

Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership
Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning
Stakeholder Meeting No. 30

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2020

Conference Call

ATTENDANCE:

Adrienne Averett, Steve Parrett, Donna Beverage, Tim Wallender, Dana Kurtz, Shad Hatten, Rodger Huffman, Brett Moore, Margaret Matter, Jed Hassinger, Darrin Walenta, Tim Bailey, Tony Malmberg, Jim Webster, Anton Chiono, Gretchen Sausen, Tom Demianew

I. WELCOME

a. Introductions

b. Recap of February 26, 2020 Stakeholder meeting

- i. Presentations on above ground storage permitting requirements and underground storage methods
- ii. Introduced issues, goals, and objectives

c. Purpose of tonight's meeting

- i. Discuss and approve issues, goals, and objectives
- ii. Discuss and approve strategy ranking

d. Meeting guidelines

Keep yourself on mute unless you're speaking; time will be given to pause and wait for new comments. The chat function is also available. Since several feedback opportunities have been available, when you raise a concern tonight please indicate whether it is a major concern or something to expand on.

When the document comes to a vote, a "yes" vote will be saying that you approve the document going forward using these issues, goals, and objectives (each one will list what we share in those reports). The document was emailed to everyone and has been changed since the first email with comments and suggestions received. "All goals are aspirational" statement added from suggestion – it is a voluntary partnership, some of these goals we don't even know if we can meet them, but putting them out to try.

II. Goals, Objectives, and Strategies Discussion (1 hour)

a. Go over feedback on handout (emailed to group)

b. Discuss goals and objectives (consensus vote to approve goals and objective if the group is ready)

i. Issue/Goal 1: Eliminate Surface Water Deficit

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Rodger requested better definition of "Administrative Action;" it is concerning that it is wide open. Administrative Action could unknowingly take away what's currently out there and may make it look like we are supporting something like that. Dana explained that this is the full list of AA, and rather than putting them all in parentheses they were listed in nonregulatory actions so that we understand that all of these actions would be voluntary. Someone else asked is using nonregulatory and administrative was oxymoron. Steve explained that the central premise of approach is that the actions the community wants to take are voluntary, nonregulatory. This about this group trying to work together and manage water better. Dana stated that both viewpoints (nonregulated/voluntary) would be noted.

ii. Issue/Goal 2: Improve Water Quality

There was some discussion about the importance of including "year round."

Tim W. said that the verbiage of ecological flows does not represent everyone in the group. Dana noted that the document will include commercial under industrial and agriculture.

Tim B. noted that this objective is focused on data gaps, irrespective of what those gaps are.

Dana stated that the feedback received was that there are data gaps, but those for agriculture and municipal are different and smaller more manageable gaps. We knew instream was the worst and we wanted to clean that up. We could also add a statement to include them all. A comment was made during the call that they want instream called out specifically.

Anton explained that the thinking was to call out the data gap that was particularly significant. There has been a decrease shift since 1977 and it's important to know our water supply, then we know how much excess there is.

Margaret said the importance of supply is not as big as a data gap. A limiting factor is what the supply will be someday; we need to work with what we have. Jed said that the data gap is pretty big itself, but he's not sure how that plays in here.

An unknown caller made the following statement: We get caught up on a lot of emphasis on reliable sources of water and we are finding out that they are not as reliable as we thought. You might be able to estimate, but we don't have them anymore and won't have them in the future. It is adapting with what we have and will require flexibility in what we do in the future. There have only been a few data collection campaigns to estimate what is

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needed for natural resources. Can also agree with Jed that supply side is a huge data gap, too. We have called these out: we have some big data gaps and we need to get to them right away.

Tim W. and Rodger said that agriculture and municipal have data gap that need to be addressed. Anton agreed that made sense. The problem needs to be well defined and we were hoping to call that out. The intent was not to diminish other data gaps. Tim W. said there isn't a reason to shine light on one thing; we all know what the problem is, there is only so much water to go around. When asked is this was something he could live with, Tim W. said sure. Rodger said he could kind of understand the issue as far as water quality, the temp standard, and we know that nothing we do will meet that at that time of year. He is not sure there is much advantage to putting more eggs in that basket by highlighting it, but could live with it if everyone else is OK with it. Tony M also said he was good with the change.

iii. Issue/Goal 3: Reduce Groundwater Declines and Supply Uncertainty

Someone suggested to add natural hazards, climate change, flooding and drought in National Forests to the Public Land Practices strategy.

iv. Issue/Goal 4: Natural Hazards/Climate Change

Dana stated that a lot of feedback was received about Objective 4.3 during the first round of revisions.

