



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Water Resources Department

North Mall Office Building  
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A  
Salem, OR 97301-1271  
503-986-0900  
FAX 503-986-0904

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Steven Parrett, Planning Coordinator  
Harmony Burright, Planning Coordinator

SUBJECT: Agenda Item F, August 17, 2017  
Water Resources Commission Meeting

### Update on Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning

#### I. Introduction

This informational report provides an update on place-based integrated water resources planning, including the use of program funds, planning group progress, key outcomes, lessons learned, and challenges. Conveners from several of the planning groups will also provide updates and answer Commission questions during this agenda item.

#### II. Background

Place-based integrated water resource planning is a voluntary, locally initiated and led effort in which a balanced representation of water interests within a basin or watershed work in partnership with the state to understand their instream and out-of-stream water needs, and identify solutions to meet those needs.

In 2015, consistent with Integrated Water Resources Strategy action 9A, the Legislature passed SB 266, authorizing the Department to make grants and provide technical assistance to communities interested in undertaking place-based planning. The Legislature allocated \$750,000 to be distributed to communities testing the Draft Place-Based Planning Guidelines (Guidelines).

#### III. Use of Program Funds

As shown in Table 1, in February 2016, the Commission approved grant funding totaling \$657,000 to four place-based planning groups (see the February 2016 Agenda Item E staff report), leaving \$93,000 of the \$750,000 in reserve.

**Table 1. Place-Based Planning Group Funding Awards**

Planning Area	Funding Requested	Funding Authorized
Upper Grande Ronde	\$197,000	\$197,000 (Full Fund)
Lower John Day	\$190,000	\$190,000 (Full Fund)
Mid-Coast	\$330,300	\$135,000 (Partial Fund)
Malheur Lake	\$205,500	\$135,000 (Partial Fund)
Totals	<b>\$892,500</b>	<b>\$657,000</b>

Funding awarded to the planning groups is being spent on facilitation, technical support, project coordination, and partner capacity. To date, the Department has reimbursed the grantees a total of \$161,141 of the \$657,000 authorized. Through the grant solicitation process, the Department suggested a minimum of 25 percent cash or in-kind match. Thus far, match has been greater than 50 percent, largely from donated time, plus some funds provided by consultants and private foundations.

In August of 2016, the Commission authorized the Department to expend the \$93,000 of reserve funds to: 1) provide additional financial assistance to the partially funded pilots; 2) engage statewide collaboration and conflict resolution experts or develop other resources that assist all four pilot areas; and 3) assist in funding a workshop in spring 2017. These are described further in the August 2016 Agenda Item M staff report.

The \$93,000 of reserve funds are being used for the purposes authorized by the Commission in August of 2016, as shown in Table 2. To date, a total of \$35,000 has been obligated to the activities listed in Table 2 that support the pilots. The remainder (\$57,000) is still reserved to support the current pilots but has not been allocated to any one of the three uses identified above.

**Table 2. Use of Reserve Funds**

<b>Reserve Fund Purpose</b>	<b>Partner Organization</b>	<b>Funding Agreement</b>	<b>Products Received to Date (Attachments 3 through 5)</b>
Water Planning Workshop	Sustainable Northwest	\$5,000	Bend Event Summary Report
Convener Support	Association of Oregon Counties (AOC)	Up to \$18,000	AOC Needs Assessment
Collaboration Training	PSU National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC)	Up to \$12,000	NPCC Collaborative Training Agenda for Grande Ronde Place-Based Water Planning

**IV. Place-Based Planning Groups – Overview and Updates**

Each of the four planning groups have successfully completed Planning Step 1 – *Build a collaborative and inclusive process*. Following the Guidelines, each convener is working to sustain a process reflective of their place and responsive to their partners. The conveners initially conducted extensive outreach efforts to gain participation from a broad and balanced representation of interests and procured facilitators and technical consultants to help undertake the planning effort. All of the groups are currently working through Planning Step 2 – *To develop a shared understanding of their water resources*. Attachment 1 is a handout providing a more detailed update on planning group activities.

The Department has been an active partner in implementing place-based planning at the local level, but has also been working to support the program as a whole. Key outcomes from Planning Step 1 are described below.

