

Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Prioritization Project Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 9, 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

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

Bradley Wynn -- Seal Rock Water District

Matt Thomas - Oregon Department of Forestry

Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District, co-convenor

Christine Clapp – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Online Participants:

Ronan Igloria – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Mikaela Clarke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Alan Fujishin – Gibson Farms

Suzy Driver – Attorney for Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians

Alyssa Mucken - Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)

Billie Jo Smith – Lincoln County Water Systems Alliance

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

Caylin Barter -- Wild Salmon Center

Jeanne Anstine

<p><u>Questions/Comments To Address</u></p> <p>Q: Can the grant provide capacity for the co-convener role?</p> <p>Comment: We may want to update the Charter to exclude mentions of two co-conveners so we aren't limited to only two.</p>	<p><u>Decisions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GSI will develop an email dedicated to the request for information about projects that fit within the Water Action Plan. - GSI will develop a description of the co-convener position - Coordinating Committee will decide who to ask to be a co-convener - We are skipping the next monthly prioritization workgroup meeting because the partnership meeting is the next day. We will use some of the partnership meeting time to provide a more detailed analysis of some of the tests we've put together and bring everyone up to speed.
<p><u>GSI Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add a column to the project spreadsheet with a description of what each action is from the action plan. - Send out an email dedicated to requesting information about projects include a description of why the Partnership wants project information - Develop a co-convener position description. - Create a list of potential co-conveners. - Work with the Coordinating Committee to decide how and who should reach out to the county. - Further test the four prioritization approaches and provide a comparison. 	<p><u>Partnership Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review - Send GSI project information. Blurbs are fine. We are looking for projects that are in development, about to begin, or need funding. We want to track what's going on but also want to know if there are things you want to do that could use partnership support in some way. For example, who has AMI, and who has a DWPP could inform decisions.

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions, participation protocols, and guiding principles
- Review April meeting minutes
- April action items follow-up.
- Potential prioritization approaches discussion
- June 14 Partnership Meeting update
- Review meeting questions, decisions, and action items

Summary:

Suzanne recapped the April meeting and the group confirmed that the meeting notes were easily accessible on the partners' website. She followed up on the other GSI action items listed from the April meeting:

April Action Items Follow-up:

- Project data collection form / list
- Charter update ideas
- Co-convener
- Travel reimbursement form
- Financial need letters
- sharing the travel reimbursement form, feedback on the prioritization approach and criteria input document, drafted prioritization approach, form to fill in projects info, Charter, and proposed updates, and outlining project readiness approach as an option.

Project data collection form/ list discussion:

The group discussed the project data collection form that GSI provided. Billie Jo proposed adding a briefer to go along with the project collection form about why we want partners to submit their projects (because that's how we will prioritize and seek funding). Alan and others agreed that some partners (like the Soil and Water Conservation District) would need time to develop their project and grant plans into a spreadsheet format. Suzanne and Leah clarified that GSI will invite partners to send their project information in whatever format they have, whether that is a spreadsheet (Fran noted that nobody likely has a spreadsheet) or a blurb, etc. This makes sense given the range of types of projects (e.g., construction to in-stream needs). To answer Christine's question about how the project information spreadsheet or list will be used, Suzanne explained that we could use it to develop a database to track projects on behalf of the basin and groups in the area. This database could help the partnership and others in the area know what's going on. OWEB has a project tracking system. A Smart Sheet database is a possibility. Alyssa suggested adding a separate column to the spreadsheet with a brief description of what the action is from the action plan so people can reference that and have more context than a numbered item. (See GSI action items).

Charter update ideas:

Suzanne went over the charter update ideas and the group provided feedback. Billie Jo supports Option B the most for the charter because it doesn't go into too much detail but does suggest possibilities for support (for reference, Option B is "Support implementation of the [Integrated Water Resources] Plan, such as by assisting with coordination, suggesting funding, and sharing technical knowledge". The coordinating committee will discuss the Charter updates and decide whether to accept the document changes.

Co-convener discussion:

There is currently only one convener, Adam Denlinger, but the coordinating committee recently discussed needing additional co-conveners.

Co-convenor definitions: Caylin pointed out that the co-conveners are referenced ten times in the Charter and gave us this definition directly from the Charter: "The Co-Conveners are responsible for bringing people together to address an issue, problem or opportunity while remaining impartial to any particular outcomes. The Co-Conveners' primary responsibility is to serve as the organizer and administrator of the collaborative process, carrying out the preliminary and follow-up tasks that ensure the process progresses in a manner consistent with this Charter." Other qualities the group found valuable in a co-convenor were caring about the interests of the partnership, responsible for leading decision-making and coordination, and leading outreach opportunities.