- c. Discuss feedback on strategy rankings (consensus vote to approve if the group is ready)

III. Next Steps

- a. If the items in II are accomplished tonight, next meeting we will discuss geographic locations that strategies apply to, and potentially have a presentation on how reserved water rights in Catherine Creek could be utilized.
- b. We hope to send a draft of the Step 4 report out for your review (will contain action plans)
- c. Then we will begin on Step 5 – which summarizes steps 1-4 and creates an implementation plan. Step 5 guidance will be sent out after this meeting. We will generally focus on top strategies, with opportunistic work occurring for all strategies.

IV. Conclusion

- a. Next meeting is May 20, 2020 (4-6) Misener Room/Conference Call
- b. Other Comments
Dana asked if anyone felt more discussion was needed before moving to a vote. A “yes” vote would be to approve, a “no” vote would be to keep working on it.

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Rodger suggested that since we are not talking about law changes, language in Objective 1.1. could be changed to “nonregulatory” because we are not talking about Administrative Rule, which would become law. Anton concurred; it may not be the best terminology for what was intended and we can come up with a better term for what was meant by “Administrative Actions.” Tony noted that a water lease is an Administrative Action, and the Watermaster regulates water by priority; is this saying that this would not be available? Shad stated that we are not talking about fundamentally changing water law. Tony asked for clarification: would this proposed change affect any of these? Dana stated that this would be saying that we are not proposing new regulations. Rodger further clarified that this plan is not a blueprint asking Water Resources to change the laws. Gretchen said that “nonregulatory” would be incorrect; could the Administrative Action list be used as a reference instead of defining what doesn’t belong? Dana suggested updating it to say that this plan is intended to be voluntary and not affect water rights or change Administrative law. Rodger felt it would be hard to come up with accurate wording that everyone would agree with in this time period; anything added would apply to the whole document. He suggested a reference to definitions so that there is no confusion. Donna concurred.

Tim W. noted that ‘plan development’ was not a part of the action plan. Dana suggested that it may be better to add plan development to another area.

Tim W. questioned the use of “anthropogenic” in the document; we cannot make things perfect if they never were. What is the basis for saying things are caused by human interaction when we don’t have data for reference? Brett stated that the purpose of the objective is that we will improve water quality as much as we can based on how much humans have caused it to degrade. We don’t want to be responsible for quality if it was already bad, our goal is not to fix Mother Nature, but to repair what we screwed up. Tim W, clarified that he had wildfire, landslides, and avalanches in mind; how is that addressed by using “anthropogenic”? Tony agreed that the idea is to focus on the goal, not the problem; what behavioral changes can we make to create improvements instead what may have caused it in the past? Dana stated that those do affect all these things and protect us from having to solve for things like that; she suggested taking note of those thoughts and discuss in Step 4 plan to make sure it is clear. Rodger asked if it would be better to remove “anthropogenic” and define it as human caused. Tim said that is redundant; nonhuman elements need to be accounted for. Dana stated that the focus is on what part of that we can control; we don’t want to be responsible for those not caused by human.

Tony suggested changing language to “control good water quality.” Tim added: “improving water quality, to manage water quality with tools available to the group.” Rodger supports removing “100%” unless humans are gone. There was consensus to update language to “improve: instead of “manage.”

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Dana asked for feedback regarding voting and the suggestion of allowing votes via email. Tim asked if votes should be included from those who are not currently on the phone. Donna said yes, all eligible voters should have the opportunity regardless of currently being present. Dana suggested that anyone not present and eligible to vote could be contacted for their vote. Tim B. noted that this meeting format was different than past meetings where people could attend in person; there may be some people who are not present because of that and we would want them included. He suggested sending revised draft to the group and allow vote by email. Dana agreed that a vote via email could be held, and changes to the document made available prior to the vote. No one voiced opposition to this suggestion.

