

State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

Memorandum

Date: Jan. 23, 2012

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Dick Pedersen, Director

Subject: Agenda item C, Informational item: Oregon's Integrated Water Resource Strategy
Feb. 16-17, 2012, EQC meeting

Purpose of item The Water Resources Commission seeks EQC's review, feedback and endorsement of Oregon's first Integrated Water Resources Strategy and the December 2011 Discussion Draft of the strategy.

Background In 2009, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 3369, directing the Oregon Water Resources Department to develop a statewide, Integrated Water Resources Strategy to help Oregon better understand and meet its future water quantity, water quality and ecosystem needs, while taking into account coming pressures such as population growth, changes to land use, and future climate conditions.

Although the Oregon Water Resources Department is responsible for developing the strategy, DEQ, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Agriculture are key partners named in statute. Oregon's tribes, along with public and private sector stakeholders, also have an important voice in this process, as do other natural resource agencies at the state and federal levels. The directors of the four agencies convened a project team of senior staff members and formed three advisory groups to help with various technical and policy components: an 18-member citizen policy advisory group, an 18-member agency advisory group comprised of state agency staff, and a federal liaison group consisting of nine federal natural resource agencies.

Project timeline

Phase I: Setting the Stage (2009)	Phase II: Identifying Water Resource Needs (Early 2010)	Phase III: Developing Recommended Actions (2010-2011)	Phase IV: Producing Oregon's 1 st Integrated Water Resources Strategy (2012)	Phase V: Implementation and Evaluation (2012-17)

Strategy content The focus during this three-year project has been developing recommended actions to help Oregon better understand and meet its water needs. A December 2011 Discussion Draft outlines the vision, goals, objectives and principles to guide the strategy. It identifies a number of critical issues for the state's water future and offers recommended actions in 12 categories:

- Understanding water resources/supplies/institutions
- Understanding Oregon's out-of-stream needs
- Understanding Oregon's instream needs
- The water and energy nexus
- Climate change
- The water and land use nexus
- Water-related infrastructure
- Education and outreach
- Funding
- Place-based approaches
- Water resource development
- Public health and ecosystem health

**EQC
involvement**

The Water Resources Commission will notify and seek endorsement from other boards and commissions, inviting one final round of comment before closing public comment on March 15. The Water Resources Commission is responsible for adopting a final version during 2012. Following review and adoption by the Water Resources Commission, the strategy will be distributed to the Oregon Legislature in preparation for the 2013 Legislative Session. Many of the operational details related to the strategy, including setting timelines, identifying costs, and determining staffing needs, will occur during the course of preparations for the 2013 Legislative Session.

**Public
involvement
and
resources**

The public has played a prominent role in the development of this strategy, participating in 11 open houses throughout the state, and providing public comment through letters, electronic means and face-to-face meetings during various stages of the project.

The project website is the best resource for additional public involvement. The site has the December 2011 Discussion Draft and other project information, including issue papers, a three-year work plan, public comments received thus far, maps, and visual/audio presentations, such as recent legislative hearings and the 2009 State-Tribal Water Forum. Material can be found on Water Resource Department's website's home page. People can receive email updates through a project mailing list, and can provide comments or feedback.

Next steps

Producing Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy is an iterative process. Successfully meeting Oregon's water needs will mean constantly asking "what if" questions and preparing to adapt to changing circumstances and environments. The implementation process will include monitoring the implementation of recommended actions, a commitment to resolving conflicts that arise during the course of implementation, providing feedback on any successes or shortcomings and evolving or adapting to new information or resources. As the state learns lessons from the first round of implementation, the strategy can be adjusted as

needed through formal adoption every five years.

