

Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Prioritization Project Workgroup Meeting

Date: Tuesday, September 12, 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

Bradley Wynn -- Seal Rock Water District

Adam Denlinger – Seal Rock Water District, co-convener

Christine Clapp – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

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

Online Participants:

Leah Cogan – GSI Water Solutions

Steve Parrett – DEQ

Billie Jo Smith – Lincoln County Water Systems Alliance

Mike Broili – MidCoast Watersheds Council

Alyssa Mucken - Oregon Water Resources Department

Clare Paul – City of Newport

Mark River – Hydrologist at Weyerhaeuser

Martin Klinger – Panther Creek Water District

Caylin Barter – Wild Salmon Center

Paul Engelmeyer – land manager for Audubon and Wetlands Conservancy

Tyler Clouse – Lincoln SWCD

<p><u>Questions/Comments To Address</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincoln County drought declaration (Caylin suggested discussing this in a future meeting): Mid-Coast Water Conservation Consortium developed outreach materials related to the county-wide declaration and will for the State declaration. Suggestion that the Consortium share those materials on the Partnership distribution list. Incentives for water rights transactions that protect water instream (see some resources in these meeting notes) 	<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 the group the reimbursement form, convener description, email use guidelines, scoring from today, meeting notes, and updated Charter. Reach out to OWRD to ask if it's okay to be reimbursed for previous meetings prior to the change to the grant. Follow up with ODFW about water rights instream transfer incentives 	<p><u>Partnership Action Items</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a look at new scoring sheets prior to the next prioritization meeting. Contact Suzanne about reimbursement, convener, or Charter comments if interested.

Next prioritization workgroup meeting: Oct. 10

Meeting Agenda:

- Introductions, participation protocols, and guiding principles
- Review August meeting minutes
- Review criteria and scoring descriptions
- Scoring
 - Imperative 4
 - Imperative 5
 - Remaining from August 8 meeting
- Updates on Past Action Items
 - Funding
 - Convener search
 - Charter update
 - Partner email guidelines
- 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 4: Water conservation, efficiency, and reuse

Action 22: Oregon's water reuse regulations

- In places where they have done this, water quality and quantity have definitely improved
- Municipal providers have many opportunities to reduce demand on streams, such as new conservation technologies
- Industrial reuse could have a large impact as well
 - Fish processing plants for example are a high use of Newport's water
- Wastewater reuse can reduce streamflow but that discharge to streams is low quality water and the net benefit is positive -Steve
- There is an initiative from legislature for DEQ to lead an effort to understand why reuse is not being used more broadly. Steve will keep the group informed as the effort develops and hope Mid-Coast will contribute to the effort. The State will then be promoting and supporting more reuse based on results of the evaluation. -Steve
- It is not likely that with the broad public, there will be general increased understanding

Action 23: reusing treated sewage water for potable, agricultural, and industrial uses

- We could combine actions 22 and 23 in the workplan since they are similar
 - 23 is specific to wastewater. It also emphasizes sharing 'methods' and may be geared towards engineering.
- Water quantity may not be benefited as much as water quality under this action (up for discussion)
 - Not using as much water means keeping more instream which improves water quality. Anything discharged back instream might be lower quality but that is a separate issue.

- There needs to be significant industrial re-use projects for readiness to be high but there's not a high demand for it. There are potential opportunities. Toledo tried to pursue a project with George Pacific, but it did not work out. We need more education around this topic and its benefits to the region.
 - Funding to the industry would be an incentive but we don't have that currently.
 - DEQ's Pat Heinz may already have such information on methods he could provide at a Mid-Coast event -Steve
 - From HB 2010 - Directs DEQ, in consultation with the [Water Resources] Department, to develop recommendations to expand water reuse or recycled water programs or projects and report to the legislature by September 15, 2024. -Steve
- I don't know of any farms that have done this -Paul
- There may be a reuse project in the Toledo area -Suzanne
- Golf course irrigated with "#2" water
- Keep in mind PFAS issues with recycled water and general water system.
 - DEQ is studying why reuse isn't being used more broadly, not specifically about PFAS
- The district in the Siletz area is talking with DEQ about methods to test for biosolid applications and potential impacts on water quality. Will take buy-in from landowners, needs support.
 - Biosolids are not necessarily related to the issues being discussed

