Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning

Helping Oregon communities plan for their current and future water needs

Water is vital to community well-being, economic development, and a healthy environment. Given the importance of water, in order for a region to achieve their vision for the future, they must consider how their water resources needs will be met. Planning is essential to being able to formulate solutions to water challenges. As a result, Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) recommends undertaking a placed-based approach to water planning.

Why place-based planning?

Place-based planning helps foster cooperative relationships within a planning area. Through a collaborative process, planning groups build upon existing knowledge, identify and fill information gaps, coordinate efforts, and explore innovative solutions to meet multiple needs.

Place-based planning can help communities develop a shared understanding and vision, prioritize actions, and gather the support and resources they need to implement those actions.

What is place-based planning?

Place-based planning provides a framework for communities to understand and meet their water needs now and into the future. It involves a five-step process, in which a planning group will:

1. Build a collaborative and inclusive process;
2. Gather information to understand water resources and identify gaps in knowledge;
3. Examine current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment;
4. Identify and prioritize strategic, integrated solutions to meet water needs;
5. Develop a place-based integrated water resources plan.

Key Planning Principles

- Locally-initiated & led collaborative effort
- Voluntary, non-regulatory process
- Includes a balanced representation of water interests
- Conducted in partnership with the state
- Addresses instream & out-of-stream needs
- Looks at water needs in an integrated approach
- Creates an open and transparent process that fosters public participation
- Builds on and integrates existing studies and plans
- Does not infringe on existing water rights
- Adheres to IWRS principles and state laws

Learn More!

- Visit the web page: http://bit.ly/owrdplanning
- Contact a planning coordinator: placebasedplanning@wrd.state.or.us
- Legislative Contact: Racquel Rancier, Senior Policy Coordinator, racquel.r.rancier@oregon.gov

Summary of Place-Based Planning Areas

Lower John Day Sub-Basin

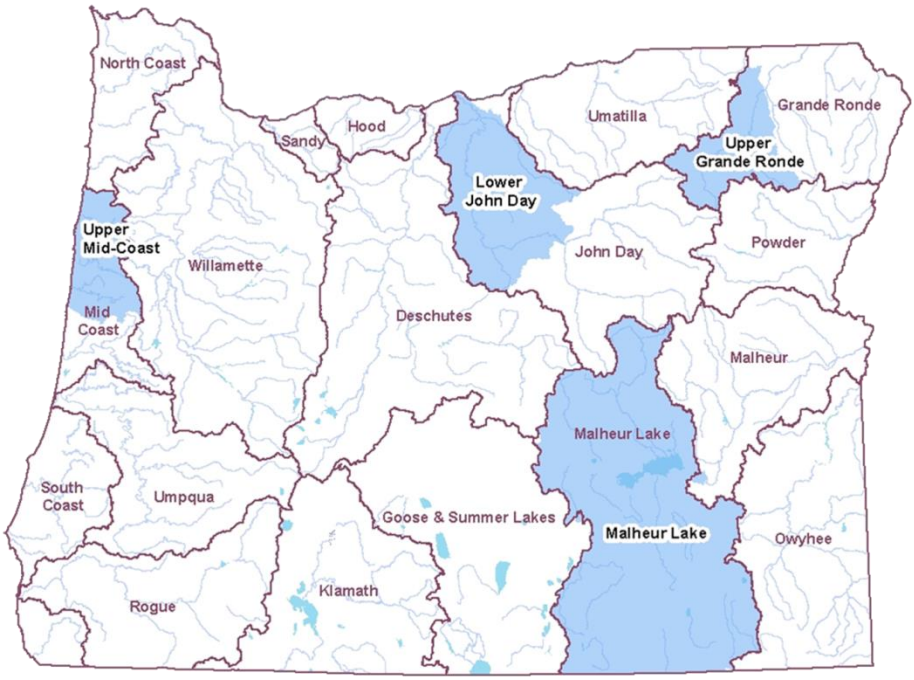
Convener: Gilliam SWCD and Mid-John Day Watershed Council
OWRD Grant Award: $200,000

The Lower John Day Sub-Basin supports an agriculture-based economy and important wild anadromous fish habitat, both of which depend upon reliable water resources. The lower river and tributaries rely heavily on the watershed's ability to capture, store, and slowly release 8-20 inches of annual precipitation. Several years of drought and the potential impacts of climate change further threaten limited supplies.

Upper Grande Ronde Sub-Basin

Convener: Union County
OWRD Grant Award: $207,000

The Upper Grande Ronde Sub-Basin is a vital ecosystem that supports ranchers, farmers, and urban residents as well as an array of fish and wildlife species. Water supply shortages for instream and out-of-stream uses currently exist in this sub-basin and may be intensified by climate change and increases in future demand.



Mid-Coast Region

Conveners: City of Newport, OWRD, Seal Rock Water District, and Gibson Farms
OWRD Grant Award: $150,000

The Mid-Coast Region is characterized by many smaller watersheds distributed up and down the coast line. These coastal watersheds support out-of-stream needs for municipalities, small water systems, agriculture, and industry, as well as instream needs for various aquatic species, water-based tourism and commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries.

Harney-Malheur Lake Basin

Conveners: Harney County Watershed Council and County Court
OWRD Grant Award: $150,000

The Harney-Malheur Lakes Basin supports hay and cattle industries as well as a dynamic high desert ecosystem. Recent drought and full allocation of groundwater have contributed to declining groundwater levels in several areas of the basin and designation of a "groundwater area of concern."