Dana reviewed the Strategies from the December (2019) meeting, which was revised with feedback from January and February (2020).

Tom asked if more confusion is being created by putting definitions on lists. Tim B. was not sure he would support that; he would rather have list types that came from brainstorming, giving continuity from others. Tom explained that listing once makes it very clean, but he would be fine leaving it as is.

Dana will send the updated Step 4 Report to everyone via email and will also individually email to everyone who is eligible to vote.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cinda Johnston
Union County Planning Department Specialist

UGRRW Issues, Goals, Objectives, Strategies

The following information summarizes the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed (UGRRW) Place-Based Planning Partnership's current understanding of the issues facing our Watershed, broad goals to address these issues, measurable objectives to meet our goals, and specific strategies that align with these objectives. Strategies will be described in greater detail in draft action plans to be included in the Step 4 Report. All information in this document will be incorporated into the Step 4 Report, once consensus is reached. These objectives are not presented in order of priority. These strategies should be considered potential strategies.

All goals are aspirational. The Partnership recognizes that achieving each goal completely (ie: eliminating 100 percent of water quality violations and water quantity deficits) may not be possible.

Issue/Goal 1 Eliminate Surface Water Deficit – The largest issue facing the UGRRW is that surface water is limited in summer and fall when demand is the highest for instream and agricultural needs. A surplus of surface water occurs on an annual basis, with most of that surplus occurring in winter and spring. The goal is to eliminate 100 percent of the seasonal surface water deficits in each subwatershed, through our own work or support of other organizations. It is anticipated that our efforts would balance these deficits with winter/spring in-channel uses.

Objective 1.1 By 2040, reduce current surface water deficit as much as possible, per the outcomes of feasibility studies, and the total subwatershed deficits listed below. The total quantity achieved will be based on the outcome of the feasibility studies.

- Subwatershed 1: September through November - 7,940 acre-feet (AF) deficit
- Subwatershed 2: July through November - 10,182 AF deficit
- Subwatershed 3: July through November - 10,129 AF deficit
- Subwatershed 4: July through November - 1,297 AF deficit
- Subwatershed 5: July through November - 13,098 AF deficit
- Subwatershed 6: June through October - 58,183 AF deficit
- Subwatershed 7: July through September - 7,843 AF deficit
- Subwatershed 8: July through November - 510 AF deficit

Strategies

- Storage, Built Storage (O=Off-Channel, U=Underground, C=On-Channel)
- Agricultural Practices
- Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring
- Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management
- Public Land Practices
- Outreach and Education
- Infrastructure/Land Modification
- Administrative Actions
- Municipal Practices

Objective 1.2 Begin work immediately to fill data gaps identified in Step 2 and 3 reports, particularly with respect to instream demand and ecological flow needs, which currently are based on incomplete and outdated information. By 2040, fill data gaps identified in Step 2 and 3 reports. These studies are anticipated to investigate ecological flows needed in the winter and spring.

Strategies

- Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring (feasibility studies to define ecological flows within impacted reaches)

Issue/Goal 2 Improve Water Quality - Water quality concerns are present in each of the eight subwatersheds. The concerns are predominantly high temperatures, low DO, and insufficient flow. The goal is to eliminate 100 percent of the anthropogenic elements of water quality issues in each subwatershed, through our own work or support of other organizations.

Objective 2.1 By 2040, reduce each water quality issue as much as possible per the outcomes of feasibility studies addressing the parameters of concern as described below. Support the work of others in addressing additional water quality parameters beyond what was identified by ODEQ may also be addressed including toxic chemicals, pharmaceuticals, heavy metals etc.

- Subwatershed 1: Temperature, pH, DO, algae
- Subwatershed 2: Temperature, pH, DO, algae, *E. Coli*
- Subwatershed 3: Temperature, pH, algae
- Subwatershed 4: Temperature, pH
- Subwatershed 5: Temperature, pH
- Subwatershed 6: Temperature, pH, algae, *E. Coli*
- Subwatershed 7: Temperature, pH, DO, algae
- Subwatershed 8: Temperature

Strategies

- Storage, Built Storage (O=Off-Channel, U=Underground, C=On-Channel)
- Agricultural Practices
- Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring
- Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management
- Public Land Practices
- Outreach and Education
- Infrastructure/Land Modification
- Municipal Practices

Objective 2.2 By 2040, fill data gaps identified in Step 2 and 3 reports with respect to water quality including temperature and other parameters important for beneficial uses.

