



Harney Groundwater RAC Discussion Groups

9/9/24

AGENDA

- **Why discussion groups? And how do we want them to work?**
- **Proposed framework for discussion groups**
- **Forming groundwater model scenarios**
 - **Process**
 - **What has the RAC and OWRD already done?**
 - **What other information would help the discussion on 9/16?**
- **Assessing fiscal impacts**
 - **Process**
 - **What has the RAC and OWRD already said?**
 - **What other information would help the discussion on 9/17?**
- **Prepping for 9/16 and 9/17**

Why discussion groups?

- Managing groundwater is complex, more discussion is helpful
- An opportunity brainstorm additional options and considerations to give back to the RAC
- The RAC is the primary place for making advisory recommendations to OWRD
- The Water Resources Commission still makes decisions
- Discussion groups will be public, noticed, recorded, and notes taken

How will discussion groups work?

- Normally–Will meet every Monday from 10-11:30AM via Zoom, with an in-person option for folks without strong internet
- We do anticipate some full-day workshops to make some concentrated progress, but only as needed
- Facilitated by Oregon Consensus, with support from High Desert Partnership
- Process guidelines
 - Assume good intentions, be aware of the impact of what you say
 - WAIT
 - “Why am I talking”
 - “Why am I not talking”



Proposed Framework and Next Steps

9/9/24

Proposed Framework

Crosscutting Discussions:

1) Modeled management scenarios

2) Fiscal impacts of potential management scenarios

3)
Understanding
Current
Conditions

4) Defining
Success:
Setting Goals
for Groundwater
Management

5) Achieving
Success:
Management
Actions

6) Achieving
Success:
Voluntary
Approaches

7) Achieving
Success:
Regulatory
Approaches

3) Understanding current conditions

- “Sub-area” boundaries
- Basin-wide and sub-area problem definitions (groundwater level trends and known or potential impacts)
- Prioritization of “sub-areas”

4) Defining Success: Setting Goals for Groundwater Management

- Indicators of sustainability (quantification where possible)
- Groundwater level goals (rate, magnitude, timing) for sub-areas
- Measuring and monitoring success – identifying representative monitoring sites/data sets to know when goals have been achieved

5) Achieving Success: Management Actions

- Proposed reductions in groundwater use for “sub-areas” to avoid problems and achieve goals (amount, location, timing, “allocation,” etc)
- Review of potential management actions to achieve reductions in groundwater use (confirm scope of rules)
- Adaptive management considerations

Other management actions:

- Classification/allowed future uses of groundwater
- Water use measurement and reporting
- Well construction
- Others?

6) Achieving Success: Voluntary Approaches

- Voluntary agreements
 - Boundaries
 - Goals/objectives
 - Proposed reductions/approach
 - Management tools?
 - Governance
 - Interim milestones
 - Triggers for regulatory action
- Voluntary forfeiture of groundwater rights (CREP)
- Other actions (within the scope of the rulemaking process)
- Adaptive management considerations

7) Achieving Success: Regulatory Approaches

- Critical groundwater management area designation (CGWMA)
- Corrective controls under a CGWMA
 - Basin closed to further appropriation
 - Disposition of undeveloped rights
 - Establishment of permissible total withdrawal (PTW)
 - Setting a PTW (methodology, scale, GW goal)
 - Timing for achieving PTW
 - Allocation of PTW
 - Other measures to protect public welfare, health and safety
 - Permissible changes in thermal characteristics of GW or closing further appropriate for thermal characteristics
- Triggers for state intervention
- Adaptive management considerations
- Enforcement of decline conditions in permits
- Forfeiture of unused groundwater rights

Near-term Steps

September 16 Focus: Management Scenarios to Model

September 17 Focus: Fiscal Impact Statement

What we're doing to prepare:

- Reviewing past RAC meetings (transcripts in process)
- Reaching out to subject matter experts to invite their participation
- Developing discussion guides
- Gathering supporting materials

What you can do:

- Identify potential supporting materials
- Come prepared to discuss

1) Cross-cutting Discussion: Modeled Management Scenarios

Ingredients for developing a management scenario:

At a minimum...

- Amount of proposed pumping reductions
- Location of proposed pumping reductions

More complicated inputs...

- Timing of proposed pumping reductions (transitions and triggers)
- Allocation of proposed pumping reductions (by priority or proportional reductions or other)

1) Cross-cutting Discussion: Modeled Management Scenarios

Current scenarios

- The USGS has already run two scenarios - 1) no change into the future and 2) no groundwater pumping (at all) into the future (both are hypothetical and not actual alternatives)
- OWRD is running 2-3 scenarios developed by OWRD
- OSU has run 15 scenarios (in partnership with USGS) - not yet available
- TNC has been exploring the model
- A group of local irrigators has been exploring the model
- RAC can develop 2-3 scenarios to run in the model

1) Cross-cutting Discussion: Modeled Management Scenarios

Focus of workshop on September 16

- Discuss various inputs/ingredients and options for developing 2-3 scenarios to model (actual scenarios will be decided by the RAC at the October meeting)
 - Delineation of subareas
 - Current conditions
 - Current and future problems we are trying to avoid
 - Management goal(s)
 - Proposed reductions (location, amount, timing, allocation)
- Model scenarios won't tell us HOW to achieve reductions - still need to discuss both voluntary and regulatory approaches

1) Cross-cutting Discussion: Modeled Management Scenarios

What information would aid us in this discussion?

- Understanding of existing model runs (what has been done already?)
- ArcGIS map/explorer from OWRD
(<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/2db5f0d5e50142138304801e09b72fb7/>)
- Guidance from OWRD on the model and developing management scenarios
- Updated groundwater level trends analyses from OWRD
- Map with the 2018 groundwater level contours
- Map with current groundwater level trends

2) Cross-cutting Discussion: Fiscal Impacts

Management scenarios allow us to assess potential fiscal impacts

Focus of workshop on September 17

- Level setting on fiscal impact statement - what is the minimum requirement?
- Review past RAC feedback on the fiscal impact statement
- Begin to assemble subject matter experts and available resources
- Inventory “categories of impact” of different scenarios discussed on September 16
- Discuss potential approach and methodology for assessing impacts

2) Cross-cutting Discussion: Fiscal Impacts

What information would aid us in this discussion?

- How can we incorporate existing tools (e.g., CREP) into this analysis? Has anyone produced an analysis on this?
- Groundwater allocation RAC FIS - fiscal impacts without rules/under status quo scenario
- Existing information, process used, experts consulted by OWRD in the development of the FIS?
- Handout of discussion on the laws and administrative rules for FIS



Next Steps

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