# Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Prioritization Project Meeting

**Date**: March 2, 2023, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

**Location**: Hatfield Marine Science Center and virtual via Zoom

**Conveners**: Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District

**Project Team**: Suzanne de Szoeke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.; Leah Cogan – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

**Meeting Attendees**:

Alan Fujishin, Gibson Farms

Evan Hayduk, MidCoast Watersheds Council Coordinator

Bill Montgomery, MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member and certified water treatment plant operator

Mike Broili, MidCoast Watersheds Council Board Member

Paul Engelmeyer

Tyler Clouse, Lincoln County Soil and Water Conservation District

Steve Parrett, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Alyssa Mucken, Oregon Water Resources Department

Billie Jo Smith, Lincoln County Water System Alliance

Janna Stevens, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Adam Sussman, GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Laura Johnson, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

David Waltz, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Clare Paul, City of Newport

Caylin Barter, Wild Salmon Center

Mark River, Weyerhaeuser

Fran Recht, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Aubrie Koenig, Consor

Margaret Treadwell, McKenzie River Trust

Phoebe Howe, Oregon Health Authority

Lori Arce-Torres, Lincoln City Chamber of Commerce

David Rupp, Oregon State University

Seth Barnes, OFIC

Ronan Igloria, GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

**Meeting Objectives**: The meeting objectives were to describe the planned activities and schedule related to the Partnership’s award of grant funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund, and to introduce and discuss various potential prioritization criteria and approaches for the actions and imperatives listed in the Partnership’s Water Action Plan.

**Meeting Summary**: The Project Team provided a recap of the approved Water Action Plan organized into eight categories of imperatives. The Project Team described the ARPA funding that has been secured to move forward with implementing the Water Action Plan and to continue place-based planning efforts through December 2024. Under the Water Action Plan’s Regional Capacity and Collaboration imperative, one action calls for developing procedures to facilitate the prioritization and funding of projects throughout the region. ARPA funding will be used in part to undertake a prioritization of the implementation actions and then to take initial steps to implement prioritized actions. The Project Team shared an estimated schedule for the grant-funded process. The Partnership brainstormed their vision of success for the prioritization process.

The Project Team presented a variety of potential prioritization criteria that could be applied to the actions in the Water Action Plan, such as providing instream and out-of-stream benefits, improving water quality and quantity conditions, project readiness and availability of resources, resilience to climate change, public support, and geographic priorities, among others. The Partnership discussed the potential criteria and suggested additional criteria such as water conservation and avoiding new listings of endangered species. Next, the Project Team presented prioritization approaches, including decision support systems, paired comparison analysis, deliberation, cost-benefit analysis, champion approach, and several methods specific to ecosystem protection and enhancement. The Partnership discussed the approaches and expressed support for connecting the actions to existing projects and plans from the member organizations.

## Next Steps

* Provide input using the prioritization approaches and criteria worksheet by March 14
* Respond to the online survey by March 7 to help the group find a regular meeting time and specify which imperatives are of interest to you for the prioritization project
* The Project Team will compile feedback on prioritization approaches and criteria to refine ideas for next meeting

Comments during the Meeting

* Billie Jo suggested looking into the Puget Sound Partnership to see how it operates
* Input on the goals of prioritization included: recovery of species, Partnership efforts support other efforts (TMDL, for example), balance consideration, efficiency, well-informed, durable
* Looking at the approaches of other place-based planning efforts was suggested
* Some prioritization criteria suggested included: conservation of use, avoiding new listings
* Paul recommended looking at a FEMA ecosystem services document that he will share
* Janna suggested a prioritization that considers protection and restoration in phasing of efforts
* Fran had a question about the City of Newport Big Creek dams project
* Fran and Caylin asked about financial support for organizations to participate in these Partnership efforts
* Fran asked about the people on the Partnership contact list
* Billie Jo expressed interest in the deliberation and champion prioritization approaches in which groups bring projects to the Partnership and show how they relate to actions in the Water Action Plan, and the Partnership supports those
* Now that the Partnership has completed the Water Action Plan, it has this new type of work (prioritization and early implementation support) and the role of the Partnership needs refining
* Other organizations implement the actual projects, the Partnership supports their efforts