Overall discussion points

- Several people agreed that co-conveners should be local (such as a county level organization) and not come from a water provider perspective because it's already represented.
- A new co-convenor could get involved with outreach opportunities. This would include meeting with other members of the partnership, such as county commissioners, councils, districts, and watersheds and giving the partners updates. Adam does not have the capacity for this type of work.
- Group members agreed that co-conveners should be plural, as there are several functions and broad capacity means that the role could address.
- Alan mentioned somebody who works well with our fiscal agent.
- Alyssa informed the group that OWRD is a helpful impartial perspective and could help support a co-convenor by filling in gaps in capacity but would not be suited for that primary role.
- Fran acknowledged the importance of having someone local but was concerned about the limited capacity and time of the partners to be in an administrative support role rather than support implementing projects. She thought the co-convenor should be GSI or OWRD.
- Suzanne responded by explaining that the funding does allow GSI to provide support to the partnership and does want to provide whatever support it needs. However, there is value in having multiple local entities being the overall face of the partnership. This is good for knowledge sharing and building community, but also when an organization wants funding it's good to see they have the support of a partnership led by multiple local entities.
- Billie Jo suggested a watershed council as a co-convenor to help support Adam.
 - o Mike later responded to this suggestion by informing the group that the watershed council would not be interested as they want to focus on implementing projects, but he would like to get the county involved as they support watershed restoration work.
- Adam referred to the state's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS), which looks at place-based planning as a model or approach and provides guidelines we want to continue following. We could look to those guidelines regarding a co-convenor, and we can reference that for potential projects that could benefit us. He noted that other partnerships have heavy participation from their county commissioners in their process. The county was involved in this group before the pandemic but then that changed, and we should consider getting the county involved again.
- Billie Jo suggested reaching out to County Commissioner Kaety Jacobson because she is familiar with what's going on in the mid-coast. Suzanne said GSI will create a list of potential people and feel out interest levels.
- Any new co-convenor would likely need support for additional staff capacity to take on this role.

Travel reimbursement form: please reach out and we will get that to you at the next meeting, same with financial need letters (we haven't received any but it's still open)

Process under ARPA funding feedback/discussion:

- 1. Develop process: criteria and alignment 2. Each imperative: prioritize actions and projects 3. Work plans
- Support looks like sharing expertise, connecting partners, letters of support, tracking funding, and public awareness.
- We don't have to make any decisions about a future process, but we want to distinguish how this process is different from a future process. GSI is also thinking about how the process that we are currently developing could be used in the future.
 - o Currently there is funding to support implementation, which may not be there in the future and would change the role of the partnership.
- We sent three major ideas to the group.
 - o 1. Overarching Criteria First
 - Does it meet water quantity/quality benefits? Then look at imperative specific criteria, then look at urgency and readiness.
 - Process: some actions/projects score higher, and we'd focus on those and work on work plans, hold others for future
 - Perhaps instead of breaking them out by level, we could potentially just look at all of them so that there's a total score considered, that would encapsulate partnership goals and would consider the urgency of projects altogether (Alternative to Idea 1). Based on how they're scored we would start with plans for higher scoring ones.
 - o 2. Urgency Criteria First
 - Urgency and readiness > overarching criteria > imperative-specific criteria
 - Process: if all urgency criteria are met, there's not a whole lot for the partnership to do, just light support. There are others where there'd be funding and not urgency and then we'd go into phases 2A and 2B.
 - o The prioritization process we are developing is intended to help us decide how to use ARPA funding to support implementation of projects.
 - o Leah: the goal is not to exclude any of these things, but just to decide what are we going to focus on first.
 - o 3. Champion Approach: project lead brings a project to partnership, is discussed, partnership decides how to support implementation
 - o Approach refinements:
 - Action categories: some actions have direct on-the-ground impacts, and others actions are let's do this plan or study.
 - Specific to general. Some of the actions are very specific with how they're going to do it. Some are more general and need more development. Some just need a focus area but have a goal (e.g., erosion control)
 - Action categories:
 - Foundational: plans, studies, data collection, and monitoring
 - Projects: outreach, ecological restoration, infrastructure

- Specific to general examples were shared.
- Focus areas needed: ecological restoration projects, infrastructure (e.g., water meters), monitoring (e.g., stream gages), DWPPs.

