

Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Prioritization Project Workgroup Meeting

Date: Tuesday, October 10, 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

Leah Cogan – GSI Water Solutions

Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District, co-convenor

Christine Clapp – ODFW

Bill Montgomery – MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member

Online Participants:

Billie Jo Smith – Lincoln County Water Systems Alliance

Fran Recht – Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Janna Stevens – ODFW

Olivia Jasper – ODA

Caylin Barter – Wild Salmon Center

Mark River – Hydrologist at Weyerhaeuser

Tyler Clouse – Lincoln SWCD

Mike Broili – MidCoast Watersheds Council

<p><u>Questions/Comments To Address</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<p><u>Decisions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None other than scoring sheet decisions
<p><u>GSI Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send Scoring decisions and meeting notes to the group • Look into where info is/add info on website (libraries to go to for different resources) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re: Action 1e; Suzanne will be meeting with water providers in the region and I will ask them for input on this action to help inform • Keep MCWPP home page up to date with water news; promote Conservation Consortium resources. 	<p><u>Partnership Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through scoring prior to Oct. 31 meeting if possible • Contact Suzanne about reimbursement or co-convenor if interested.

Next prioritization workgroup meeting: Oct. 31

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions, participation protocols, and guiding principles
- Review September meeting minutes
- Review input and scoring together
 - Imperative 5
 - Imperative 3
 - Remaining imperatives if time allows
- Updates on Past Action Items
- Review meeting questions, decisions, and action items

Scoring discussion

(Note: The scoring table filled out during the meeting reflects decisions made about scores for the actions. The following captures comments/questions from the scoring discussion, at times identifying the person who commented.)

Imperative 5: Resilient water infrastructure

Action 31: evaluate alternatives for both natural and built water storage within planning area, identify and perform feasibility studies

- Fran: Have existing water conservation plans from municipalities already identified storage options? We should check existing plans.
 - Suzanne: we can look at master plans for that info
- What alternatives are there?
 - Natural could include beavers, built could include different types of reservoirs
- Remember that stakeholder understanding could be either gathering data or education
- Billie Jo: there is not any stakeholder communication built into this, so I rated it a medium (others agree)
- Janna: storage doesn't generally help fish so instream benefits are not necessarily a yes, although natural systems would benefit fish.
- Caylin: They were grouped together by design so we could look at storage holistically.

Action 32: expansion of state-supported revolving fund to accelerate water infrastructure improvements

- What does new funding for self-suppliers mean?
 - Funds (grants or loans) for improving or building wells on properties etc.
- Fran: should be higher – infrastructure improvements could benefit quantity
- Suzanne: This action could include pipelines etc. – separate from storage in Action 31
- Leah: Water quality depends on what kind of improvement
- Olivia: From ODA perspective, quality would rank higher
- Caylin: caveat that this action is about a statewide funding system and we should look at how it could benefit the mid-coast specifically
- Suzanne: water quality benefit would mainly be preventing leaks
- Leah: the “collaboration with communities” likely is referring to water provider communities. Because this is called out specifically stakeholder understanding can be a medium
- Bill: There are funds that already exist –probably already quite a few projects
 - Suzanne: DEQ is reaching out to communities about available funding – unsure about infrastructure projects
 - Fran: maybe we should confine it more to preventing leaks or something – because it is so broad, this would help us rank it better

- Billie Jo: actions in the Plan are all important and build on each other. Some of the criteria don't apply to critical parts of actions. This discussion and the suggestions you all are making are important to the groups who want to take on these things – however these groups aren't hearing that. I hope in our process for making things happen we give an opportunity for those groups to hear our input. We need a forum for that. (others seconded)
 - Suzanne: the partnership meeting in November will have time for discussion and input on some of these

Action 33: *identify funding programs to support infrastructure enhancements that advance sustainable and secure water solutions. Study how others have funded their infrastructure improvements*

- Suzanne: Even more broad than last action, so it has potential to address quantity and quality but it depends
- Billie Jo: seems like it applies more to out-of-stream uses but unsure
- Bill: up for discussion, so a yes for instream/out-of-stream benefits makes sense
- Caylin: seems like there's a narrow set of people who can weigh in on this one. A water district or the conservation consortium could have more expertise.
- Adam: aging infrastructure has impacts on quantity and quality so improvements to this will benefit both.
 - Mike: agreed, infrastructure is important in conservation

Action 34: *establish a community revolving loan program for infrastructure improvements for septic systems*

- Christine: this is an issue on the northern end of our county near Devils Lake
- Adam: There is a program initiated by representative Gomberg but that program is more of a grant program so this seems different
 - Bill: there might be a statewide program
- Tyler: there is a program currently through the Lincoln County Health Department for low-income folks to replace their septic systems. I agree with Adam that this might be different than what currently exists and might target different landowners.
- Billie Jo: the action plan lists Lincoln County, Craft3, & OSU Extension Well Stewardship Program as leading in this
 - Folks are unfamiliar with Craft3
 - [From Mikaela after the meeting: It is a nonprofit that gives out various loans including for septic repair/replacement <https://www.craft3.org/homeowner-loans/clean-water/oregon>]

