

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

Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2019

OSU Extension Office

10507 N. McAlister Road, La Grande, OR

ATTENDANCE: Tim Bailey, Doc Butcher, Shad Hattan, Jed Hassinger, Aaron Bleisner, Rodger Huffman, Brett Rudd, Mike Burton, Matt Insko, Adrian Averett, Tim Wallender, Scott Hartell, Kathleen Cathey, Susie Snyder, Tony Malmberg, Larry Larson, Steve Perrett, Anton Chiono, Donna Beverage, via phone: Rachel Lovellford, via phone: Margaret Matter, Dana Kurtz.

The Steering Committee met prior to the Stakeholder meeting at 3:00PM.

I. Welcome

- a. Donna opened the meeting and brief introductions took place. Ideas were shared to encourage more engagement from the community and it was noted that some areas of representation could be brought to the table: more farmers, recreational users, Bureau of Recreation, Ag Extension Office, Water Resources Commissioner, Industrial representatives, and U.S. Forest Service.
- b. Dana reviewed meeting guidelines and provided an overview of Place-based planning. The governance agreement is available to anyone interested in signing and becoming a voting member. This partnership is moving into Step 4.
- c. Dana stated that at the November meeting, the Ford Family Foundation Learning Partnership visited and the meeting was followed by a field trip around the valley looking at subwatersheds and identifying critical issues.
- d. No comments were received regarding the October meeting minutes.

II. Miscellaneous Updates

- a. Groundwater Memo: Rachel provided information about the groundwater memo that included an update to an earlier version that was provided last October. It is a living document; comments and edits are welcome at any time. They felt that it was important to include a better summary of how to highlight management options. Main changes include an explanation of additional groundwater terms, added clarification around Miocene volcanics (Columbia and Powder River basalt groups). The Powder River volcanic group was added because it can be a source of water for some users in the basin. The key point is that some background information is known up front. A very simplified scenario showing how recharge available storage and discharge, all mediated by geology impact, ground water supply is for pumping. Pumping may reduce flows and hydraulically connected streams and rivers. Highlighted existing data shows water levels are declining in both major aquifer systems; they are most notably in the volcanic aquifer systems. They would be interested in providing a presentation regarding effective groundwater mitigation if the group is interested. Without more water level data, both spatially and over time, we are prevented from having a robust understanding of the aquifers.

Dana asked the group if they would be interested in hearing a presentation about groundwater mitigation in terms of a solution category. She suggested that groundwater mitigation may be a potential solution.

- b. Climate Change Memo: Dana stated that a group at the University of Oregon have been looking at data in the Grande Ronde basin and downscaling a regional model for the group. The initial memo that was drafted is pretty scientific and not so much action oriented; there are no results or conclusion section that would identify the top five strategies. That is being reworked to make it more practical for implementing solutions.
- c. Step 3 Report Update: Dana stated that comments from the last meeting were incorporated in the Step 3 report. The draft critical issues comments are tentatively incorporated; these are the things that stand out in each area. Another option would be finalize the Step 3 report without it and use it as the starting point for Step 4 planning. The draft critical issues was distributed for everyone's review.

III. Step 4 Solutions Overview

- a. Steve Perrett shared that Water Resources has several funding programs, including feasibility study grants, water project grants, and water project loans; the next deadline is in April. If interested, contact Becky Williams.

Steve presented information about water transaction tools and the benefits of water markets, water rights transfers and instream leases, and allocation of conserved water. See attachment for full presentation.

Anton presented additional information about Allocation of Conserved Water (ACW) Projects. Applications must be submitted in five years, after which time savings cannot be claimed and opportunities to increase efficiencies are gone. Contact Aton, Steve, or Tony for more information.

Tony presented information about full season and split season instream leasing.
(discussion inaudible)

IV. Step 4 Discussion

- a. The group ranked hypothetical projects using the revised matrix.
- b. The meeting was adjourned before Step 3 and 4 Critical Issues could be discussed.

V. Conclusion

- a. Next meeting is February 13, 2019, 4-6PM, at the OSU Extension Office
- b. Comments

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cinda Johnston
Union County Planning Department Specialist