

Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Prioritization Project Meeting

Date: Tuesday, August 8, 2023, 9:00 am – 11:00 am

Location: Hybrid (Seal Rock District Office and Virtual)

Conveners: Adam Denlinger (Seal Rock Water District)

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

In-Person Participants:

Suzanne de Szoeki – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Leah Cogan – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Mike Broili – MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Chair

Bradley Wynn -- Seal Rock Water District

Christine Clapp – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Fran Recht – Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member

Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District, co-convenor

Bill Montgomery – Certified Water Treatment Operator, Toledo (former)

Online Participants:

Mikaela Clarke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Steve Parrett – DEQ

Clare Paul – City of Newport

David Rupp – OSU

Janna Stevens – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Water Planning Coordinator

Kimberly Wollenburg – City of Depoe Bay

Margaret Treadwell – McKenzie River Trust

Kacey Largent – USFS Siuslaw National Forest

Caylin Barter – Wild Salmon Center

Alyssa Mucken - Oregon Water Resources Department

Tyler Clouse – Lincoln SWCD

Paul Engelmeyer – land manager for Audubon and Wetlands Conservancy

<p><u>Questions/Comments To Address</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information about the Private Forest Accord: https://www.oregon.gov/odf/pages/private-forest-accord.aspx • Information about a new funding opportunity related to the Private Forest Accord: https://www.dfw.state.or.us/news/2023/08_Aug/080823.asp <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Note: the meeting described in this link has already happened, but additional meetings are scheduled</i> • TMDL DEQ follow-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Steve asked David Waltz to send an update on Mid-Coast TMDL work and will send to Suzanne and Leah for distribution to this group 	<p><u>Decisions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We want to keep instream/out-of-stream benefits as a criterion but change it to “direct” benefits and score it as a yes/no • We will change regionwide benefit and “helps implement a statewide or regional plan” to yes/no • In general, we will come back to some actions after other scoring is completed
<p><u>GSI Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post projects list/spreadsheet with a date on Partnership website even if it keeps changing. It was sent in the last email, but we will send an updated version. • Add PFA funding link to bibliography in Plan (<i>Note: It cannot be added directly to the plan, so GSI will add it to the Partnership website</i>) • Pass on info from DEQ • Provide Partnership education information for a booth (pamphlets) • Send out score sheets for Imperatives 4 & 5 • Keep working on convener description and charter 	<p><u>Partnership Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete scoring for Imperatives 4 & 5 before next meeting. At a minimum, looking through it and thinking about it will help the next meeting flow better. No need to go back and do the scoresheet for Imperatives 6 & 8.

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions, participation protocols, and guiding principles
- Review July meeting minutes
- Review criteria and scoring descriptions
- Scoring
 - Imperative 6
 - Imperative 8
- Review meeting questions, decisions, and action items

Summary:

July meeting follow-up:

- GSI has PDF of imperatives
- GSI sent out scoresheet for Imperatives 6 and 8
- GSI sent email asking if it is ok to share people's email
- GSI reached out to people who might have more expertise on today's topics

Criteria and Scoring Descriptions Discussion:

- GSI came up with descriptions for what each scoring criterion (high, medium, low) means
- Comments:
 - Thought it was difficult and time consuming, grouping multiple sites didn't make sense
- Descriptions can be adjusted
- Several criteria don't need high, medium, low but rather yes/no, such as "implements a state plan"
- Comments:
 - Regional benefit: "I'd rate most as a medium so it's not super helpful"
 - We will change regionwide benefit and "helps implement a statewide or regional plan" to yes/no
 - "I thought the scoring descriptions and criteria worked fairly well. Took me about 1.5 hours to complete the exercise."
 - "I can't imagine we'd have any actions that have regional benefits"
 - Certain plans were regionwide, but most projects aren't.
 - We should change instream/out-of-stream benefit to yes/no
 - General q: how useful is this criterion?
 - For regionwide benefit: a high score on increasing stakeholder understanding automatically made out-of-stream benefits a yes
 - Many scored a yes, so it was difficult to distinguish
- We want to keep instream/out-of-stream benefits as a criterion but change it to "direct" benefits and score it as a yes/no
 - Are instream & out-of-stream benefits always connected? Would there be a case where they are ever separate (one is low and one is high)?

