

Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Early Implementation Work Group Meeting

Date: Tuesday, March 12, 2024, 9:00 am – 10:30 am

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Conveners: Adam Denlinger (Seal Rock Water District)

Facilitators: Suzanne de Szoeka and Leah Cogan (GSI Water Solutions, Inc.)

Participants:

- Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District (SRWD)
- Andrea Sumerau – Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Billie Jo Smith – Lincoln County Water Systems Alliance
- Bill Montgomery - MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member
- Janna Stevens – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
- Leah Cogan – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
- Margaret Treadwell – McKenzie River Trust
- Mark River – Weyerhaeuser
- Mikaela Clarke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
- Paul Engelmeyer – MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member
- Steve Parrett – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
- Suzanne de Szoeka – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
- Tyler Clouse – Lincoln County SWCD

<p><u>Questions/Comments To Address</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on question about TMDLs 	<p><u>Decisions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will take recommendation from work group to coordinating committee for a consensus vote on action prioritization • Group will prioritize supporting existing projects, once gaps are identified, GSI will bring gaps to the group and the group will decide which are priorities to be supported by the Partnership.
<p><u>GSI Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send actions related to TMDLs so people can provide public comment on OWRDs IWRS (through April 5) • Look into locations for the May Partnership meeting with Andrea • Adjust the May meeting agenda to combine funding & activities discussion 	<p><u>Partnership Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide comments when GSI sends materials out

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 9:00 am

Prioritization recommendation discussion:

- Paul: I thought we discussed the need to do a TMDL, and out of that would come a list of actions to bring the system into compliance.
 - Suzanne: We reached out to DEQ about this, and they mentioned a Yaquina TMDL. I was approaching it as an early implementation action vs. part of the prioritization process. For the consensus decision, we are asking about the A, B, or C prioritization scheme.
 - Paul: We're doing something that's going to happen under a Clean Water Act implementation strategy, and that to me should be driving this prioritization discussion.
 - Leah: There are a few high-priority actions that are related to TMDLs. Things like source water protection, and water quality monitoring.
 - Paul: It would be helpful for DEQ and us to just say: engage and initiate a Siletz TMDL process ASAP. DEQ has to do a prioritization for the 112,000 stream miles that are already impaired. Not all streams have such community engagement. I want to know how DEQ prioritizes which TMDL is next.
 - Suzanne: the actions that capture this are prioritized.
 - Adam: Paul is right. Going back through the prioritization list, many elements of the TMDLs are embedded in this process. Recognizing the TMDL alone has a huge overlap with what we're looking at here, I don't see any reason why we shouldn't just recognize the TMDLs directly in this process.
 - Steve: I reached out to David Waltz recently and he can come present on a TMDL update, and they're creating a 2-page brochure. I don't think the Action Plan has a TMDL-specific action, but many actions will help achieve the goals of the TMDL. It might be a worthwhile exercise to create a TMDL bundle as part of our work plans. I will be meeting with others at DEQ to discuss this. I will bring up the concerns about the TMDL & its implementation and how it aligns with this group. I will make the point that the Partnership would prioritize the Siletz TMDL getting developed.
 - Billie Jo: We can't change the action descriptions. We want to find out what projects leads have and are planning to do that implement our actions. A Siletz TMDL would be a project that implements an action(s) with DEQ as the lead. We don't need to change our actions to include the TMDL, we just need to support it as a project (and it will include many actions). As a group, we will look at our resources that can help support that.
 - Paul: I'm totally on board with that, but we don't have any statement about coordinating a TMDL action with that effort and I think that should be in there.
 - Suzanne: All these actions' descriptions in the Action Plan were approved through a lengthy process so we're not going to change the descriptions, but when we go to implement the actions, that's where we can call out the TMDLs. We will try to make it clearer how we can do that as we move along in this meeting. We could move this discussion to later in the agenda or could bring it to the coordinating committee.
 - Leah: I can put together a bundle that describes actions related to the TMDL. OWRD has the draft IWRS out for public comment. Several of those strategies are related to TMDLs, water quality, and place-based planning. They are accepting public comments until April 5. That would be a good opportunity to mention it as a public comment.