## V. Key Outcomes to Date

While place-based planning will ultimately result in an Integrated Water Resources Plan for each place, the benefits of place-based planning extend beyond the document itself. This program aims to help communities create and sustain a collaborative problem-solving framework and process around water issues. The following key outcomes have already been realized:

- a) Guiding documents - The planning groups have developed documents to structure and guide the overall planning process including: a governance agreement using consensus-based decision making, a work plan for completing planning steps 2-5, and a communication and outreach plan to maintain an open and transparent public process.
- b) New partnerships - The planning groups and the Department are forming new partnerships at the local level and at the state level. For instance, a collaborative water planning support team is available for the planning groups through Sustainable Northwest, NPCC, and AOC. Relationships are also developing with a number of other potential funders.
- c) Access to data and information - Planning groups are gaining greater access to data and information through partner presentations, improved on-line resources, and agency technical assistance. As planning partners, agencies are helping communities understand how this information can be best used for local planning efforts.
- d) A collaborative culture - A culture of collaborative problem solving around water issues is emerging through the planning process. Diverse water interests are talking to each other at meetings, gaining a shared understanding of water issues, and having positive dialogue.
- e) Sustained community engagement - The planning groups have sustained high meeting turnout and community engagement for over a year. People see the importance of the place-based water planning efforts and value the opportunity to shape a sustainable water future for their communities. This process also provides the Department another venue to engage in meaningful conversations with community members about the current state and future vision for water resources in their place.
- f) Support from state and federal agencies - Agency partners are very engaged. In particular, the core state agencies charged with implementing the IWRS – the Oregon Departments of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and Agriculture (ODA) – have been very helpful and committed to the place-based planning groups. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board and federal partners have also demonstrated interest and a willingness to help.

## VI. Lessons Learned or Confirmed

Since this program is in the pilot phase, the Department is actively identifying lessons and best practices that can inform program development.

- a) A flexible framework is appropriate - It is important to develop and sustain a planning framework that is adaptive to fit various basins and circumstances. The Department purposely selected four planning groups for the pilot phase with a diversity of water settings, community histories, conveners, and planning approaches. The Draft Planning Guidelines are a good, flexible foundation.
- b) Additional guidance and tools are needed - The Guidelines are very helpful in describing what should happen during the 5-step planning process. The planning groups requested further guidance on how to accomplish the work and the Department is providing additional guidance and clarification where it is most helpful. For example, the Department responded to questions on its roles and responsibilities in place-based planning. The Department worked with the planning groups to understand their needs and then coordinated internally in order to develop a memo on the Department's roles and responsibilities in place-based planning. Attachment 2 provides a copy of that memo.
- c) A pre-planning assessment phase may be needed - A new preliminary step could involve a situational assessment with partner interviews to better understand the overall context and drivers for place-based planning, as well as document existing sources of conflict and cooperation. These preliminary actions are considered a best practice by organizations that specialize in collaboration and consensus-building. Conveners could also benefit from an initial desktop review of available information.
- d) Collaboration is a key to success - Respected conveners and professional facilitators are important to solicit open dialogue and build trust early in the planning process. A positive spirit of collaboration will be critical to the long-term success and implementation of the place-based plans. Early events such as a field tour and/or a group dinner that reduce stress and open communication can be valuable - even though they take time.

## **VII. Challenges**

Place-based planning faces four primary challenges: time, money, partner capacity, and technical assistance.

- a) Time - The legislative authority for the Department to make grants sunsets on June 30, 2019, three years after the four groups started planning. This is a tight timeline to work through all five planning steps and create a collaboratively-developed integrated water resource plan. Collaboration takes time. If no significant obstacles arise, only one or two planning groups are likely to develop a plan in three years. The Malheur Lake and Mid-Coast groups anticipate the planning process will take 4 to 5 years.

- b) Money - The grant awards were based on the amounts requested in the Letters of Interest, which was the best estimate of the planning process cost at that time. The Upper Grande Ronde and Lower John Day were provided the full amounts requested, but this may prove inadequate. If conflicts arise, or technical studies are needed during the planning process to support decision-making, financial resources will be limited. The partially funded groups, Malheur Lake and the Mid-Coast, will require significant additional time and resources to complete the planning process.
- c) Partner Capacity - The capacity of core state agencies ODFW, DEQ, and ODA to help directly with place-based planning is limited. Staff in each agency have a demanding portfolio of important work and are stretched thin, but have still given valuable and crucial support to place-based planning. The Department is grateful for this inter-agency partnership. Limited partner capacity at the local level is also a challenge.
- d) Technical Assistance - Within the Department, technical staff are stretched thin and data sets require some processing to be useful for community planning efforts. The Department's five divisions are working together to more effectively provide the planning groups with technical assistance. The Department is also seeking partnerships with other entities that can provide technical assistance.

## **VIII. Summary**

Since the Commission authorized grants to the four planning groups in February of 2016, people who are passionate about the water resources in the planning regions have been forming community partnerships and working together to build a better water future. The Department is invested in making this program succeed and looks forward to feedback and input from the Commission on program design and implementation.

### Attachments:

1. Place-Based Planning Update Handout
2. Memorandum on Department Roles in Place-Based Planning
3. Bend Event Summary Report
4. AOC Needs Assessment
5. NPCC Collaboration Training Agenda

Harmony Burright  
503-986-0913

Steven Parrett  
503-986-0914