Scoring discussion:

- GSI received five scoresheets ahead of time and compiled them onto one sheet to compare
- In top 10:
 - Watershed protection and restoration, drinking water protection among others
- Lower scores:
 - Outreach, things worded more vaguely, wildfire mitigation
- Note: this meeting is not practice, this is our official time for scoring actions.
- Things are probably going to change as we go along because we'll learn more, so we'll go back to the first few to confirm our scoring at the end or next meeting.
- High = substantial improvements are expected, medium = moderate improvements, low = minimal or no improvements

Scoring and Discussions for Imperative 6: Source Water Protection

****Other than Action 35, notes were not taken on every action's scores for every criterion since scores will be in the table which is more efficient. Notes were taken on discussions about criteria scoring and actions.***

Action 35: Identify, fund, and implement high-priority regional source water protection activities.

Water quantity discussion:

- The word regional is confusing because source water protection is a very localized activity. Maybe remove the word regional.
- "Finalize establishing minimum instream flows" is another part of the action. This part of it should be one of the highest priorities, especially for steelhead.
- Jones-Perry concept of source water and vegetation pattern, changing timber management regime are important to consider.
- Landscape processes are larger scale so that would make this score high
- "If protection (acquisition) leads to management practices that are better for source water quality, then I would rate this H. Are we to assume that it does?"
- "I would say Medium, because to prove any action increases water quantity will be difficult"
- Protecting cold-water refugia: Coho are coming off edges of ag land and forests, the Tribe has started to map them. That's a project that should be funded. Whether it's acquisition, easements, or management.
- "I looked at action 35 as a broad category of projects, so it's harder to score. I scored high for water quantity though because it could include projects that really benefit it."
- Alyssa: "I ranked this as low for quantity because I think of drinking water when I think of source water. The definition in the plan is very broad but not necessarily driven to improve water quantity. Might be more about quality."
- The broadness of this action may make it less useful for prioritization. It depends on what we consider a helpful quantity (1 cfs, 10 cfs, etc.). We don't want to downgrade this criterion or action, it just may need more definition. This is what is generally difficult about some of these actions and we'll just have to agree on a common interpretation of how we want to approach it and move on.

- If we look at source water protection in relation to drinking water for municipalities, the quantity would score high.
- If we look at a pie chart of where water goes, are there conservation actions on that side of the pipe. Benefits quantity on both sides.
- Protecting source water benefits watershed and increases water quantity.
- “Based on the provided definition I would rank water quantity as Low. If we include projects like enhanced metering systems that protect source waters by decreasing overall use I would rank it as High”
- **Final score: Medium**

Water quality:

- **High**

Stakeholder understanding:

- Again this is a broad action and this is hard to score. Could include working with landowners, educational opportunities.
- Doesn't seem to be the focus of the projects based on the action definition, but definitely depends on the project.
- “Low for me, "study" or "monitoring" not a component. But educational component is there, so ok w/ a medium, too.”
- The action itself is focused on high priority regional activities, like acquiring a high proportion of industrial timberlands in a particular watershed (just an example).
- **Medium**

Readiness:

- Several projects fell under this action.
- **High**

Instream/out-of-stream benefits:

- **Yes**

Regionwide benefit:

- **Yes**
- We haven't really acknowledged a natural climate solution/carbon accounting but I think it does apply here – Paul
 - In those plans, climate is acknowledged

State or Regional Plan:

- None of the plans we identified, but at least one other one
- **Yes**

Action 36: Support the reduction of nutrient, turbidity, and bacteria inputs and emerging contaminants of concern to source water from all sectors using the latest technology.

Readiness:

- GSI didn't see any projects focused on this, but this can change if anyone knows any projects.
- DEQ might be looking at this?
- How do we incorporate the TMDL for the Siletz into this process? From my perspective these things are high in terms of TMDL process readiness as it is ongoing on the Siletz– Paul. Not seeing an updated timeline on TMDL but maybe DEQ has that. Yaquina is highest priority but then Siletz.
- The SWCD's funding is focused on the Siletz that falls under this action. There will be an outreach and engagement project next year as well.
- Curious if they're updating the 303(d) list or about the TMDLs?
- **High**

Instream/out-of-stream benefits:

- **Yes**
- Directly or indirectly

Action 37: enhance contamination prevention measures for reservoirs, surface water intakes, springs, and/or wellheads.

Stakeholder:

- **Low**
- Depends on what you do

Readiness:

- No projects under this action were identified but if anyone knows one it can be updated
- Does this capture storm drains?
 - No, it's upstream
- Many actions are very similar but very specific in their scope. To me we should go after larger projects, and one like this would be an element of a larger action. – Alyssa
- **Low**

Action 38: Assess and evaluate harmful algal bloom events that affect source water to identify potential contributing sources...

