

# Oregon's 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy

A framework for improving our understanding of Oregon's water resources and meeting our instream and out-of-stream needs, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs



## ( 1 ) Understand Water Resources Today

**Further Understand Limited Water Supplies & Systems**  
(groundwater, surface water, and their interaction)

**Improve Water Quality & Quantity Information**

**Further Understand Our Water Management Institutions**

**Understanding Water Resources / Supplies / Institutions**

- 1.A Conduct additional groundwater investigations
- 1.B Improve water resource data collection & monitoring
- 1.C Coordinate inter-agency data collection, processing, and use in decision-making

← OBJECTIVES →

← CRITICAL ISSUES →

← RECOMMENDED ACTIONS →

## ( 2 ) Understand Instream and Out-of-Stream Needs

**Further Define Out-of-Stream Needs / Demands**  
(i.e., diverted water)

**Further Define Instream Needs / Demands**  
(i.e., left-in-place water)

**Understanding Oregon's Out-of-Stream Needs/Demands**

- 2.A Regularly update long-term water demand forecasts
- 2.B Improve water-use measurement & reporting
- 2.C Determine unadjudicated water right claims
- 2.D Authorize the update of water right records with contact information
- 2.E Regularly update Oregon's water-related permitting guide

**Understanding Oregon's Instream Needs/Demands**

- 3.A Determine flows needed (quality & quantity) to support instream needs
- 3.B Determine needs of groundwater dependent ecosystems

## ( 3 ) Understand the Coming Pressures That Affect Our Needs and Supplies

Economic Development

Water & Energy

Climate Change

Extreme Events

Population Growth

Water & Land Use

Water-Related Infrastructure

Education & Outreach

**Water & Energy**

- 4.A Analyze the effects on water from energy development projects & policies
- 4.B Take advantage of existing infrastructure to develop non-traditional hydroelectric power
- 4.C Promote strategies that increase/integrate energy & water savings

**Climate Change**

- 5.A Support continued basin-scale climate change research efforts
- 5.B Assist with climate change adaptation & resiliency strategies

**Extreme Events**

- 5.5A Plan and prepare for drought resiliency
- 5.5B Plan and prepare for flood events
- 5.5C Plan and prepare for a Cascadia subduction earthquake event

**Economic Development & Population Growth**  
(See Actions 2A and 3A)

**Water & Land Use**

- 6.A Improve integration of water information into land use planning (and vice versa)
- 6.B Improve state agency coordination
- 6.C Encourage low-impact development practices and green infrastructure

**Water-Related Infrastructure**

- 7.A Develop and upgrade water and wastewater infrastructure
- 7.B Encourage regional (sub-basin) approaches to water and wastewater systems
- 7.C Ensure public safety/dam safety

**Education and Outreach**

- 8.A Support Oregon's K-12 environmental literacy plan
- 8.B Provide education and training for Oregon's next generation of water experts
- 8.C Promote community education and training opportunities
- 8.D Identify ongoing water-related research needs

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## ( 4 ) Meet Oregon's Instream and Out-of-Stream Needs

Place-Based Efforts

Water Management & Development

Healthy Ecosystems

Public Health

Funding

**Place-Based Efforts**

- 9.A Continue to undertake place-based integrated, water resources planning
- 9.B Coordinate implementation of existing natural resource plans
- 9.C Partner with federal agencies, tribes, and neighboring states in long-term water resources management

**Water Management & Development**

- 10.A Improve water-use efficiency and water conservation
- 10.B Improve access to built storage
- 10.C Encourage additional water reuse projects
- 10.D Reach environmental outcomes with non-regulatory alternatives
- 10.E Continue the water resources development program
- 10.F Provide an adequate presence in the field
- 10.G Strengthen water quantity & water quality permitting programs

**Healthy Ecosystems**

- 11.A Improve watershed health, resiliency, and capacity for natural storage
- 11.B Develop additional instream protections
- 11.C Prevent and eradicate invasive species
- 11.D Protect and restore instream habitat and habitat access for fish and wildlife
- 11.E Develop additional groundwater protections

**Public Health**

- 12.A Ensure the safety of Oregon's drinking water
- 12.B Reduce the use of and exposure to toxics and other pollutants
- 12.C Implement water quality pollution control plans

**Funding**

- 13.A Fund development and implementation of Oregon's IWRS
- 13.B Fund water resources management activities at state agencies
- 13.C Invest in local or regional water planning efforts
- 13.D Invest in feasibility studies for water resources projects
- 13.E Invest in implementation of water resources projects

## THE OREGON WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION'S VISION

A statewide integrated water resources strategy will bring various sectors and interests together to work toward the common purpose of maintaining healthy water resources to meet the needs of Oregonians and Oregon's environment for generations to come.