Action 25: *work with NRCS to develop a Conservation Implementation Strategy*

- Our region does not have a lot of agricultural use
- Seems like several of the re-use-related actions could be rolled into one "project"
- If you're able to apply less water, you will likely have less runoff which will benefit water quality
- Because of minimal irrigation in county, quantity and quality scores could be low - Tyler
- Does ODFW have any areas of concern? May have more of an impact in certain areas. Scale is an important factor in scoring criteria for this action
 - ODFW would defer to DEQ
 - It would be helpful to know what the barriers are to implementing technical support
- Establishing minimum flows. What's the trigger for agriculture when we approach and go below minimum flow currently? Would there be a flow benefit even without high quality water?
 - 100 cfs is the cut-off in July this year
- Definitely highest water demand for crops is when flows are lowest - Caylin
- The District has technical assistance funding in the Siletz for conservation currently -Tyler

Action 26: *Voluntary water conservation*

- Do we have data on how much voluntary incentives impact water quantity?
- Examples of voluntary incentives include rebates on efficient equipment, outreach
- Automatic shut-offs at fish processing could be impactful if that is the largest municipal draw
 - Involves not letting hoses run while they cut fish
- This action seems to have more of a residential focus as opposed to commercial, but our ratings considered commercial/industrial after some discussion

- Increasing water rates will immediately cause a decrease in use and in revenue, and over time the behavior does not change (use does not stay down) -Adam. Conservation education is important, helps us consider how we value water and are we using it efficiently.
- Has there been a water pricing assessment done for the mid-coast, for all water providers? - Caylin
- There are many hotels/inns in the region that use a lot of water so conservation there would be impactful – has potential
- Tiered water rate structures are being adopted by municipalities to encourage conservation
- The District is planning to apply for Rare again this year. I'd be happy to house someone here to help with that - Tyler
- The Mid-Coast Water Conservation Consortium has been purchasing efficient fixtures etc. as an example of a ready project
 - The Consortium will be applying for a grant for rebates
- There could be a youth program or something similar to actually install fixtures -Fran
- Related to conservation – do we have credible incentives to extend rotation of forests to keep more water moving through the landscape into the river? -Paul
 - Consider starting conservation in forests before the rest of a watershed
 - ODFW has a program that gives ag lands to forests (100 ft buffer)
 - Passage of Private Forest Accord (PFA) may open programs and funding
 - In Washington, there are programs related to beaver and their value in uplands (Natural climate solutions)
- Water right instream use/transfers
 - In Siletz and Yachats basin there is interest -Tyler
 - Some NGO's, like The Freshwater Trust, will buy water rights to transfer instream. Not The Freshwater Trust on the coast, but there's state funding that agencies & Tribes & nonprofits can access directly
- OWEB has a new \$10M water acquisitions program which includes funding for instream water right transfers. As a result of PFA there is funding that can be devoted to flow restoration. Funds are already available.
 - OWEB water acquisitions program (maybe helpful for Nov. Partnership meeting): <https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/grants/acquisitions/pages/water-acquisitions.aspx>
 - Private Forest Accord Mitigation Fund Grant Program: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/habitat/PFA/index.html>
 - Regarding OWEB grant program for water acquisitions to improve streamflow, the program manager Brian Wolcott says: The solicitation will begin at the end of September and close in Mid January, with Board decision at end of July.

Action 27: *using the Water Management Economic Assessment Model to develop adaptation measures (e.g. investments, rebates, pricing models) to address water shortages*

- OSU was working on this model (covered at last Partnership meeting). Focus is on demands and streamflow modeling in future climate change scenarios, not on the adaptation measures. There could be expansions to the model in the future.

