

Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Prioritization and Early Implementation Work Group Meeting

Date: Tuesday, January 9, 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:

Suzanne de Szoeka – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Leah Cogan – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Mikaela Clarke – GSI Water Solutions, Inc.

Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District (SRWD)

Alan Fujishin – Gibson Farms

Alyssa Mucken – Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)

Billie Jo Smith – Lincoln County Water Systems Alliance

Caylin Barter – Wild Salmon Center

Evan Hayduk – MidCoast Watersheds Council

Fran Recht – Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission

Janna Stevens – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

Margaret Treadwell – McKenzie River Trust

Matt Thomas – Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)

Olivia Jasper – Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Paul Engelmeyer – MidCoast Watersheds Council

Phebe Howe – Oregon Health Authority DHS OHA

Steve Parrett – Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Steve Stewart – City of Newport

Tyler Clouse – Lincoln Soil and Water Conservation District (LSWCD)

Bradley Winn – SRWD

Mike Broili – MidCoast Watersheds Council

<p><u>Questions/Comments To Address</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TMDLs 	<p><u>Decisions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group agreed to keep prioritization the same for Actions 20 and 21 under Imperative 3, but note the tasks that are easier for the Partnership to accomplish. • For final work plans, group imperative 7 as it's own • Move Action 35 to group A. • Develop a work plan concept that utilizes Billie Jo's approach and the action prioritization
<p><u>GSI Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach out to DEQ and OHA about Actions 20, 22 & TMDLs • Look into definitions of "water supply" and consider drafting a more adequate definition • Developing work plan concept and looking at online tools Update members on website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share list of Coordinating Committee members • Send out reimbursement form again 	<p><u>Partnership Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 9:00 am

Prioritization Groups Summary Discussion

Imperative 3: Monitoring and Data Sharing

- Paul: TMDL process is an issue on the horizon for our watersheds. Maybe someone from DEQ could speak on it because it's pertinent to this discussion.
 - Steve P: David Waltz could give more of a comprehensive update at a future meeting.
 - Suzanne: Could add it to a workplan task.
- Olivia: Rob from ODA could present agency's concerns and process for Yaquina TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load of pollutants, in this case bacteria and dissolved oxygen)
- Tyler: Action 21 – another DEQ thing I'd like to know more about. They compile data we submit through the volunteer monitoring program. It could be made more accessible to partners if possible. Is someone working on it? If not, LCSWCD would be interested. Maybe its rank should be elevated.
 - Suzanne: We could reach out to DEQ.
- Caylin: Monitoring would be an A++ for me if there was one. DEQ is the lead agency in developing the integrated water database (Oregon Water Data Portal), that might merit bumping up the priority for Action 21. I'm surprised Action 20 is a C, as this issue has been on the news more and is a big issue.
 - Oregon Water Data Portal: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/pages/owdp.aspx>
- Fran: before we move up priority of Action 21, find out where we are and as Tyler said make it more accessible if it's already there. There are many potential priorities. Where we don't have to do something, or we could do a slightly different task such as promoting it. Nothing can be a priority if everything is a priority. I support trying to parse out what we have here.
- Alan: I agree with Fran. Actions 20 and 21 might have ranked low because they are not low-hanging fruit in terms of getting them done (although we understand they are important). Our local area isn't the responsible jurisdiction for some of those tasks. There's a difference between us developing vs. supporting development of something, e.g., a water database. Something that can be done without a lot of investment, e.g., a letter of support, could move it higher in the priority groupings. I'd caution against revising the whole action plan – it's not perfect.
- Suzanne: Is the group comfortable keeping these where they are, or should we elevate them?
- Caylin: I agree with Alan. These actions are in desperate need of updates from the DEQ (for Action 20) and DEQ and OHA (for Action 22). If there is an easy lift for the Partnership, e.g., letters of support, targeted letter to an agency, that would be great. If GSI could reach out to those groups and find out the status that would be helpful.
 - Suzanne: GSI can do that.
- Leah: OWRD has a program for tracking wells going dry (for Action 20).
- Suzanne: Reaching out to agencies etc. could fall under "Work Plan Actions".
- Tyler: My vote is to keep the priority group and note important tasks associated with the success of the actions to add to the workplan.
- Steve P: DEQ can certainly give an update on water data portal development so the Mid-Coast group can see if it will be helpful to them and how to/whether to support its completion.

