

NOWC Strategic Plan FY 2024-2026

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2026

Mission: The Network of Oregon Watershed Councils supports the work of watershed councils by increasing council capacity, representing councils with key partners and funders, and convening council staff and board members to learn from each other.

NOWC Goals (our desired condition)

1. NOWC is known and trusted by watershed council staff and boards
2. NOWC provides consistent, high-quality information, resources and services that add value, encourage efficiency and best practices among watershed councils
3. NOWC effectively represents the mission of watershed councils to local, state/federal agencies, organizations, and elected officials
4. Watershed Council staff and board members participate and lend expertise to the NOWC Board and leadership committees
5. The longevity of the organization and its operations are guaranteed through financial resilience, consistent staffing, continuity of programs, and a functional board of directors
6. NOWC retains professional and productive employees through competitive compensation and benefits, and a safe, inclusive, and comfortable workplace

Assessment Plan: Progress on these objectives and strategies will be measured quarterly through regional member meetings, and annually through a member satisfaction survey.

Aligned with Goal...	Program Deliverables	Priority Levels:			Led by	Supported by
		High	Med	Low		

Committees: MSC = Member Services; BDC = Business Development; GRC = Government Relations

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Objective 1: Support watershed council organizational development (board support, coordinator support)

Strategies:

- A.** Reach out to/onboard new WC Coordinators/Executive Directors
- B.** Assist individual WCs with organizational/logistic issues, according to needs/requests
- C.** Conduct or partner to offer training on DEI, leadership development, and fundraising for staff and boards.
- D.** Provide and maintain a statewide jobs board through the OrCP
- E.** Disseminate tools/guides on board and organizational best practices.
- F.** Provide new coordinators' handbook; provide training specific to new coordinators at remote and/or conference events
- G.** Establish formalized mentoring structure between experienced and newer council coordinators

NOWC ED	Board
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Objective 2: Provide and maintain a resource hub for information relevant to watershed councils (information, templates, expertise)

Strategies:

- A.** Provide and maintain a useful website, including a member facing page that has a clear structure that is searchable and easily accessible (i.e. a tag system) for the template library, resources/benefits; articulate incentives for membership dues
- B.** Provide regular webinars through the "NOWC Insider" series and the OrCP, Maintain links to the recordings on the NOWC website

NOWC ED	MSC
MSC	NOWC ED

- C. Disseminate emerging information, policy changes, summaries of regional/state/federal funding opportunities, DEI and other relevant trainings from other organizations.
- D. Provide & maintain template library of vetted, "sanitized" documents to support administrative capacity & promote best practices among WCs
- E. Provide a vetted list of professionals who provide services outside of NOWC's purview (i.e. interim directors, bookkeepers, accountants, website developers, facilitators, strategic plan consultants, contractors, etc.)
- F. Provide and maintain email listservs for all Coordinators/Directors, also grouped by regions

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

Board NOWC ED

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

NOWC ED Board

**Objective 3:
Effectively connect watershed councils with one another**

Strategies:

- A. Co-sponsor the biennial OrCP CONNECT+ conference; participate in the planning for technical, administrative, leadership and DEI sessions; coordinate on-site WC meetings and events
- B. Organize and coordinate four affinity groups on technical niche topics through the OrCP
- C. Organize "Watershed Management Camp", a biennial in-person networking and educational event for watershed Coordinators / Executive Directors and staff
- D. Hold remote quarterly meetings with each of six regions; send brief regional reports after each NOWC Board meeting
- E. Provide and maintain a Google group for Coordinators/Directors to connect with one another
- F. Maintain a Google group for WC Board members; forum for staff members
- G. Continue to reach out to engage councils not affiliated with NOWC

MSC NOWC ED

NOWC ED Board

MSC NOWC ED

Board NOWC ED

NOWC ED MSC

NOWC ED MSC

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

**Objective 4:
Add value to watershed council organizational, education and outreach endeavors**

Strategies:

