional stream gages.

IV. Other IWRS-Related Items

The Strategy was designed to include a number of recommended actions and implementation steps that can be undertaken without additional staff or resources. Updating Oregon's Water-Related Permitting Guide (Action 2.E), an inter-agency effort completed in August 2012, is one such example. The Department has also focused efforts to expand awareness of the Allocation of Conserved Water Program (Action 10.A) and is finalizing a "mapping" project to support further integration of data collection, processing, and use in decision-making among Oregon's natural resource agencies (Action 1.C).

Allocation of Conserved Water Program – Outreach Efforts

Oregon's Allocation of Conserved Water Program allows a water right holder who plans to implement a water conservation project to legally use a portion of the conserved water on additional lands, while another portion is permanently protected instream. Examples of eligible conservation projects include lining or piping open canals and ditches, or changing to a more efficient water distribution system, such as switching from flood irrigation to sprinkler or drip irrigation.

Since the program began in 1987, fifty-three conservation projects have been approved, with almost 161 cubic feet per second of water permanently protected instream. Irrigators who have participated in the Allocation of Conserved Water Program have also benefited, placing more than 5,100 acres of previously arid land into cultivation. Recent surveys have shown however, that very few irrigators and technical irrigation experts are aware of this program, or the benefits to instream flows and agricultural production.

In 2013, Department staff actively promoted awareness of the Conserved Water Program, as called for in the IWRS (Action 10A). Informational presentations were provided to the Network of Oregon Watershed Councils and the Oregon Association of Conservation Districts, and during fall training sessions for Certified Water Rights Examiners. Planned outreach efforts include a presentation at the Northwest Ag Show in Portland and updates to the Department's web page to better explain the program. In the latter half of 2013, eight conserved water applications were filed with the Department. This compares to one application filed in 2010, three in 2011, and six in 2012.

Mapping Oregon's Water Related Institutions

With the help of two interns from Oregon State University, the Department embarked on a "Mapping Project" in early 2013 to document the various roles and responsibilities of Oregon's water-related institutions (Action 1.C). These efforts helped produce a comprehensive document organized around the IWRS themes, describing monitoring activities, technical assistance, grant and loan programs, and water-related education or outreach activities. Several state and federal agencies reviewed the mapping document during the spring of 2013, offering various suggested changes. Department staff followed up with a handful of agencies over the summer to solicit additional feedback on the mapping document. In mid-January, the Department convened the State Agency Advisory Group and the Federal Liaison Group, asking for a final review of the mapping document.

In addition, a recently formed inter-agency team met on a quarterly basis in 2013 to further coordination on monitoring-related activities. The team consists of agency staff from the Department of Forestry, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Health Authority, Department of Fish & Wildlife, Department of Agriculture, and the Water Resources Department. This team offered input on the mapping document, and found it to be useful for understanding the various roles of Oregon's state and federal natural resource agencies. Agencies had some additional suggestions, including adding online links within the mapping document.

The Department anticipates finalizing the mapping document, and posting it to the IWRS Project website in mid-to-late March.

V. Undertake Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning (Action 9.A)

Since every river basin in Oregon is unique with widely varying ecological issues, community values, and economic dynamics, the Strategy identifies place-based integrated water resources planning as a vital component for meeting Oregon's water management challenges. Such planning enables communities to engage in a collaborative process to determine how best to meet their unique instream and out-of-stream water needs at a scale that a statewide strategy may not be able to achieve. Place-based efforts provide a venue for water managers to interact with the people who live, work, and play in a watershed and care deeply about it.

The State, working primarily through the four agencies involved with development of the Strategy, committed to developing a set of guidelines and seeking further grant funding and other

incentives to assist with local planning efforts. The guidelines are meant to ensure that plans are integrated, addressing instream and out-of-stream needs, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs.

To inform development of guidelines, the Department has been researching how neighboring states approach regional or locally-led water resources planning. California, Washington, and Texas have all undertaken regional planning, and not surprisingly, each state's approach varies in terms of requirements, incentives, and state facilitation.

The Department is in the process of finalizing a discussion paper, comparing how these three states approach regional planning and describing how it could inform Oregon's approach. This spring, the Department plans to host workshops with interested stakeholders to discuss and solicit feedback on the draft guidelines. The Department would like to gather the Commission's input during the next Commission meeting in May.

VI. Conclusion

The Department will continue to implement the Strategy and track progress, working closely with state and federal agency partners. Communicating our combined successes with the Oregon Legislature, stakeholders, agency partners, and the broader public will be an important component of implementation efforts.

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