

# Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning Stakeholder Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2018

Coe Kerr Building - Cove Ascension School

1104 Church Street, Cove, OR

**ATTENDANCE:** Kyle Carpenter, Brett Moore, Jed Hassinger, Tim Bailey, John Dadoly, Brian McDowell, Jim Cook, Rianne BeCraft, Levi Old, Jason Spirit, Tom Demianew, Tim Crowson, Nini Valerio, Maurizio Valerio, Ken Berley, Jeff Oveson, Anton Chiono, Kim Ogren, Larry Larson, Dustin Johnson, Pat Sharp, Mary McCracken, Steve Parret, Mark Owens, Scott Hartell, Mike Burton, Debbi Bunch, Hannah Fatland, Margaret Matter, Caroline Barnes, Nikki Hendricks, Donna Beverage, Dana Kurtz, Cinda Johnston.

The Steering Committee met prior to the Stakeholder meeting at 11:00 am.

### I. Welcome

- a. Donna opened the meeting at 12:10 p.m. and brief introductions took place with participants sharing the type of water issues they have been seeing. Dana reviewed meeting guidelines and explained that this partnership is finishing step three and kicking off step four.
- b. Dana provided an overview of Place-Based planning; it is a three year, five-step planning process. New participants may sign the Governance agreement if interested.
- c. Dana stated that the September meeting included additional feedback and collaborative work on the Step 3 report. Participants shared facts they would like the Learning Partnership to know about this area: it has strong relationships, interests have made a concerted effort to collaborate over a long period of time, agriculture is the backbone of the local economy, protecting resources and improving efficiencies has been really helpful, and this rural group has a lot of knowledge and expertise.
- d. There were no additional comments or objections to the proposed meeting minutes for September 19, 2018 meeting.
- e. Donna shared results from the Oregon Community Foundation survey.
  - 13 UGRRW participants
  - 75% indicated that partners agree with key drivers for water planning and trust the process in neutral, inclusive, and transparent
  - 11 people stated that they have contributed to the project and indicated that reports are valuable
  - 12 people feel their organization has benefitted from being a part of the process
  - One comment indicated that they would like to hear where the County stands.

Donna stated that she is a convener for the meetings and cannot speak for the whole county. Additional feedback is appreciated and welcome.

## II. Step 4 Matrix Update

- a. Dana reviewed matrix ranking revisions: addition of a notes section that better explains categories; sub watershed rankings changed to acknowledge more critical conditions; broader point spread; addition of section for flow impacts; and addition of section for data gap impact. Hypothetical projects need to be ranked again using the revised matrix by anyone who is willing and has time.

## III. Step 4 Work Plan Introduction

- a. Dana reviewed the work plan schedule. The scheduled field trip around the valley will include discussions about vulnerabilities and critical issues in each sub watershed. Two meetings will likely take place in January, where volunteers will make five to ten minute presentations. Working groups will discuss critical issues and solutions. The technical committee will then use feedback and recommendations to draft the Step 4 report. Work will conclude for the summer in June and start up again in August, which will include drafting an action plan with solution packages and funding strategies.
- b. Dana reviewed potential Step 4 solution strategies: efficiency and conservation measures; built and natural storage; water right transfers and rotation agreements; nontraditional water supply techniques; infrastructure; instream flow protections; watershed and habitat restoration; water quality protections; monitoring; water markets; and mitigation data gaps collections.

## IV. Step 3 Report

- a. Dana stated that there were a lot of comments on the Step 3 report, and of those, five main points resulted in revisions:
  - SSIU current and future estimates: this group does not have industrial representation so there isn't any real information on this. For current demand, it is assumed that SSIU were using half of the total water rights for one eight-hour shift. Future estimates assume growth and use of full water rights for two eight-hour shifts.
  - Supply data correction: this was not a revision, just a corrected mistake due to renumbering sub watersheds.
  - Vulnerability summaries: sub watersheds were ranked by vulnerabilities, i.e. demand, quality, and supply. Also included is the magnitude of impact: if a watershed runs out of water, how big of a deal is that? If the watershed has ground water problems, is it a big deal if there are no municipalities in that area?
  - ODFW is revising their memo and should be available in December. At the last meeting, Rachel talked about a plan to develop a memo regarding the uncertainty of groundwater. There has been a lot of discussion about it and, although much more information is needed, this group will continue to use the estimates. Rachel is collecting feedback on that memo.
- b. OWRD Groundwater Memo discussion: No comments were offered and there was no discussion.
- c. Groups were formed to rank individual sub watersheds.
  - Sub Watershed 1 Scott reported that there was a suggestion to have individual aerial maps of sub watershed basins. This group felt that numbers in the water data table needed to be looked at. Depending on the perspective, it looked like there is a 90% efficiency rate with surface water in the sub watershed, but that didn't seem