Attachments

A. Strategy framework

**Online
resources**

1. Water Resources Department web page: www.wrd.state.or.us
2. Strategy project web page:
http://www.wrd.state.or.us/OWRD/LAW/Integrated_Water_Supply_Strategy.shtml
3. Project mailing list: <http://listsmart.osl.state.or.us/mailman/listinfo/iwrs/>
4. Project inquiries and comments: waterstrategy@wrд.state.or.us

Information provided by the Oregon Water Resources Department

Project Manager, Brenda Bateman
brenda.o.bateman@state.or.us
503-986-0879

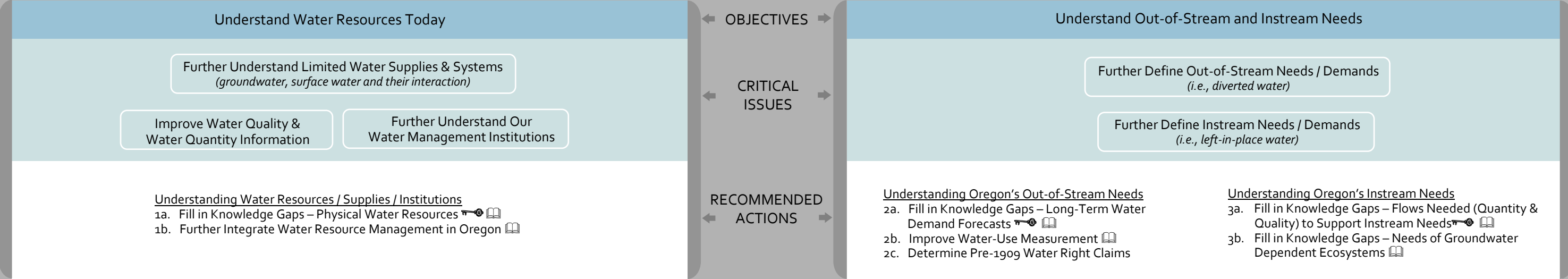
Policy Coordinator, Alyssa Mucken
alyssa.m.mucken@state.or.us
503-986-0911

Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy Framework



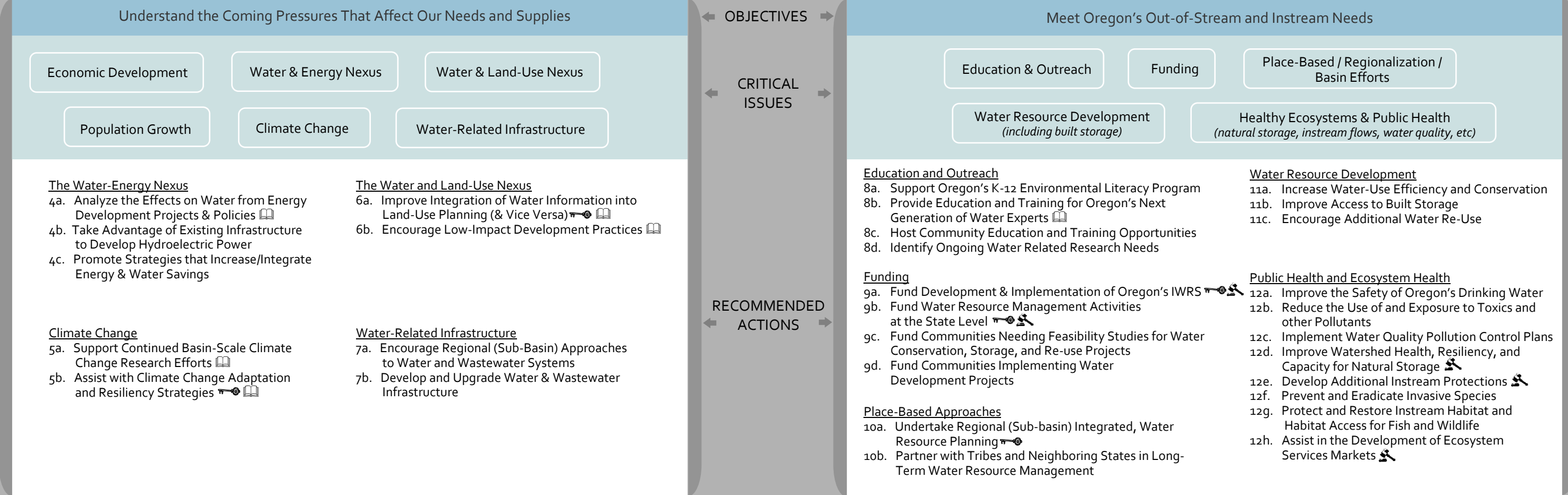
Goal 1: Improve Our Understanding of Oregon's Water Resources