- Group agreed to keep prioritization the same for Actions 20 and 21, but note the tasks that are easier for the Partnership to accomplish.

Imperative 4: Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Reuse

- Leah: Imperative 7 only has two actions, and one was a duplicate of another action. We were thinking of grouping the remaining action (seeking alternative sources of water for development) with Imperative 4, but now are leaning towards grouping it with Imperative 5.
- Group agreed to keep priority groupings the same for Imperative 4.

Imperative 5: Resilient Water Infrastructure

- Steve P: there is a progress report out now on DEQ's evaluation of the water reuse program. I will send to GSI for distribution. I noticed that Action 42 seems to be related to another action that was about developing the 50 year water supply plan (Imperative 2, Action 2) – those two could be linked together.
- Billie Jo: A lot of these from different imperatives will be linked together, correctly so. People can find which actions fit their project, so I don't think it's that important that we group something from an imperative with another imperative just because it goes with it (Imperative 7 action being grouped with Imperative 5). People will find the actions, many projects will include more than one imperative.
 - Leah: We will keep Imperative 7 on its own for final work plans.
- Fran: is there a definition section that goes with the Water Action Plan? I think there is a bias when people read "water supply", they could perceive that as we are creating more water supply with hard infrastructure, rather than conservation etc. That bias is something to think about.
 - Suzanne: there is a definition section that does define water supply on page 97. We can add to the definition in the work plan for clarification though.
 - Alan: I believe there is another action that elevates green infrastructure (Action 5). I think we had a bias to leave lots of these general and leave it to partners to synthesize actions and create a rationale for support. I don't think we should get too specific at this level. When I think of a project, I think of combining a lot of these actions together and create a rationale around that.
 - Fran: Definition from Plan: "Water Supply—Water for human use comes from two primary sources—surface water and groundwater. Water supply systems convey, store, treat, and distribute water. Understanding water use helps to evaluate the effects of future development on water supply sources." I don't think this definition is adequate. It sort of implies the bias I'm concerned about.
 - Alyssa: To Fran - pretty sure I read something in the action plan that puts better sideboards on this action... I'll see if I can find it.
 - GSI will look into this.
- Billie Jo: Regarding the Action Plan itself, I think there's a lot about the instream water supply. These actions are really aimed towards water supply for human use; I hope both are covered. We should not change any actions, since that process is huge. We could add an addendum that clarifies a few things.

- Paul: Natural infrastructure is a big deal. If you get 20% more water from natural infrastructure, e.g., beavers, forest landcover, etc. that's substantial and should be acknowledged in there. The phrase "natural infrastructure" probably captures it.
 - Suzanne: Action 31 (Imperative 5) relates to natural storage. There is a definition for natural infrastructure in the Plan.

Imperative 6: Source Water Protection

- Fran: Action 35 seems to be more broad than the ones below it, and it could be bumped up to group A.
 - Leah: it might have been scored this way because it was vague and the group didn't know what it meant.
 - Suzanne: it scored a 2 instead of a 3 for water quantity.
- Group agreed to move Action 35 to group A.
 - Alan: I support it, it's just so general that it almost could be the imperative.
- Steve P: OWEB received additional funds for source water protection in 2023 legislature. Great we have action 41 as an A
- Alyssa: at our last meeting, we bumped up two source water protection actions to group A, so we will have a pretty good source water protection bucket.

Imperative 8: Ecosystem Protection and Enhancement

- Leah: Fran noticed that Action 52 had typo in Plan – it's meant to say "where water is not available" – Leah changed it on the spreadsheet.
- Group agreed to keep priority groupings the same for Imperative 8.

Suzanne: now that we have prioritized the actions, we will work on multiple imperatives for group A first, then group B, then group C.

Work Plan Discussion

Suzanne: GSI provided an example/idea for a Work Plan approach, and Billie Jo will share her idea for a Work Plan approach in this meeting. Group may go with one or the other, or a combination of both. The heart of it is identifying tasks for people/organizations that may implement the Work Plan and for the Partnership. And how to support actions without projects.

