



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

**Water Resources Department**

725 Summer St NE, Suite A


Salem, OR 97301

(503) 986-0900

Fax (503) 986-0904

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Water Resources Commission

**FROM:** Alyssa Mucken, IWRS Program Coordinator 

**SUBJECT:** Agenda Item O, November 20, 2015  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### 2017 Update to Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy

#### I. Introduction

During this agenda item, staff will introduce a proposed process for updating Oregon's 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS). The update is due in 2017. Staff will seek guidance from the Commission on several items, including public involvement, stakeholder engagement, and the role of the Commission.

#### II. Background

The 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy is a 50-year roadmap that will guide agency actions for years to come. The IWRS is geared toward helping the state better understand and meet Oregon's instream and out-of-stream water needs, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs, now and into the future. The 2012 IWRS contains more than forty high-level recommended actions that cover a wide range of critical issues facing the state. The goals, objectives, guiding principles, and actions laid out in the 2012 IWRS were developed using a collaborative and public process.

The IWRS is ambitious, and as such, agencies and other partners have taken a phased approach to implementation. In the first round of implementation, Oregon's natural resources agencies focused primarily on building our existing data and monitoring programs—for both groundwater and surface water—and developing the capacity at the state and local level to help with collaborative planning and implementation of water resources projects.

Much has been accomplished under the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. During the March 2015 Commission meeting, Department staff and state agency partners provided a report on implementation of the recommended actions.

### The Process for Developing the 2012 IWRS

Since its inception, the Commission has played a very important role in development and implementation of the IWRS. In 2009, a sub-committee of Commission members authored a set of issue papers that formed the basis of agency discussions with stakeholders, the public, and other partners. Department staff regularly briefed and held work session discussions with the Commission.

The Commission was instrumental in guiding development of the public involvement plan and helped agency staff reach a wide audience early in the process. During the first phase of IWRS development, the Department and its partner agencies hosted community meetings (“open house events”) throughout the state and conducted several dozen briefings or workshops with stakeholder organizations. Staff also developed and solicited public input through an online survey to ensure that those unable to participate at face-to-face meetings or briefings had an opportunity to weigh in and shape the IWRS.

The 2012 IWRS offered several opportunities for public comment. A public email distribution list was used to disseminate information and solicit feedback, along with a dedicated email address to contact the IWRS Project Team, which included the Department, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and the Oregon Department of Agriculture. Both tools and a dedicated webpage are still used today to share information about implementation.

The Department also formed three advisory groups to help inform and develop the content of the IWRS: a state agency advisory group of natural resource and economic development agencies, including staff from the Governor’s office; a federal liaison group of ten different water and land management agencies in Oregon; and a policy advisory group of 18 different citizen members that met quarterly over the course of two years, providing guidance and recommendations to the IWRS Project Team.

In summary, the development of the 2012 IWRS involved extensive public outreach and stakeholder engagement, active involvement of the Commission, and valuable input from several advisory groups. The success of the IWRS can largely be attributed to the considerable involvement and input gathered from all across the state.

### **III. Oregon’s next Integrated Water Resources Strategy – 2017 Update**

The Integrated Water Resources Strategy was meant to be a living document, developed and implemented using an iterative process. The authorizing legislation requires a review and update of the IWRS every five years. The Department anticipates that the Commission will adopt the update to the IWRS in late 2017.

Since the 2012 adoption, new data and reports have been developed, some of which will inform the 2017 Update, whereas others are direct work products stemming from the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The Department has been busy on a number of projects that support the IWRS, and will work closely with our partner agencies to capture and share new data and information.

It is important to recognize that the goals and objectives of the 2012 IWRS, including the recommended actions, were designed with a 50-year horizon in mind. The recommendations in the current IWRS are still very relevant today and do not require changes or modifications to further implementation.

The Department is proposing to keep the goals, objectives, and guiding principles largely intact. For the 2017 Update, the Department intends to focus our energy on reporting progress toward implementation, exploring a few key topic areas that require further attention or resources, and identifying recommended actions that will be the priority for implementation over the next five years.

In regards to the key topic areas, preparing for extreme events (such as drought, floods, and earthquakes) and adapting to climate change are important issues facing Oregon that should be better reflected in the next iteration of the IWRS. This summer, Governor Kate Brown directed the Department and its partner agencies to further address climate-related risks and to build drought resiliency into the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

#### **IV. 2017 Update: Organization, Process, and Timeline**

As previously mentioned, the Commission has provided valuable input on the public involvement process and stakeholder engagement over the last several years.

To launch the 2017 Update process, the Department is seeking feedback from the Commission on the following recommendations from staff:

1. **Form a sub-committee of the Water Resources Commission.**  
The sub-committee would meet in between regularly scheduled Commission meetings to help guide the 2017 Update process.
2. **Convene an Advisory Group.**  
This group would function similar to the former Policy Advisory Group, meeting 3-4 times in 2016, and possibly once in 2017.
3. **Solicit public input in early 2016.**  
The Department plans to conduct an online survey to seek initial feedback from the public. The Department is also considering hosting listening sessions in 3-4 locations, similar to the Open House events in 2010.

4. Continue to provide updates on progress during regular Commission meetings. Staff can share initial input gathered from public meetings, the online survey, and other face-to-face meetings with stakeholders. The August 2016 Commission meeting is a joint meeting with the Environmental Quality Commission, which presents a unique opportunity to share and discuss the 2017 Update with Commission members.

## **V. Next Steps**

If the Commission chooses to form a sub-committee, staff will schedule a follow-up meeting or call to further discuss the work plan for the 2017 IWRS Update.

The Commission is responsible for reviewing and adopting the 2017 IWRS Update. The Department anticipates an adoption date in late 2017. The Commission must give notice to the Environmental Quality Commission, the Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife prior to adoption of the update. Revisions of the IWRS will take effect upon the Water Resources Commission's adoption of the 2017 IWRS Update by reference in rule.

Alyssa Mucken  
503-986-0911