Imperative 3: Monitoring and data sharing

Action 14: *Implement efficient advanced metering infrastructure for faster leak/shortage identification, support providers meeting industry standards for documenting water loss*

- Adam: (for stakeholder understanding) Smart water grid systems are brand new and help water providers understand the system better

Action 15: *recommend installation and use of flow meters to gain a more accurate estimate of water use in the region*

- We agree that the action is talking about flow meters on diversions
- Bill: OWRD person is doing metering on the Siletz
- Suzanne: Yachats and Waldport are exploring metering
 - [From Suzanne after the meeting: I initially confused this action with the monitoring streamflows action (Action 16). To clarify, Waldport and Yachats both have metering systems in place to track their diversions. My remark during the meeting was referring to streamflow monitoring that Waldport is implementing and that Yachats is exploring.]
- Fran: this is an important but unimplemented project. What would it require for all our diversions to be metered? Question for OWRD. Is it a lack of budget or automatic readers, etc.?
 - Suzanne: when we get to workplan we can address this more
- Adam: municipal water providers already are subject to recording their diversions and amount of water that is sold? Why are we trying to re-create that?
 - Bill: those regulations are slightly different, we are talking about measuring all our streams
 - Suzanne: not every source has its own meter, sometimes they are combined
 - Caylin: Non-municipal diversions are not necessarily required to meter and measure
 - Leah: if you are not required to you probably don't

Action 16: *fully fund, install and monitor real-time stream gauging stations throughout the region to assess source water and enable innovative demand reduction actions during periods of critical ecological need*

- Leah: when streamflows are low, that's when conservation is required, for example.
- Billie Jo: isn't that already happening in our region?
 - Not all streams, but definitely on the Siletz
- Fran: The enforcement of it is a problem. For example, when GP is forced to cut off, they go to Toledo and take their water. So there is no reduction in diversions there.
 - Billie Jo: one year they came to the City and the City still limited their use because it couldn't go above the city's authorized diversions. Since then there has been a vote that the City cannot sell water to the mill.
- Fran: this applies to City of Newport supplying the industrial fish processing plants as a "municipal use"
- Caylin: More real-time data enables more proactive actions
- Mike: if everyone has access to streamflow information, water providers can get ahead of times where they are limited. Fran's issue is important but might not fall under this framework.
- Bill: munis won't be responsible for measuring streams other than their diversions right? Shouldn't this be OWRD funding?
 - Leah: It could be in some cases. Not all of the municipalities have a stream gauge although it is required for some.
 - Bill: Toledo uses the NOAA site for streamflow.
- Bill: Separate issue is the emergency part – no plan when we run out of water. Trying to not get to that point. Munis are going to pump until they can't pump.

- Caylin: They are also going to conserve harder as they get closer to the bottom of the tank
- Adam: This year is an example of this – there was concern among munis about whether their pumps would cavitate. Monitoring streamflows is important because it helps guide decisions made by muni operators and the regional water master. You could have senior water rights but still have issues with your pumps cavitating and damaging your system. Haven't seen that yet but the potential exists.
 - This action could help mitigate some of the worst circumstances

Action 17: Long term water quality monitoring program

- Mike: Need to identify funding sources as this is costly.
- Fran: this is way way too much to do. We already have 303d listed streams and we aren't doing much about it despite being on the list for years. TMDLs aren't going anyway.

Action 18: Comprehensive and ongoing water testing to guide management practices

- Fran: ditto to above. Nothing is happening in the TMDL world to improve practices-- and that is the vehicle to get changes in practices.
 - Suzanne: thinking ahead to the workplan and how we can address these issues.
- Tyler: this is definitely a DEQ thing. We're doing some of the monitoring for agricultural users, and it's informative and helpful for people to get local data, even if it's not as comprehensive. So stakeholder understanding should be a high.
- Caylin: we should put a lot of weight on Tyler's vote due to his expertise (others agree)
- Readiness at a high because it sounds like Tyler is already doing some of this
- Tyler: Readiness I might go M or L. While we are doing some water testing, we do not have the resources to conduct comprehensive testing over a long period.
 - Billie Jo: this has been going on (Yachats, Salmon River, Yaquina watershed)– readiness should be higher
 - Caylin: Good point Billie Jo — ODFW doing it too
 - Suzanne: it seems some infrastructure/relationships are in place to make it high

Action 19: coordinated network of people conducting stream flow monitoring and quality monitoring to share resources and data, incorporate volunteers to complete gauging network

- Mike: this is a good educational opportunity
- Christine: trying to get the Nazarene Church involved to start monitoring nitrate currently. There is also a tracking system done in schools with StreamWebs
- Billie Jo: Lincoln county schools have been involved for a long time. There is also an existing network of community volunteers.
- Tyler: Schooner Creek. Blue Water task Force, but they are just on beaches.
- Tyler: Thanks for the history Billie Jo, I would like to see those connections reinitiated with the District for future monitoring.