Billie Jo's Work Plan Approach (refer to BJS Draft Work Plan for WCWPP document)

- I look at the Work Plan as the process by which the Partnership will support and coordinate projects that implement actions. I found the current approach confusing and maybe time consuming, because it develops a proposal for actions that fit together within an imperative. I don't think going by imperative for each project is an effective approach. I think what we should be doing is stimulating the agencies & organizations that are working within Lincoln County and supporting them in projects. I would define work plan as the process for the Partnership to use to get to those actions.
- The MCWPP will develop a chart with organizations that are identified as potential leads and participants in the Action Plan, and identify Action # and prioritized ratings of each prioritized

actions. 3 columns: Potential Lead & Participants, Lead on Prioritized Action #s, Participant for Prioritized Action #s.

- Then the Partnership will send out information and communicate with them about the projects they're doing and want to do related to those actions. Then we help develop a proposal.
- Outline for what people give us: description of projects, identify actions to be addressed and how they will be implemented, provide a proposed timeline, include funding needed and how it will be budgeted, list current and/or possible funding sources.
- Then the coordinating committee, for example, will review the proposed projects. Then we have a Partnership meeting where leadership of a project presents it to the group, group will review project and provide feedback, information & advise.
- If we have funding available through Partnership, we'd come up with a scoring system and have a committee who scores the projects.
- The two last sections of the other work plan have the tasks we'll be doing, and as projects come in, we can look at our prioritized list and identify holes and who could do those things. That comes after we've made the contact list.
- This comes from the organization model from Improvement Puget Sound, a committee that coordinates local groups to reach goals. This is just a draft and can be edited.

Discussion about Billie Jo's Work Plan Approach

- Steve P: I wonder if this is a big value add to project implementors to develop a proposal and come to the Partnership for advice, references, and funding ideas? It would be one thing if the Partnership had more money, but I wonder if people will be anxious to come to us for advice and references.
- Billie Jo: I would hope that it would bear on funding agencies to understand that a proposal coming to them fit with an Action Plan for the region. I think that would have a lot of weight. If a key group supports it, it does influence funding. I think it does make a difference to get input from different informed sources it will make their projects more likely to be successful.
- Alyssa: I think it is an effective way to move projects forward and say they've got the support of the Council. We have a lot of actions we've prioritized and a lot of them are very general. I worry we'd have a tough time with which projects get prioritized for a support letter. How does the Partnership see themselves operating in the future (e.g., ten years from now)? Do we want to be writing support letters or working on collaborative projects?
- Billie Jo: my thinking about the future of the Partnership is tied up into what I proposed, and I had questions about that early on. Improvement Puget Sound's model is a very good model for staying functioning and becoming a center of support. We would need a paid director to do that, but the key knowledge comes from the Partnership.
- Alan: the two approaches I see is that one approach is the imperatives being the lens vs the lead partners being the lens. It puts pressure on partners having to do the development of the plan. The key of Billie Jo's proposal is it allows a step for partners to jump on the bandwagon. I'm not too concerned about withholding Partnership support from project proposals. At that point there's not much of a prioritization question to be posed, but more a question of "is this project consistent with the Plan and the Charter?". That will put the lead partners in a leadership role in the Partnership. That has the potential of leaving things out that nobody's doing. I like the idea of focusing on under-represented projects or actions and that could be a role of the Partnership,

although I don't know how this would be possible. I think the Partnership should have more of a leadership role rather than relying on our lead partners. We don't have much funding right now for supporting things at the project level. It's wide-open which way that might go in the future. There's potential to develop a Partnership funding stream, but that would be more in facilitation than actual projects because of the scale of some projects. I like Billie Jo's proposal. It ticks the box of if it brings positive value to partners, flexible Partnership role depending on resources.