Strategies

- Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring

Issue/Goal 3 Reduce Groundwater Declines and Supply Uncertainty - The UGRRW lacks sufficient groundwater monitoring wells, long-term trend data, and pumping data to evaluate groundwater supply sustainability and support strategic groundwater resource planning. The goal is to improve understanding of groundwater supply and develop and implement a plan to ensure that groundwater aquifer levels do not decline.

Objective 3.1 Complete a groundwater study by 2035 through partnership with OWRD and USGS. Through data collection and analysis, understand the characteristics of the UGRRW aquifers and determine the rate of change in level, if any, for each aquifer.

Strategies

- Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring (work with OWRD to scope and fund study)

Objective 3.2 Once the system is understood, implement a plan to ensure that the withdrawals from each aquifer do not exceed the safe yield.

Strategies

- Storage, Built Storage (O=Off-Channel, U=Underground, C=On-Channel)
- Agricultural Practices
- Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management
- Public Land Practices
- Outreach and Education
- Infrastructure/Land Modification
- Administrative Actions (ie: voluntary water bank, work with OWRD on voluntary water management plans)
- Municipal Practices

Issue/Goal 4 Natural Hazards/Climate Change –Natural Hazards like flooding, fire, and drought impact water supply in the UGRRW frequently, and we lack an integrated plan to mitigate, respond and adapt to the impact these events have on water supply. The goal is to develop an integrated plan to reduce or mitigate the impact of these events. Also, climate change models have projected temperature increases and stream flow changes by 2068. The goal is to create an adaptive management plan that allows for all water uses (municipal, ecological, and agricultural) to be whole.

Objective 4.1 By 2030, develop a Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan to reduce or mitigate the impact of flooding, fire and drought.

Strategies

- Administrative Actions (Plan Development)

Objective 4.2 By 2040, implement mitigation measures identified in the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan developed above.

Strategies

- Storage, Built Storage (O=Off-Channel, U=Underground, C=On-Channel)
- Agricultural Practices
- Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring
- Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management
- Public Land Practices
- Outreach and Education
- Infrastructure/Land Modification
- Administrative Actions (Plan development)
- Municipal Practices

Objective 4.3 By 2030, create an adaptive management protocol to apply new climate change data to goals. The protocol will codify a method to modify goals based on new climate change data at regular intervals. This adaptive management protocol will also be used to evaluate our progress in accomplishing our objectives. It will also provide a means for feedback to determine whether we need to change our approach. This objective will be applied to the goals listed in this document. The Partnership recognizes the uncertainty inherent in models and will seek to avoid identifying targets based on models that cannot be validated with empirical data.

Strategies

- Administrative Actions (plan development)

Strategies in Order from the December Meeting and Feedback in January Meeting

1. *All strategies are retained and will be applied to different subwatersheds to solve the different critical issues.*
2. *Top 5 strategies will be the focus of the Step 5 action plan – all will be discussed.*
 1. Storage - Built Storage - Aboveground-Off Channel evaluated in feasibility studies as the first choice; Built Storage - Aboveground-On-Channel will be evaluated as the second choice.
 2. Land Management – Agricultural Land
 3. Data Collection & Monitoring & Research
 4. Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management
 5. Land Management – Public Land

6. Infrastructure/Land Modification
7. Administrative Actions
8. Land Management – Municipal Land
9. Outreach and Education
10. Underground Storage

Table. Water Demand Vulnerabilities and Recommended Strategies by Subwatershed

Subwatershed Name	Agricultural	Municipal	Instream	Water Quality	Water Demand Strategies
1 Lookingglass Creek/Cabin Creek	Low	Low	High	High	
2 Willow Creek/Indian Creek	High	Low	High	High	
3 Lower Five Points Creek	High	Low	High	High	
4 Beaver Creek, Upper Five Points Creek	Low	Low	High	Moderate	
5 Meadow Creek, Upper Grande Ronde River	Low	Low	High	Low	
6 Ladd Creek, Lower Catherine Creek	High	Moderate	High	High	
7 Upper Catherine Creek 1	High	Low	High	Moderate	
8 Upper Catherine Creek 2	Low	Low	High	Low	