## THE 2010 POLICY ADVISORY GROUP'S VISION

**Everywhere in our State, we see healthy waters, able to sustain a healthy economy, environment, and cultures & communities.**

Healthy waters are abundant and clean. A healthy economy is a diverse and balanced economy, nurturing and employing the State's natural resources and human capital to meet evolving local and global needs, including a desirable quality of life in urban and rural areas. A healthy environment includes fully functioning ecosystems, including headwaters, river systems, wetlands, forests, floodplains, estuaries, and aquifers. Healthy cultures and communities depend on adequate and reliable water supplies to sustain public health, safety, nourishment, recreation, sport, and other quality of life needs.

## THE 2016 POLICY ADVISORY GROUP'S VISION

Water is a finite resource with growing demands; water scarcity is a reality in Oregon. Water-related decisions should rest on a thorough analysis of supply, the demand / need for water, the potential for increasing efficiencies and conservation, and alternative ways to meet these demands.

## PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE THE INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY

**Accountable and Enforceable Actions** – Ensure that actions comply with existing water laws and policies. Actions should include better measurement and enforcement tools to ensure desired results.

**Balance** – The Strategy must balance current and future instream and out-of-stream needs supplied by all water systems (above ground and below ground). Actions should consider and balance tradeoffs between ecosystem benefits and traditional management of water supplies.

**Collaboration** – Support formation of regional, coordinated, and collaborative partnerships that include representatives of all levels of government, private and non-profit sectors, tribes, stakeholders, and the public. Collaborate in ways that help agencies cut across silos.

**Conflict Resolution** – Be cognizant of and work to address longstanding conflicts.

**Facilitation by the State** – The State should provide direction and maintain authority for local planning and implementation. Where appropriate, the State sets the framework, provides tools, and defines the direction.

**Incentives** – Where appropriate, utilize incentive-based approaches. These could be funding, technical assistance, partnerships / shared resources, regulatory flexibility, or other incentives.

**Implementation** – Actions should empower Oregonians to implement local solutions; recognize regional differences, while supporting the statewide strategy and resources. Take into account the success of existing plans, tools, data, and programs; do not lose commonsense approach; develop actions that are measurable, attainable, and effective.

**Interconnection/Integration** – Recognize that many actions (e.g. land-use actions) in some way affect water resources (quality and/or quantity); recognize the relationship between water quantity and water quality; integrate participation of agencies and parties.

**Public Process** – Employ an open, transparent process that fosters public participation and supports social equity, fairness, and environmental justice. Advocate for all Oregonians.

**Reasonable Cost** – Weigh the cost of an approach with its benefits to determine whether one approach is better than another, or whether an approach is worth pursuing at all. Actions should focus on reducing the costs of delivering services to the state's residents, without neglecting social and environmental costs.

**Science-based, Flexible Approaches** – Base decisions on best available science and local input. Employ an iterative process that includes lessons learned from the previous round. Establish a policy framework that is flexible. Build in mechanisms that allow for learning, adaptation, and innovative ideas or approaches.

**Streamlining** – Streamline processes without circumventing the law or cutting corners. Avoid recommendations that are overly complicated, legalistic, or administrative.

**Sustainability** – Ensure that actions sustain water resources by balancing the needs of Oregon's environment, economy, and communities.

## IMPLEMENTATION

An iterative process will help us evaluate whether the recommended actions meet the goals and objectives defined above. The process will include monitoring the implementation of recommended actions, a commitment to resolving conflicts that arise during the course of implementation, providing feedback on any successes or shortcomings, and evolving or adapting to new information or resources. As we learn lessons from the first round of implementation, we can adjust the Strategy as needed through formal adoption every five years.