



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Brenda Bateman, Technical Services Division Administrator
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SUBJECT: Agenda Item D, March 12, 2015
Water Resources Commission Meeting

IWRS Implementation: Monitoring Strategy

I. Introduction

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature approved \$1.5 million of General Funds in the Oregon Water Resources Department's (Department) budget to establish, maintain, and upgrade streamflow gaging stations and monitoring wells throughout the state, and to hire five scientists and programmers to oversee the work. With these resources in hand, the Department wants to ensure that it is placing these new gages and wells as efficiently and strategically as possible.

During 2014, the Department began a three-part process. First, it began with a re-write of protocols, including landowner access agreements, protection of cultural resources, inter-agency and intra-agency coordination efforts, and equipment purchasing agreements. Second, it outlined a method to evaluate and update the current monitoring network of gages and wells. Third, it began an analysis of Department programs to assess how and where gages and wells should be located, to help the Department succeed in its various tasks and programs. All of these pathways will be captured in a Strategy for Surface Water and Groundwater Monitoring (Monitoring Strategy). This report will provide a description of how the Monitoring Strategy is being constructed.

II. Background

On August 2, 2012, the Water Resources Commission adopted Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS). The IWRS provides a blueprint for understanding and meeting Oregon's water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs now and into the future. One primary objective of the IWRS is to understand the status of the state's water resources. More specifically, this objective seeks to further understand Oregon's water supplies and systems,

water quality/quantity information, and water management institutions. IWRS Recommended Action 1B (improve water resource data collection and monitoring) and 1C (coordinate interagency data collection, processing, and use in decision-making) of the IWRS support this objective.

Staff believes this Monitoring Strategy will not only support recommended actions in the IWRS, but also the Department's Key Performance Measures, and other appropriate policy documents of the WRD.

The Monitoring Strategy builds on work conducted by Department staff in 2011, in which we analyzed the Department's stream gage network for its usefulness in our day-to-day water distribution duties. The new Monitoring Strategy will take a broader look, to determine where WRD's monitoring sites should be located in order to meet the goals of additional programs and interagency initiatives. As part of the process, staff will involve other WRD staff, partners, and stakeholders, inviting their input.

This project has already benefitted from the Department's involvement in the interagency STREAM Team. The Oregon Department of Agriculture, Department of Forestry, and Department of Environmental Quality all have monitoring strategies in place and are in the midst of updating them.

III. Progress

The Department has recently modernized several protocols and procedures necessary to install new data collection sites. These include:

- Cultural resource (archaeological) assessments, in conjunction with the state archeologist, tribal partners, university consultants, and other public and private partners;
- Property access and cooperative agreements, written with help from the Department's contracting staff;
- Inter-agency agreements with local, state, and Federal partners, such as the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and counties;
- Intra-agency coordination between Field Services and Technical Services Divisions; and
- Equipment purchasing and price agreement procedures.

In addition, staff members are currently analyzing Department programs that utilize surface water and groundwater monitoring data. As part of the process, staff will assess how these programs use monitoring data, recommend how these data might be supplemented or improved in the future, and note where additional monitoring may prove beneficial. The Governor's 2015-

17 Recommended Budget proposes one additional staff member at WRD to implement the resulting recommendations.

IV. Conclusion

Due to the effectiveness of the IWRS and the support of the Legislature, the Department now has resources to improve its data collection efforts. In order to wisely utilize these resources, the Department is taking a comprehensive look at its data collection protocols and network.

The Strategy for Surface Water and Groundwater Monitoring in Oregon is currently underway, and will develop more fully during the spring and summer. Staff plans to report back to the Commission, bringing a Draft Monitoring Strategy for review and discussion, in September.

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