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**Date:** July 20, 2023

**To:** Environmental Quality Commission

**From:** Leah Feldon, Director

**Subject:** Item J: The Inter-Agency Project to Update the Statewide Integrated Water Resources Strategy (Informational)  
July 20, 2023, EQC meeting

**Why this is important** The Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD) is leading an inter-agency project team, which includes DEQ, to update the 2017 Statewide Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) with input from community groups, interested parties, tribes, WRD and other natural resource agency staff, and agency boards and commissions. The Oregon Secretary of State’s 2023 Advisory Report on Water Security (Attachment A) provides recommendations that include a need for closer coordination between state water agencies. The strategy is one framework around which that coordination should occur.

**Prior EQC involvement** The EQC provided input to and support of the 2012 and 2017 editions of the strategy prior to their adoption by the Oregon Water Resources Commission. Those editions have guided some legislative proposals for budget and staffing resources to help support IWRS-related work such as place-based integrated water resources planning, water right application reviews, participation on review teams for investment in water supply studies and implementation projects, and involvement in the drought readiness council.

**Background** Oregon’s IWRS charts a long-term course to meet the state’s instream and out-of-stream water needs. The 2017 strategy included a suite of recommended actions to improve our understanding of water resources, to define our collective water needs – including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs – and to address the coming pressures that may affect these resources and needs.

As indicated in ORS 536.220, the strategy is to be updated every five years. To serve as a foundation for the update, agencies compiled a summary of accomplishments since 2017 in the form of the 2017-2022 IWRS Progress Report which summarizes the work of 14 state agencies toward implementation. The report (Attachment B) highlights several projects or project types where multiple agencies have collaborated to advance water issues. These categories included:

- Data Collection
- Oregon Water Data Portal
- Drought Planning and Support
- Conservation and Ecological Restoration
- Place-Based Planning
- Pesticide Stewardship Partnership.

Of the 51 IWRS recommended actions, DEQ made progress on 17 actions in the past five years relevant to its mission and goals. Three key accomplishments of DEQ are highlighted in the report:

- Lead the Oregon Water Data Portal Project to co-locate water data from several agencies.
- Conducted rulemaking to incorporate new eligible Clean Water State Revolving Fund borrowers for the purpose of lending to address failing onsite septic systems.
- Designated Waldo and Crater Lake as Outstanding Resource Waters, providing additional protections.

The report only addressed state agency actions; however, several recommended actions can be implemented by a wider variety of entities such as public-private partnerships. A specific challenge for the next strategy will be to convey the opportunity for participation by these entities in a clear and actionable way.

The IWRS update is being led by the Water Resource's Department's Crystal Grinnell with the help of an interagency project team consisting of staff from WRD, DEQ, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Land Conservation and Development. DEQ is represented by Rian Hooff, Steve Parrett, and Cole Hendrickson. The broader interagency Water Core Team, consisting of 14 state agencies, is also providing guidance and input.

The State of Oregon values comprehensive input on updating the IWRS. Feedback from a variety of perspectives will be incorporated. Because the strategy is only updated every five years, the State wanted to engage with as many individuals and groups as possible throughout Oregon. The presentation will outline how the WRD has been gathering feedback, what the preliminary feedback has been, and when WRD anticipates finalizing the updated strategy.

WRD hired Oregon's Kitchen Table to provide public outreach and engagement support for the IWRS update. In 2023 OKT facilitated seven in-person community conversations, accompanied by the interagency team as follows:

- Seaside – May 11
- Hermiston – May 16
- John Day – May 17
- Roseburg – May 23
- Corvallis – May 24
- Madras – June 7
- Ontario – June 8

One virtual community conversation was held on May 31 to hear from those unable to attend, or not located near, an in-person conversation. In addition to the public meetings noted above, OKT is supporting culturally specific and other community listening events throughout Oregon. These take a variety of forms, often led by a



WRD would like to hear from the commission about their perspectives on the IWRS update process.

**Key issues** The IWRS update generally has broad support from people across Oregon, so the update itself is unlikely to be controversial or contentious. DEQ staff will help WRD draft the IWRS update and actively participate on the inter-agency project team. If adopted, the updated IWRS can guide future policy and budget requests and drive DEQ’s work consistent with its mission.

**EQC involvement** WRD would like support and commitment for the updated IWRS from state agencies who will have a significant role in its future implementation. Therefore, it may be prudent for WRD to return and present the draft or the final draft strategy to the commission prior to adoption by the Water Resources Commission in early 2024.

**Supporting materials** A. [SOS Water Security Advisory Report 2023](#)  
B. [IWRS Progress Report 2017-2022](#)

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