- Tyler: The District is coordinating with ODA and DEQ for planning and implementation of the Yaquina TMDL. I will have more information on when the meeting will happen in the area. It was planned for March/April
- Paul: Sounds like we're moving forward but I don't want to miss the timeline for a TMDL that is complementary to what we're doing.
- **Decision: work group will take prioritization recommendation to coordinating committee**

Smartsheets project management tool next steps

- Coordinating committee approved purchase. Proposed next steps: fill out the template with projects list, bring it to work group once it's populated. Might make a form that people could enter in data to the spreadsheet. Think about what kinds of graphs and statistics we could make.
- Caylin's comments: GSI will create a smartsheet framework for tracking & gathering initiatives called out in the Action Plan, facilitate population through discussions, meetings etc. Resource for enhanced coordination, optimizing phasing, increasing funding opportunities. Maintenance could be taken over by future coordinator of the Partnership.

Reaching out to partners discussion

- GSI is tracking current projects and which leads and participants in the Action Plan are working on them and which actions they implement. GSI is reaching out to organizations to see what they would be interested in leading and how they would like to work with the Partnership.
 - Many state agencies were identified for a lot of actions, so GSI is figuring out which are priorities and identify gaps.
- Janna: ODFW is hiring right now and will have more resources available. Having a meeting with manager next week about some of those actions you described.
- Billie Jo: Identifying actions that partners are already doing is good. We need to identify what actual projects they're doing and what actions are included in those. That would be a different chart but we could correlate the two. Big projects are happening with state agencies and we need to understand those so that we can support them.
 - Leah: that's a great use of the smartsheets because then we can track what are the projects, who's doing them, what actions they include, and any metrics we'd want to include like how many acres are being restored, etc.
- Suzanne: We talked about two routes of implementation for support. One is where people have projects and can go through this process and get Partnership support. Another is where there are no leads real projects for an action and the Partnership could do other things to support them.

Bundling actions discussion

- Leah: GSI bundled category A and some B into different categories. There were additional priority group A standalone actions. The bundles are to facilitate getting people to work together on similar projects. We are open to shifting bundles, adding a TMDL bundle, etc.
- Bill: I really like the bundling idea! efficient!
- Paul: This is really impressive. I'm working on a Climate Adaptation discussion, which is an interagency document. It could be complementary to this effort. I will send it to you. We will have people from the interagency team give a talk, we can try to record that talk.

- Leah: climate change is related to several actions, so that would be a great connection to have.
- Adam: I think it's stunningly elegant. Can you explain the non-bundled actions?
 - Leah: We could just work on those actions individually. When we're reaching out to entities, we can include actions in bundles if they're already working on other ones in the bundle. With individual non-bundled actions, we will still move them ahead and ask entities about them.

Workplans next steps discussion

- Discussion question: Does the group want GSI to start building out work plans that potentially don't have any entities working on them?
- A good example of a potential work plan is from the Integrated Place-Based Planning from OWRD. It would include:
 - Who would be involved
 - What action is about
 - Examples of activities or projects
 - Resources/services (existing studies, links to funding, etc.)
 - People could use a one-page document with a step-by-step process described for those actions that don't have any projects identified yet with a lead.
- Billie Jo: I think we will get to this point, but I don't think we're there yet. I think we need to know more about the projects that organizations are already doing and support that now. All the organizations we work with are already doing a bunch of stuff. After we've started supporting those, we will try to get people to do these other prioritized actions. Right now, I think organizations know what they want to do and I'm sure what they're doing will fit a lot of the actions. I'd rather see GSI spend your time learning about and getting information on projects that are going on and sharing that with a background of what they're doing, actions they implement, and outcomes they're hoping for. Let's see how we can support those.
- Adam: this approach is something we could take advantage of, but remind me why.
 - Suzanne: we could build out a sheet like this for actions where there are not any leads building out a project. Then people could understand how to approach implementing the actions and what kind of outcomes the Partnership would want to see. This would be for existing actions in the Action Plan.
 - Adam: I think we want to be nimble in our approach so that if an opportunity presents itself, we have a mechanism to implement it. I agree with Billie Jo that it's not something we need to push right now but it could be a good approach.
- Bill: what Billie Jo and Adam said makes sense. However, I like this because it keeps things at the top and keeps things from lingering. We might be able to do it at the same time. Of course, projects that are ready to go would be a priority, but I like this. This should be second to the current projects but don't put it too far down.
- Leah: Once GSI understands the gaps in the projects, the GSI team could bring the gaps back to the work group and the group can decide which gaps are important to develop a work plan for. Others might be similar enough to existing projects that it wouldn't be necessary.