Water Demand Management Strategies

- A. Built Storage (O=Off-Channel, U=Underground, C=On-Channel)
- B. Agricultural Practices
- C. Data Collection, Research, and Monitoring
- D. Non-Structural Water Storage & Habitat Management
- E. Public Land Practices
- F. Outreach and Education
- G. Infrastructure/Land Modification
- H. Administrative Actions
- I. Municipal Practices

Quick Reference: Water Demand Management Vulnerabilities and Objectives Information from Step 3 Report

- **Area Map:** Figure 1-2 (Step 3 Report, p. 1-3)
- **Current & Future Annual Water Balance Summary by Subwatershed (Step 3 Report, Section 7.0):** Tables 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3
- **Agricultural (Step 3 Report, Section 4.0 & Appendix B):** Current (2018) estimated total agricultural water use is 211,134 AF/year (surface water and 86,832 AF/year (groundwater) using water rights; 193,725 AF/year (surface water) and 77,973 AF/year (groundwater) using estimated evapotranspiration (ET). Future (2068) estimated GIWR is 284,532 AF/year (surface water) and 114,522 AF/year (groundwater) with existing irrigation efficiency and 214,169 AF/year (surface water) and 87,396 AF/year (groundwater) under the increased efficiency scenario (per p. 4-31; Figure 4-1, Figure 4-5, Figure 4-15, Figure 4-17, App B Agriculture Water Demand Summary Table (p.246)).
 - Critical concerns and/or uncertainties = Limited testing/surface water quality data gaps, long-term surface water quantity vulnerability, future increasing gap between water quantity/quality demands and low supplies in critical periods (late summer/early fall), and future groundwater demands and sustainable yields from groundwater aquifers.
 - Critical opportunities = Increased stakeholder-agency partnerships to share data and coordinate monitoring activities, water storage infrastructure, and increased irrigation efficiency is projected to reduce overall future irrigation demands by 24 percent (range ~18-30%).
- **Municipal (Step 3 Report, Section 3.0 & Appendix A):** Total municipal demand is projected to increase from 10.3 to 22.3 total AF/year from 2018 - 2068; with SSIU demand projected to increase by a factor of 4 (3.7 TAF in 2018 to 15.0 TAF in 2068).
 - Critical concerns/uncertainties = Long-term stability/viability of groundwater aquifer system, SSIU water demand, unaccounted for water loss, aging infrastructure, lack of system redundancy, increasing water use, and drought impacts.
 - Critical opportunities = Increased cooperation between cities, additional conservation measures, voluntary rural well monitoring network, emergency inter-city mutual aid agreements, and coordinate with OWRD to address groundwater supply data gaps and improve groundwater aquifer information.
- **Instream Water Quantity and Quality (Step 3 Report, Section 5.0 & Appendix C):** Current (2018) and future (2068) instream water demand is 173,750 AF/year based on water rights only. Water flows and temperatures are the primary components of instream demand for aquatic species and other water uses. Instream water deficits occur annually and biweekly and are highest in late summer/early fall. Water quality issues associated with low flows, high water temperatures, bacteria, nutrients are a significant concern (Figure 5-3, Figure 5-4, Figure 5-5, Tables 5-8 and 5-9).
 - Critical concerns/uncertainties = ESA-listed summer steelhead, spring/summer Chinook, and bull trout survival impacts due to water quantity and quality conditions, future climate change effects on water quantity and quality, and data gaps.
 - Critical opportunities = Stream restoration actions to improve floodplain-riparian connectivity and function, forest management practices, water conservation to reduce out-of-stream use, short- and long-term voluntary cooperative agreements to increase instream flows, coordination with ODFW, ODEQ, and OWRD to improve data and characterize instream demand.
- Historic or observed regional monitoring and model data indicate declining trends in precipitation and snowpack, streamflow, and groundwater levels, and increasing trends in temperature. Future projections include increased air temperatures, reduced snowpack/shifted precipitation, and reduced summer base flows. These conditions will likely increase the gap (vulnerability) between available water supply and water resource demands during the summer, peak demand period.