- Paul: I think this is a good direction. I fall back to the issues I consistently bring up. Let's get TMDLs, let's get the lead partners (DEQ) on a work plan, instream flows (ODFW), climate crisis etc. Let's make sure partners have funds so we can do those things.
- Billie Jo: In the Action Plan that has potential leads and potential participants, DEQ, OWRD, other agencies come up as potential leads for those things because those should be their projects. My thoughts on prioritizing: even if a project gets proposed that has actions with different rankings, project developers will see which aspects should be focused on.
- Suzanne & Leah: do people want to head more in this direction, or maybe a blend (take this approach, then see where there are gaps for actions that don't have projects)? We could do something in tandem where we work with Partners, clarify what needs are, try to identify gaps, and parallel to that, identify tasks to be done for actions beyond a single project, and what those tasks would look like for partners and for the Partnership to support.
- Billie Jo: that step to identify gaps, that would happen after the first part of my process. We could tell people here are the actions that list you as a possible leader, show us how your project addresses these actions.
- Suzanne: our goal is to come out of this meeting with an idea of how we can support the Partnership. What I'm hearing is we should try to build out this table, then figure out certain needs related to those actions. We could look at if there are certain grants that could help support those actions.
- Caylin: the examples provided to date read more as paper things. They're set up as word docs. Is that assumption accurate or should we look at an online sharing tools that has links and is dynamic and user friendly instead? It could be something that could generate reports and see what could be accomplished, where have multiple entities tagged the same funding source, etc.?
 - Steve P: I believe the OWEB Focused Investment Partnership model is fairly effective and something this group should consider for its role.
 - Alan: one of the actions is to develop something like that. At some point we need a lead partner to try out this proposal build for a real thing. What we will recommend to the Partnership for a work plan approach is an important step. The gaps that are identified could be addressed by GSI's model. I'm not sure how to get to where Caylin wants to go, maybe to start we need a paper model. Or is there a tool already built we can use for that?
 - Caylin: FIP, and GSI can explore the options and build that tool. I'm advocating for GSI to build that tool, and not start with a paper process.
 - Billie Jo: we have begun that on our website. We need both types of processes occurring in parallel.
 - Fran: what a tool will also do is to show progress more clearly on objectives... progress fosters more support and potentially \$

- Alan: schematic needs to be paper right now, we don't have a proposal for a tool. The work GSI is proposing for next meeting is still viable, and then adapt that to a tool. My wish would be for a partner to populate it so we could show people but that may be too big of an ask.
- Fran: collating what partners are involved now - GSI is doing now.
- Alyssa: I want to make sure the different path we're heading does not lose sight of the work we've done this past year to prioritize actions.

Coordinating Committee Discussion:

Alan's explanation of Coordinating Committee

- Groups within the Partnership are in flux, not set in stone. Our Charter has a membership section which has perspectives we want involved. Has been difficult to maintain groups and perspectives we want consistently. Original Committee tried to capture these groups, and with turnover and changes over time, tried to maintain and it was difficult as some interests were not consistently participating. The Coordinating Committee was asked to help coordinate the groups we'd formed and advise convenors and project team.
- Committee initially created a governance document charter for the Partnership to review and ratify, wanted about 12 people to deliberate. The idea is that there is an intentional and focused group that is the right size to have discussions. If we had an issue we couldn't agree on at 12 people, we were never going to agree on a Partnership level. As the Action Plan was built, Committee coordinated work groups to support plan development and advise the convener.
- Alan: I see the Coordinating Committee still being not a board of directors, but representative or something close, that is deliberative and can frame issues for discussion.
- The Committee is small, we're trying to build it (maybe OSU students). Alan shared Committee membership in 2018 – spectrum of local and regional interests, agencies. Project support team – convenors and consultants, facilitators.
- The role of the Committee has changed and there is great potential there. Committees carried the Partnership in times when we were resource short. There is a vacancy currently. Want to populate list of work group and Committee members. Currently work group is the most active members of Partnership and I want to see if anyone willing to serve on the Committee and fill gaps.
 - Caylin: Should Environmental/Social Justice groups be added to this “seek to include in Partnership Membership” list? For next steps, sounds like folks should look for the current CC membership from GSI and then reach out to you Alan?
 - Post current membership on website – GSI working on it
 - Janna: ODFW has funding for a western region coordinator and that job will go live soon. They will be my counterpart and may have the ability to fill that ODFW vacancy.
 - Tyler: Is there funding capacity to cover the cost of participation as a member of the coordinating committee? Knowing the vacant categories would be fantastic for providing recommendations.
 - Yes GSI will share it