Action 20: aggregation and update of current self-supplied water system databases, determine what exists from current databases. Track wells going dry via self-reporting

- Readiness: there's some tracking going on

- Leah: for wells going dry, that exists. Unsure about self-supplied system databases.

Action 21: *develop a water monitoring database for data entry and access by multiple entities*

- Christine: If there was a database available, that would have a wealth of information that could benefit stakeholder understanding
- Folks are unfamiliar with the Inter-agency Stream Team listed as the lead for this action in the Action Plan
 - [From Mikaela after the meeting: <https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/data-reporting/EM/Pages/Monitoring-OPSW.aspx>]

Imperative 1: outreach

Action 1: *public awareness and engagement campaign aimed at supporting imperatives and actions in Mid-Coast Water Action Plan*

- Fran: Drought awareness reader board in Newport was very effective

Action 1a: *promote water conservation at events and through outreach, particularly in the hospitality industry (no notes)*

Action 1b: *develop drought declaration and audience-specific water conservation and curtailment messages*

- There is already drought declaration outreach – high for readiness

Action 1c: *coordinate watershed and water system tours to increase understanding of local water issues*

- Readiness also high – we are doing tours, Tyler is doing tours, etc.
- Fran: H for SU but a LOT of effort to do this to reach only a few people. People who go on tours are already interested.
 - Caylin: If we get the school kids maybe they're not already interested ;)
- Can we post tours online?
 - May be sensitivity with landowners, may be issues

Action 1d: *regional training to improve coordination and provide education to water providers on infrastructure funding*

- Similar to other funding actions we've discussed
- Billie Jo: This is a critical piece of how quantity and quality could be improved eventually/indirectly. Mediums make sense
- Bill: Stakeholder understanding may not be high because water providers would already be involved and doing the trainings potentially
 - Christine: and it may not be shared broadly
- Caylin: Is this part of MCWCC?
 - Suzanne: it could be a great addition

Action 1e: *internship program, hands-on training, and certification training for water technicians*

- Bill: it was hard to find people to fill the gaps in water treatment in distribution areas. Adam suggested the community college should develop a course on water management
- Christine and Bill: quantity and quality are low, but there is value in it
- Billie Jo: doesn't exactly fit some of these criteria, but it is critical that water providers have training like this. Community college is willing, I already asked them.
- Fran: thinking ahead to next steps, many of our scores are mediums and highs which doesn't help prioritize. In my mind, it is not a benefit to quantity or quality as much as other actions.
 - Billie Jo: the groups that developed these actions already ranked them as very important so what we are doing now is difficult. I don't want to rank something that is very important as low.
 - Fran: I would support it more if it emphasized water conservation and water quality etc.
- Bill: maybe it shouldn't be included in this part of the grading. Imperative 1 has a slightly different focus than water quantity and quality but it is still very important.
- Christine: if a proposal came through it would be ranked by individual merit rather than just how an action ranks.
- Billie Jo: implementing Water Management and Conservation Plans (WMCPs) is important and the technicians are the people implementing them.
- Stuck between medium and low for 1e. Tabling water quantity and quality rankings for this action to discuss next time.
- Statewide these programs likely exist, but not regionally
- Billie Jo: if we could get the community college to implement this curriculum, it would be possible for our group to add water quantity & quality improvements and conservation to the curriculum
 - Suzanne: I will be meeting with water providers in the region and I will ask them for input on this action to help inform our decision

Follow-up discussion

- Scoring:
 - Leah: Super helpful to even have a few of these compiled ahead of time to see what others are thinking, so anybody who is able to fill it out before next meeting it would be helpful.
 - Caylin: this dialogue in this space is so helpful and rich, so I end up waiting to put my input until we have these discussions.
- Financial need request:
 - \$20,000 total set aside, \$3,000 max per org
 - Reimbursement form
 - Grant amendment approved
 - Contact Suzanne
- Charter update:
 - Updated version reviewed by Coordinating Committee
 - Review by the full Partnership next
- Co-convenors
 - Position description reviewed by CC
 - Outreach to potential co-convenors next

- Additional October meeting:
 - October 31 meeting to finish scoring – just remote
 - Will discuss Imperative 2
 - *We want to get through as many actions as possible before Partnership meeting next month*
- Full Partnership Meeting: 11/16
 - Afternoon meeting and morning tour in Lincoln City
 - Meeting registration coming soon
- General:
 - Bill: Website used to have libraries for everybody to go to for different info, and I can't find it now
 - Leah will look into it
 - Caylin: it would be helpful to have on the MCWPP home page news related to drought declarations etc.
 - Suzanne: GSI will keep it up to date. Conservation Consortium also has resources and GSI will promote that more.