- A. Provide an annual NOWC newsletter
- B. Produce an annual report: NOWC's impact + WCs impact
- C. Maintain an engaging social media calendar, plan and presence, work with OWEB on dissemination of stories
- D. Arrange organizational discounts/group rates for relevant expert services (i.e. bookkeeping, tax prep, financial review/audit, legal counsel, insurance, software)
- E. Coordinate and promote communications/media support from Gard Communication, through the OrCP
- F. Provide in-house coordination and assistance for obtaining federal funding, through the OrCP
- G. Provide and maintain a statewide jobs board through the OrCP

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

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Board NOWC ED

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

**Objective 5:
Represent and advocate for watershed councils (with state agencies and elected officials)**

Strategies:

- A. Meet regularly with OWEB leadership

NOWC ED Exec Cmte

- B.** Identify and select WCs to host annual legislative tours that showcase statewide projects and concerns; plan and facilitate tours
- C.** Meet with state legislators; work to proactively draft bills before they reach committees
- D.** Recommend reps to statewide RACs and other advisory groups as necessary.
- E.** Track legislation, provide testimony on relevant issues, report back to councils
- F.** Organize WCs and provide verbal and written testimony to the OWEB Board
- I.** Advocate to OWEB for the need to add capacity support for specific high-performing watershed councils that are not currently eligible.
- H.** Monitor commissions and agencies (i.e. ODFW, ODF, BLM, NOAA fisheries) for issues and potential actions to comment upon

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Aligned with Goal...
1 2 3 4 5 6

Organizational Growth

Priority Levels:
High Med Low

Committees: MSC = Member Services; BDC = Business Development; GRC = Government Relations
Led by Supported by

Objective 1: Leadership Development: Expand the NOWC Board and Committees to bring desired skillsets, capacity to contribute time/expertise, and/or identify as a member of an underrepresented/underserved community

- Strategies:**
- A.** Establish a board committee to develop a matrix for additional board roles based on expertise, such as legal or financial, recruit/engage retain colleagues and outside experts
 - B.** Establish a board committee to gather/develop regional stories for earned media, interface with Gard Communications
 - C.** Recruit/retain board members representing or from underresourced/ underserved members of Oregon's watershed council community
 - D.** Develop more intentional plan for filling regional representative positions on the NOWC Board
 - E.** Review committee charters to ensure they align with this strategic plan
 - F.** Appoint ad hoc committees from broad WC membership as needed (i.e. management camp planning committee)

Exec Cmte	NOWC ED
Board	NOWC ED
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Exec Cmte	NOWC ED
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Objective 2: Funding: Seek and obtain funding from a variety of sources to ensure long-term organizational stability

- Strategies:**
- A.** Continue to strengthen the Business Development Committee, integrate with the Member Services Committee
 - B.** Maintain current funding: collaborate on admin and program planning through the OrCP; Evaluate funding, role, and relationship of OrCP in relation to NOWC goals
 - C.** Pursue grant/sponsorship/donation funding from agencies/foundations/companies to support NOWC staff capacity/FTE; support training for WC members; operating reserve
 - D.** Assess the membership fee structure to ensure optimal fee structure is in place.
 - E.** Establish an affiliate membership structure, website presence and recruitment campaign.

BDC	NOWC ED
NOWC ED	Board
NOWC ED	BDC
Exec Cmte	Board
NOWC ED	BDC

F. Advocate to OWEB for the need for additional capacity support for NOWC staff salaries

Exec Cmte

BDC

**Objective 3:
Ensure that NOWC is advancing according to this Strategic plan, effectively serving watershed councils**

Strategies:

A. Conduct review of strategic plan

B. Establish firm structure/calendar for admin tasks/long-range planning based on this strategic plan; develop an operations manual (companion document to the Bylaws; how decisions are made and work happens)

C. Conduct thorough staff evaluations/self evaluations.

D. Annually review salary/benefits package to ensure comparable/competitive with similar organizations.

E. Survey WCs to assess satisfaction with NOWC services, inventory emerging needs; review and incorporate feedback into strategic plan, committee charters, ED work plan as appropriate.

F. Reach out to other, similar statewide watershed council organizations to explore their approach and practices.

G. Appoint the Executive Director position at a full FTE to engage and retain qualified organizational leadership

Exec Cmte

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Board

Assessment Plan: Progress on these objectives and strategies will be measured quarterly through regional member meetings, and annually through a member satisfaction survey.