Readiness:

- At least one project under this action identified
- **High**

Action 39: advocate for integrated pest management...

- "I'm hesitant about source notifications for all downstream water users, it doesn't seem feasible to notify everybody every time somebody's spraying. We should specify it is for *aerial* spraying."

Action 40: furthering a working lands concept, advocate for incentives and other strategies that promote silvicultural practices....

Readiness:

- Support for projects, but need an active lead
- **Medium**

Action 41: protect critical lands within DWSAs through acquisition, conservation easements, etc.

Readiness:

- Funding is available now, but projects still need to be identified
- Depoe Bay has an actual project!
- **High**

Scoring and Discussions for Imperative 8: Ecosystem Protection and Enhancement

See scoresheet table for final scoring.

- Several are similar, we might talk through differences. If several rank high, we can walk through them later.

Action 44: Support restoration projects that involve diverse landowners and land management goals that will achieve the greatest ecological returns on investment.

Action 45: Use established methods...and local knowledge to prioritize stream reaches for riparian buffer restoration...

Action 48: Evaluate anthropogenic sources of fine sediment...Seek funding opportunities to reduce shallow landslide risk and other sediment delivery hazards

- *Readiness:* there are a couple of road projects identified
- PFA (Private Forest Accord) updates?

Action 49: Protect beaver populations and encourage beaver pond creation, especially in critical areas with low summer flows.

- Part of any beaver project should be including education and stakeholder understanding efforts.
- With stakeholder understanding generally, we might want to focus more on data collection rather than education. We might want to edit the stakeholder definition to remove educational component because it leads to many actions scoring high.
 - Stakeholder understanding includes an educational component, data collection/monitoring, or supports a study that will help stakeholders manage water better.
 - Criterion is getting pretty broad
 - "Looking for words like "study", outreach, or monitoring in the action description. Without these words, stakeholder understanding should rank lower."
 - *Stakeholder understanding* should maybe be a medium because it's so project specific.

Action 51: Evaluate the mechanisms and conditions for restoring hyporheic flows...

- What were projects identified for Action 51?
 - Creating more gravel over bedrock, not so much creating mechanisms

- See projects list.

Action 52: Recommend limits on further appropriation of water on high priority streams where water is not available for meeting aquatic life needs.

- Is there a project identified by OWRD?

Action 54: Determine ecological flows... and identify basin-wide in-stream demands. Support development of additional instream water rights. Implement flow restoration efforts in high priority areas...

- There are two separate parts of this action
- 54 is all in one: studies, new ISWR's and flow restoration.

Action 57: Advocate for implementation of the Lincoln County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, especially as it relates to wildfire mitigation in the Mid-Coast.

- Lincoln County Hazard plan identifies a broad range of projects, so it depends on projects whether it benefits quantity and quality. There may be some that would benefit.
- Not a lot of people in the Partnership know about the plan.
- Not every municipality in Lincoln County is included in the plan. Getting in the plan helps qualify for FEMA funding. Important to consider it for future projects that other agencies may have.
- The plan does not just include wildfire. It also includes old infrastructure issues and access issues and hazards. I think we should engage in it, even though most of us don't know about it. -Paul
- The plan is a requirement of every county in the state. Lincoln County's was updated a few years ago, an update is required every 5 years.
- Disasters and hazards that occur open funding opportunities through this plan. Resources are spread across a broad scale. Important to identify projects so that they can access funding through this plan.
- There are projects in the plan, but they're not on our list.
- We should revisit the scoring for Action 57 once more people know about it.

Action 1h: Inform self-supplied and public water users and residents and businesses within public water supply areas about water supplies and water protection measures...

- *Water quality* near older houses that may have failing septic systems is an issue that may need to be a priority. We should not wait until we have a crisis in a sensitive area. – Paul
- Unfortunately, there have been no projects identified, but there is a program that replaces septic systems.
- This action relates to failing septic systems above intakes for example.

Follow-up/upcoming items:

- Financial need request:
 - \$20,000 total set aside, \$3,000 max per organization that is a Charter signatory
 - Reimbursement form with list of eligible activities
 - The group decided it needed to set aside a certain amount from the grant for this to ensure equitable distribution of funds

- Charter update:
 - Updated version to be reviewed by Coordinating Committee
 - Review by the full Partnership next meeting
 - Within next few months, signatories will decide to approve or not
 - Main changes are including language about implementing the Water Action Plan, now that it has been developed and approved
- Co-convenors:
 - We will start reaching out to potential co-convenors
- Next prioritization workgroup meeting: September 12

DRAFT