- A model may not be as tangible as other actions to affecting quantity/qual etc. However, the model will tell us what actions to implement and those actions will have high impacts. Rating is difficult because of this.
- Need more context and information about the model to determine best ratings.
- Would need an additional study because its only partially completed

Imperative 5: resilient water infrastructure

Action 28: support upgrading and maintaining water metering infrastructure

- Smart metering is a very helpful tool for especially larger providers to get measurements and understand water system
- Questions about whether it would be implemented b/c it's a lot of work to get portal started

Action 29: implementing latest technologies when retrofitting or replacing water infrastructure

- Lots of small water providers need infrastructure upgrades

Action 30: install earthquake valves in water tanks to retain water if distribution system fails

- Earthquake valves are extremely important. Lots of our communities have done that and the public is generally aware of it and why it's important.
 - Yachats is one of the communities doing this
- When scoring, think about purpose of the action. The purpose of earthquake valves isn't to benefit instream, it's to provide for our community in an emergency.
 - Having fresh water available for humans is an out of stream benefit. However, the goal of this criteria is to elevate actions that provide *both* in/out of stream benefits and this one doesn't

Discussion points on how to approach scoring:

- Stakeholder understanding could either refer to a public education component, or something that supports data collection or a study, etc.
- Actions that emphasize "improve understanding" rather than "implement programs" for example might not rate as high for quantity and quality, but higher for stakeholder understanding – Alyssa
- Ratings may be different for different paragraphs of an action, but folks can just pick an average overall score.
- When scoring, think about purpose of the action -Alyssa (see notes on Action 30 – earthquake valves)
- Regionwide Benefit and Instream/Out of Stream Benefits criteria are not the most helpful since most or all of them have been yes. – Fran
- Instream/Out of stream benefit criterion is for actions that provide BOTH

Follow-up discussion

- Financial need:
 - \$20,000 set aside, \$3,000 max per organization
 - Reimbursement form w/ eligible activities
 - Grant amendment approved
 - Program starts today
- Financial need discussion points:
 - Why does it start now and not at the beginning of the partnership/grant? -Fran
 - Difficulties in tracking federal & state funding so some retroactive work had to be done in different time periods vs. grant reimbursement cycle was more difficult.
 - \$20,000 will get used up quickly especially if it is retro-active. -Steve
 - It doesn't seem hard to document timings of meetings etc. sufficiently. The full Partnership meeting should at least be included. -Fran
 - GSI can reach out to OWRD to confirm if that would be okay. The main thing was to line it up with when SRWD reached out to OWRD to amend the grant agreement to include this as an option because it's coming out of a different line item and the budget needs to match up. -Leah
 - This is federal not state funding which is more complicated to meet requirements. We were encouraged to start fresh once the grant agreement was amended. It should be alright to revisit this question and understand whether we can go back and reimburse for previous meetings -Alyssa
 - OWRD said that although SRWD as the grantee needs to continue submitting quarterly reports and reimbursement requests, partners can bundle requests across quarters. There may be flexibility. -Leah
 - Can OWRD and GSI try to fast-track getting this info back to the group? -Caylin
- Charter update
 - Reviewed by Coordinating Committee
 - Next the full Partnership will review it
 - Take a look at it and provide feedback
- Co-convenors
 - Position description reviewed by Coordinating Committee
 - Outreach to potential co-conveners next
- Convenor description:
 - Role:
 - Ambassador, promote a collaborative & inclusive process
 - Qualities:
 - Inclusive, neutral meeting place, impartial, direct but not dominating in discussions, keep people moving, commitment, make sure there is an outcome
 - Responsibilities:
 - Direction and support to Implementation Team and Coordinating Committee
 - Assess whether spectrum of Partners is present to make decisions

- Adherence to charter, ongoing commitment
 - Support:
 - Other convenors, Implementation Team, Coordinating Committee
 - Interested in learning more and/or becoming a convenor?
 - Contact Suzanne at GSI
 - Full description will be shared with Partnership
- Email sharing guidelines:
 - Opt-out emails sent out in August
 - Sharing for collaboration & advancing Partnership efforts
 - Not for bulk emails, advertising, or marketing
 - Contact list available by request but not public
 - Don't share outside the Partnership or subscribe members to other lists
- Email sharing discussion:
 - Early on, some members wanted access to a contact list of who is on which team/committee/workgroup, and a full Partnership list, and who signed onto the Charter. This was to try to get a better sense of if we are missing any important voices and make sure we are being inclusive. This document would be beneficial for all of us to have. -Alyssa (echoed by others in the workgroup meeting)