- right. There was also a suggestion to apply zoning build outs to the maps. The resources and demands are known, but it would be helpful to look at land use and zoning scenarios to see how private lands could be divided up, potentially resulting in additional water supply demand.
- Sub Watershed 2 Steve reported that this group agreed with the rankings assigned to this sub watershed. Water temperature is a critical issue: although it looks like there is plenty of total annual water, late season shows a deficit. Unlike the tributaries, the main stems are affected by everything upriver from it. Instream water rights on Clark, Indian, Mill, and Willow Creeks is another critical issue. The main stem has stream flow issues late summer. Many of the solutions, particularly for the main stem, will need to be done in sub watersheds above it.
  - Sub Watershed 3 Jed reported that this group agreed with the rankings assigned to this area. The annual basin is plentiful, but there is a deficit in July. It is unknown how sustainable values are considering the City of Island City is in this sub watershed. Water quality is a high vulnerability. There are a lot of springs that run down Mt. Emily that are soaked up in a natural reservoir and current land use does not protect that.
  - Sub Watershed 4 Tim reported that the supply data is not current, but it is good enough to do some planning. The Step 2 report acknowledges that the data is old and it seems intuitive that things have changed from the 1950s to the 1980s. Forest management and wildfire risk was not addressed in terms of municipal water use; that could create a more vulnerable situation if the city wants to use water from the reservoir.
  - Sub Watershed 5 Jeff reported that agriculture risk and magnitude was rated low. It was unknown if the magnitude reported was for this specific sub basin, or if it was defined as the entire Grande Ronde basin. They concluded that if the magnitude is confined to this sub watershed, then it could be a really high magnitude for one owner. Because of that, they changed the risk from low to moderate. Municipal use risk and magnitude was ranked low since no one lives in the area. This group agreed with in-stream rankings of high risk and low magnitude. It is supposed to be home to endangered aquatic species that are not getting enough water, so it may not be big enough for that magnitude. While the magnitude of impacts were low, the risk was high as there was a high level of certainty that impacts would occur. Climate change has to be taken into account, but it is probably impacted by the water quality, resulting in a higher water quality than any of the other categories.
  - Sub Watershed 6 Kyle reported that this sub watershed has the lowest rankings in every category so any solution would be helpful. There's not a lot of solutions to propose that haven't already been done. A solution for storage needs and instream would help with irrigation. No changes were suggested for magnitudes or vulnerabilities.
  - Sub Watershed 7 Donna reported that this group agreed with the rankings. There is nothing to slow the water down some parts of the year and then when the water is low, it is hard for fish. There are some very high risk areas in this sub watershed. There is no municipal use since Union is on a well. More gauging stations are needed. It would be good to have charts illustrating differences throughout the year for each sub watershed, and it would also be helpful to have newer data. There is new data

being collected, but it is not necessarily shared. A few things are not reflected well in the report: seasonal variations and water rights that are not drawn during the summer due to stream flow. It is difficult to know if the development of the chart was based on rights or usage. Some ranchers are leasing water rights through June 15; charts should reflect that and illustrate the difference in July when it is bad. The minimum amount of in stream water is unknown but also needs to be reflected.

- Sub Watershed 8 Brett reported that only 120 acres are being serviced for agriculture in this sub watershed. The group agreed that the impact was low and the vulnerability may need to be changed from low to moderate. There are not enough water rights to cover the acreage. The municipal data had a few holes. The ballast table shows that 10 acre feet of water is not supported; this is an error that needs to be revisited because there's probably a deficit of ground water for those purposes in the area. The main use of groundwater is for homes and there is no ground water use for agricultural purposes. On that basis, the group ranked municipal as low vulnerability and low magnitude impact. There were questions about in-stream water; the vulnerabilities were identified as high, but the watershed has one of the best fisheries around. They were not sure about language identifying water quality and quantity as great for in-stream except for the low slow season of the year; that may not be indicative of the entire year. This group ranked the vulnerability as high and the magnitude impact as low, but noted that there are trade-offs. Do we want to identify the magnitude impacts with respect to trade-offs when we have a high quality watershed - is that magnitude impact really low? If we are going to trade something from this watershed and reduce the quality, is it that really a low magnitude impact, or is that something we want to make sure we protect? They were not sure if they agreed with it being a low magnitude impact, even though by definition there isn't a lot of concern reported. If there is high water quality in the watershed, then that is a high value. The magnitude of impact associated with lowering that quality could be a huge magnitude impact. They were not sure how to find the magnitude impact for those two items and thought that there could be some associated risks. This is probably set up to prove current deficits and, on the same basis, instead of pursuing projects we need to make sure that there is a system to protect what is currently functioning. There should be a way to identify that. The question remains: should the magnitude of impact be based on trade-offs or should there be other considerations? Water quality listed as high quality and is also identified as having seasonal temperature issues seems contradictory.

Dana asked that anyone interested in helping with more technical work to contact her. More information could be added to the sub watershed maps since the information is available, but it may be difficult to fit more information on them.

## **V. Conclusion**

- a. Next meeting is January 16, 2019, 12-2PM, at the OSU Extension Office
- b. No other comments were offer

The meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cinda Johnston  
Union County Planning Department Specialist