Upcoming full Partnership meeting

- Meeting date: May 29, 2024
- Afternoon tour from MCWCC, CTSI, and SWCD
 - Woody debris projects site
 - Lincoln SWCD water quality monitoring site
- Partnership meeting after tour starting at around 4:45 pm until 8 pm (with dinner)
 - Discuss prioritization consensus decision making, discuss background of prioritization again, discuss proposed charter updates, early implementation activities update, funding opportunities, partnership participant activities sharing, open comment time
- Tyler: Is the meeting going to be in the Siletz area or will it be back in Newport?
 - Suzanne: we're exploring having it in the Siletz, but open to feedback.
 - Tyler: tours will be in Logsdon, there's a community club there but that is pretty out there for folks so pulling it nearer to 101 would be more accessible.
- Tyler: we should have time for partners to talk about what funding resources they use regularly. Knowing who's applying for what would be helpful so we're not all applying for the same grant.
- Billie Jo: if we did it in Siletz it could help our connection with Tribes because they have a nice facility (Tribal Center), that would be very positive for our relationship with the Tribes.
- Andrea: Unfortunately, while the Tribal Community Center would be a great place to meet, it's not set up for having internet access and PowerPoints, etc. The clinic could work, it has technology, but it might not be big enough. (GSI is planning to check the building with Andrea)
- Adam: I think Tyler's idea for partners to share about funding sources is fantastic. Discussions could be about reporting requirements, how federal funding is used, etc. It could help to reach out to Business Oregon and see if they have a representative who could attend and talk about available funding through the state and/or federal government for communities like ours. The purpose is not to cover every funding opportunity but just to provide information in the handout for those attending. Hearing about challenges and successes would be good.
 - Suzanne: We could have groups create one slide each and each representative would share from their slide.
 - Tyler: The DEQ funding documents from the Drinking Water meetings might be a good handout to bring.
 - Steve: I'll be sure we bring the DEQ funding docs. We only have 20 minutes for Funding on the agenda.
- Bill: We need to find some cutting-edge speakers, who are profound and have a message that will invite people and create the energy that we need (Billie Jo, Paul, or Fran might know some people). Any speakers are good but generic PowerPoint speakers are not as effective.
 - Suzanne: GSI can look into having keynote speakers at partnership meetings. I'm not sure if there's time to get them for the May meeting but maybe the fall meeting. If it is a priority for everyone, we can look into it more. I think people are interested in the charter updates and having time to discuss projects and activities is important.
- Adam: I think the funding & activities discussion is a priority and we need to make time for that. Make sure folks know they only have 3-5 minutes. A slide deck is a great idea.
- Tyler: The funding discussion and activities sharing might go hand in hand. Could keep it a little more succinct. Combining them and having a ~3 minute session might be more valuable.

General discussion

- April meeting will be virtual
- Suzanne: Would the group be interested in having speakers come to work group meetings if we can't fit them in full meetings?
 - Bill: David Waltz is always an interesting speaker
 - Suzanne: we will look at the agenda for April and May and see if we can fit a speaker like David.

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