



Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning

Frequently Asked Questions



Help us build a bank of FAQs – email questions to placebasedplanning@wrd.state.or.us.

Q: How does place-based planning fit into Oregon’s long-term water strategy?

A: Oregon’s 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) provides a roadmap for Oregon to understand and meet its instream and out-of-stream needs, taking into account water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs. IWRS recommended action 9A calls for the Water Resources Department (OWRD) to help communities undertake integrated water resources planning at the local level (“place-based planning”). Place-based planning provides an opportunity for communities to develop plans to meet instream and out-of-stream water needs. These plans may provide information for future updates to the IWRS.

Q: What is place-based planning?

A: Place-based integrated water resources planning provides a framework for communities to collaboratively identify their instream and out-of-stream water resources needs, and then identify solutions and projects that will help them meet those needs now and into the future. It is a voluntary, non-regulatory, locally-initiated and led planning effort that brings together a broad representation of interests to work in partnership with OWRD. The process includes five steps described in the Draft 2015 Place-Based Planning Guidelines.

Q: What does integrated mean?

A: An integrated approach considers in-stream and out-of-stream water resources needs, taking into account water quantity, water quality and ecosystem needs. An integrated approach brings people, information and ideas together to tackle big picture issues and find ways to effectively coordinate efforts. See the [IWRS](#) and [Draft 2015 Place-Based Planning Guidelines](#) for more information.

Q: What do you mean by a balanced representation of water interests?

A: Generally speaking, a place-based planning group should have representatives from each of the different water uses in their area of interest, including instream and out-of-of stream uses. The planning process and final plan should be broadly supported. More information can be found in the [Draft 2015 Place-Based Planning Guidelines](#).

Q: What are the planning steps in the 2015 Draft Place-Based Planning Guidelines?

A: The planning steps in the Draft Guidelines are:

- *Planning Step 1* – Build a collaborative and inclusive process.
- *Planning Step 2* – Understand current water resources and identify gaps in understanding.
- *Planning Step 3* – Analyze current and future needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream needs).
- *Planning Step 4* – Identify and prioritize strategic solutions to meet water needs.
- *Planning Step 5* – Develop and approve a local integrated water resources plan.

Q: Do place-based plans replace previous planning efforts?

A: No, place-based plans should build upon and integrate existing information and plans whenever possible and should strive to not duplicate efforts. The planning process can help fill in gaps where needed, provide focus and coordination between partners, and help a community clearly communicate needs and solutions.

Q: Can place-based planning change existing water rights or state water policy?

A: No, place-based plans cannot infringe on or jeopardize existing water rights. Place-based plans can identify policy barriers and where policy changes may be needed to successfully implement broadly supported actions, but they do not have the force of law and cannot change policy.

OWRD Place-Based Planning – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is place-based planning required to seek feasibility or implementation funds from OWRD?

A: No, a place-based plan is not a prerequisite for OWRD’s other funding programs.

Q: What are the benefits of place-based planning?

A: Place-based planning can help individuals in a watershed, basin or groundwater area:

- Foster cooperative working relationships between different water interests;
- Create a shared understanding and vision for water resources in a place;
- Compile and share existing information;
- Identify gaps in understanding and how to fill those gaps;
- Integrate and coordinate related plans and efforts;
- Identify innovative solutions that no one group may have thought of alone;
- Leverage resources from a broad network of partners; and
- Develop more competitive proposals for local, state, and federal funding opportunities.

Q: What resources are available to pilot place-based planning?

A: In 2015, the Legislature provided resources to pilot place-based planning in several locations around the state. Specifically, OWRD received funding to provide grants to communities to undertake place-based planning, as well as additional staff to provide coordination and technical assistance.

Q: What was the process to identify pilots?

A: A solicitation process in 2015 resulted in over 80 inquiries, with OWRD receiving 16 letters of interest requesting more than \$3.6 million. Letters of interest were reviewed and evaluated by an inter-agency team with representatives from nine state agencies. OWRD developed recommendations for the Water Resources Commission, which made a decision in February 2016.

Q: What pilot areas were selected?

A: The place-based planning pilots, which are recipients of grants, are Union County in the Upper Grande Ronde Sub-Basin, the John Day Partnership in the Lower John Day Sub-Basin, the City of Newport in the Mid-Coast Basin and the Harney County Watershed Council in the Malheur Lake Basin (see handout for more information). The grant awards total \$657,000.

Q: What are the expectations for the pilots?

A: Each pilot will partner with OWRD to follow the Draft 2015 Place-Based Planning Guidelines. During the pilot phase, each of these communities will work with a balanced representation of interests to test different approaches, identify best practices and lessons learned, and help OWRD improve the planning process.

Q: How will OWRD be involved during the planning process?

A: OWRD will be a partner in each of the planning processes. OWRD has two planning coordinators who will work closely with the four pilots through the planning steps.

Q: What will the final plan look like and what will be the required content?

A: OWRD staff are developing a template for the final plan, along with additional tools and resources to help planning groups develop their plans. Local plans should provide a broadly supported roadmap that communities use to prioritize and implement local solutions in a coordinated manner.

Q: How can I learn more about place-based planning?

A: Visit the place-based planning web page at: <http://bit.ly/owrdplanning> or send an email to placebasedplanning@wrdr.state.or.us.