

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

**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 20, 2020**  
**Conference Call**

**ATTENDANCE:** Tony Malmberg, Anton Chiono, Jed Hassinger, Margaret Matter, Tim Bailey, Steve Parrett, Nick Teague, Jesse Steele, Gretchen Sausen, Tim Wallender, Adrienne Averett, Ann Hulden, Bill Gamble, Dave Johnson, Brett Moore, and Dana Kurtz.

**I. WELCOME**

a. Introductions

Donna opened the meeting, reviewed ground rules, and provided tips to be heard and engaged during the conference call, such as identifying yourself, speaking up, and using the chat function.

b. Recap of April 15, 2020 meeting

Discussed and approved issues, goals, objectives, and strategies document. Feedback regarding virtual meeting was somewhat positive; email voting received negative feedback. She followed up with persons who voted no; they will work together to review Step 4 report and potentially make changes.

**II. STEP 4 UPDATE**

a. The Steering Committee is finalizing the draft of the report

b. Stakeholders to have draft for Review and Comment in early June

It is not action plan, but summarizes strategies. Small working groups may be developed for Step 5 so that the group will have a clearer plan before voting and timelines that were out too far in the future can be adjusted. Step 5 is where you will see the details we have been working on.

c. Plan for discussion at the June 24, 2020 meeting

**III. STEP 5 INTRODUCTION**

a. OWRD Presentation

<http://union-county.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Step5-DRAFT-Guidance.pdf>

Steve Parrett presented information about Step 5 DRAFT Guidance to the group. Draft guidelines were provided in 2015 with very little information about what was supposed to happen in Step 5. It was developed by OWRD with input from state agencies and planning group conveners. This is a pilot project and the benchmarks are fairly low; they expect to get to yes with planning groups. The purpose is to assist in drafting a plan to be recommended to OWRD during the final stages of development. State agencies would then have 60-90 to review and follow up.

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b. Discussion

The OWRD Commission will consider convener's presentation, commissioners' review of plan, recommendation of state agency review team, letters of support, and public comments. Donna asked if OWRD concerns about the Draft Plan would be made known ahead of time so that they could be resolved before last consideration; Steve said that tweaks can be made during Step 2 of the OWRD review process.

**IV. RESERVATION OF UNAPPROPRIATED WATER IN THE UPPER GRANDE RONDE BASIN – POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR MEETING FUTURE WATER SUPPLY NEEDS**

a. ODA Presentation Margaret Matter presented information to the group. We are interested in water rights that were created in 1987 with the Instream Water Right Act; at the time there weren't a lot of discussion on reservations. Entities working with state agencies could request reservations, water be withdrawn and withheld for future economic opportunities. Reservations are not water rights, they are like a virtual savings account. When approved, the water is then appropriated and becomes a water right, then becoming unavailable for other uses. They do come with a priority date; for the UGRR, it is November 6, 1992. The reservations are not reserved forever, just in 20-year terms; the UGRR term expired and was recently renewed. The basin program intent is to ensure surface water is available to meet future expected needs. The approach is to design storage for multiple benefits and evaluate the risks. Examples of purposes listed in the UGRR basin programs are, but not limited to: irrigation, power development, municipal, recreation, instream flows. Often, there is unappropriated water in the fall/winter, indicating a potential need for storage. Potential options include Aquifer Storage and Recovery, Artificial Groundwater Recharge, landscape storage/engineered wetlands, recall/reserved flowed in summer months, groundwater banking, mitigating emergency water quality issues, and diverting when water is available.

b. Discussion

Tony: Could you explain engineered wetlands, and how would that relate to connecting rivers to floodplains? Margaret: Bureau of Reclamation did some of these, and many have been done since then: enlarge existing wetlands, add a controlled outlet to it (could increase water level and allow water to infiltrate), and incorporate with water treatment.

Tim B: Clarified that there is not an instream water right on UGRR on Spring Creek, but there is a minimum stream flow established by Oregon Administrative Rule that has to be met at the Perry gauge (information can be found on the OWR website). The permit and rule for minimum stream flows are managed at a particular site, which is different from an instream water right, which is administered through a reach. Monthly values would have to be met and maintained at the Perry gauge. The minimum flows were established by OAR, then implemented as instream water rights. Steve added that minimum flow rules for instream purposes were probably

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converted to instream water rights with a 1960-70s priority date; he is curious why these didn't show up in the tables, this needs to be looked into.

Tim W: Hydrograph study indicates that by 2080, the shift as a result of climate change means that the water will be more readily available at the peak flow up to four months earlier. This should speak to the group about having stored water in during peak flows, perhaps February, so it can be released at a later time when it is needed.

Tony: If the climate is shifting to an earlier point in the year, wouldn't the growing season also shift? Margaret thought that would be true; there have been some thoughts that at some point daylight hours would become a limiting factor and affect how warm temperatures would be, potentially making it unsuitable to grow crops. Dave noted that if growing season shifts, water rights are still set by dates; this would affect ag producers' access to water.

**V. CONCLUSION**

a. Next Meeting is June 24, 2020 (4-6) Misener Room/ Conference Call

b. Other Comments

Dana will send Steve's presentation about Step 5 guidance to everyone. It would be helpful for the next meeting to be in person to better facilitate voting. Locations that would allow for social distancing requirements are being researched; meeting location or conference call details will be sent via email.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cinda Johnston  
Union County Planning Department Specialist