Test runs that Leah did:

- She noticed that some could argue that a given project meets a lot of criteria, and it seems a lot of projects could score high.
 - DWPP
 - Foundational category: plan
 - For Approach 1: Scored a 6 on Level 1 criteria, a 2 on Level 2 criteria, and a 2 on Level 3 criteria.
 - For Approach 2: no specific urgency > Phase 2A > continue evaluating > determine partnership support needed.
 - Silvicultural Practices
 - General not specific approaches
 - Approach 1: scored a 5 on Level 1 criteria, a 1 on Level 2 criteria, and a 0 on Level 3 criteria.
 - Approach 2: no specific urgency criteria > Phase 3 > other work plans developed first; partnership could still support specific projects just not develop a work plan.
 - Suzanne: We don't address approach 3 in these trial runs because it would be someone bringing a project. For actions that don't have actions or leads, the other ideas for prioritization approaches could be used
 - Erosion Control
 - Project needs focus areas.
 - Approach 1: scored a 3 on Level 1 criteria, a 1 on Level 2 criteria, and a 1 on Level 3 criteria.
 - Think about how we can improve this project based on the criteria score.
 - Approach 2: no specific urgency criteria, but action is ready > Phase 3 > Continue developing ideas for implementation.
 - For approach 1: instead of stopping at a certain stage, it could just incorporate that overall score.
 - Scores are dependent on specific projects.

Discussion about trial and approaches:

Suzanne posed the question: do we like the idea of a total score, or are urgency and readiness criteria a cut-off point?

- Alan: I think that a criteria ranking is a sensible approach. A mechanism to address "gaps" in the reported project portfolios will eventually be needed; stuff that's identified as important to the Plan but isn't being addressed as well by the local partners. Probably will need a champion for the neglected there.

- Christine: consider the benefits to the watershed along with urgency and readiness.
- Mike: I think it helps because it gets you at least to a starting point. But it's complex. The simpler we can make the process, the easier it is to implement.
- Christine: this funding would be well suited for outreach because it would be gone quickly with restoration projects.
- Adam: There's so much more we can do as a partnership to elevate the value of water and how we're managing it in the region. Outreach to the community could be better in the region. From the municipal perspective, I know we're not doing enough outreach. Leah brings into the conversation using a smart meter that has effectively reduced our dependency on the source of water Seal Rock Water District is using. We have grown by 21% in the past 10 years, and we have also reduced our dependency on water by 27%. Water loss can be corrected for municipalities by using a smarter meters, which benefits instream and out-of-stream needs which benefits the collective. In the criteria, there's an opportunity for how a project achieves qualification.
- Caylin: appreciate you testing through these scenarios, but I got a little lost in the phases. It would be helpful to show a summary for each imperative to see side by side what each approach scored. I like the idea of a threshold score that projects would need to hit before we dive deeper. To focus on what we identified as a high priority. There are millions of dollars flying around right now looking for good projects to land on. This prioritization process is so important, and it makes sense to get our criteria down and where a project ranks for federal (especially) funding. I had the honor to participate in the Grande Ronde Atlas project. They had a trusted group that met regularly and looked at projects brought to the atlas process, they would run it through a ranking criteria system, and which spits out a number. This helped to elevate important projects. It would be helpful to see how each ranking process shakes out for each imperative you went through.
- Suzanne: We didn't show a table because each imperative has such different actions. We could look at multiple actions within an imperative which we didn't do yet.
- Mike: take a specific project and run each through different processes, so we can compare outcomes and rank them.
- Suzanne: in total there are about 4 different approaches. Could we narrow it down to fewer?
- Mike: start with all 4, then narrow it down
- Jeanne: We still have wooden pipes in some places. We need to put # 1, in my opinion, on infrastructure.
- Suzanne: For Approach 3 (Champion): for projects that don't have project leads, what would we be looking at? Would we defer to another approach for the next step?
- Leah: some projects might need a champion to support them.
- Suzanne: do we have a preference of if there are at least some initial criteria in the plan or just the champion approach says this is in the plan and we move forward with supporting it?
- Billie Jo: Champion approach is what we're using if we have people bringing projects that they're ready to go on first, and we look at how it meets the action plan. Then we look at what still needs to be done, they ask for what support they need from partnership. If they're asking for funding from the partnership, at that point, we'd need criteria for deciding funding. There will be things in the action plan not being addressed by any projects people are ready to do. Those are what you should rank and decide which we need organizations to do and how to get them to
- Suzanne: champion: the second phase is to look at criteria.

- Caylin: I like where the discussion is going. If there's a champion approach on a project the threshold would be ok the proponent thinks it fits the action plan, bring it to whatever forum the partnership has in place, and if it passes the test, then they get partnership support, then if you want to, we can look at prioritization criteria for that project. Then we can say we have identified this action in our plan and have identified it as X priority, which helps them present the plan to external funders. The Partnership can also help with outreach. If it's a top-ranked project, that helps them to elevate their funding request for partnership to support implementation.

June 14 Meeting:

- Location: Newport
- Field trip: AM.
- Meeting time: 12:00 pm – 3:00 pm
- Rough agenda:
 - o Background
 - o Presentations
 - o Prioritization work ground activities overview
 - o Activity: identifying projects
- Next monthly prioritization workgroup meeting in July
- Mike: we can get input from the full partnership group on the prioritization approach, then when the workgroup meets again and we can come to a conclusion
- Suzanne: We could try to decide on an approach during the July Prioritization Work Group meeting.