Goal 1 (continued)



Goal 1 (continued)

Goal 2: Meet Oregon's Water Resource Needs



THE COMMISSION’S VISION FOR THE STRATEGY

A statewide integrated water resources strategy will bring various sectors and interests together to work toward the common purpose of maintaining healthy water resources to meet the needs of Oregonians and Oregon’s environment for generations to come.

THE POLICY ADVISORY GROUP’S VISION FOR THE STRATEGY

Everywhere in our State, we see healthy waters, able to sustain a healthy economy, environment, and cultures & communities.
Healthy waters...are abundant and clean. A healthy economy...is a diverse and balanced economy, nurturing and employing the State’s natural resources and human capital to meet evolving local and global needs, including a desirable quality of life in urban and rural areas. A healthy environment...includes fully functioning ecosystems, including headwaters, river systems, wetlands, forests, floodplains, estuaries, and aquifers. Healthy cultures and communities... depend on adequate and reliable water supplies to sustain public health, safety, nourishment, recreation, sport, and other quality of life needs.

PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE STRATEGY

Accountable and Enforceable Actions: Ensure that actions comply with existing water laws and policies. Actions should include better measurement and enforcement tools to ensure desired results.

Balance: The Strategy must balance current and future instream and out-of-stream needs supplied by all water systems (above ground and below ground). Actions should consider and balance tradeoffs between ecosystem benefits and traditional management of water supplies.

Collaboration: Support formation of regional, coordinated, and collaborative partnerships that include representatives of all levels of government, private and non-profit sectors, tribes, stakeholders, and the public. Collaborate in ways that help agencies cut across silos.

Conflict Resolution: Be cognizant of and work to address longstanding conflicts.

Facilitation by the State: The State should provide direction and maintain authority for local planning and implementation. Where appropriate, the State sets the framework, provides tools, and defines the direction.

Incentives: Where appropriate, utilize incentive-based approaches. These could be funding, technical assistance, partnerships / shared resources, regulatory flexibility, or other incentives.

Implementation: Actions should empower Oregonians to implement local solutions; recognize regional differences, while supporting the statewide strategy and resources. Take into account the success of existing plans, tools, data, and programs; do not lose commonsense approach; develop actions that are measurable, attainable, and effective.

Interconnection/Integration: Recognize that many actions (e.g. land-use actions) in some way affect water resources (quality and/or quantity); recognize the relationship between water quantity and water quality; integrate participation of agencies and parties.

Public Process: Employ an open, transparent process that fosters public participation and supports social equity, fairness, and environmental justice. Advocate for all Oregonians.

Reasonable Cost: Weigh the cost of an approach with its benefits to determine whether one approach is better than another, or whether an approach is worth pursuing at all. Actions should focus on reducing the costs of delivering services to the state’s residents, without neglecting social and environmental costs.

Science-based, Flexible Approaches: Base decisions on best available science and local input. Employ an iterative process that includes” lessons learned” from the previous round. Establish a policy framework that is flexible. Build in mechanisms that allow for learning, adaptation, and innovative ideas or approaches.

Streamlining: Streamline processes without circumventing the law or cutting corners. Avoid recommendations that are overly complicated, legalistic, or administrative.

Sustainability: Ensure that actions sustain water resources by balancing the needs of Oregon’s environment, economy, and communities.

IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

An iterative process will help us evaluate whether the recommended actions meet the goals and objectives defined above. The process will include monitoring the implementation of recommended actions, a commitment to resolving conflicts that arise during the course of implementation, providing feedback on any successes or shortcomings, and evolving or adapting to new information or resources. As we learn lessons from the first round of implementation, we can adjust the Strategy as needed through formal adoption every five years.