

2024-2025

OWRD WORKPLAN FOR STRATEGIC AND
DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION PLAN

OREGON



WATER RESOURCES
DEPARTMENT

STATE OF OREGON

2024-2025

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Introduction and Status of Strategic and DEI Plan Development

In January 2023, Governor Kotek outlined expectations for state agencies in Oregon. These expectations included developing agency Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Strategic Plans. Agencies were to develop a workplan for the development of their DEI Plan by June 1, 2023, and submit their Strategic Plan by June 2024. Agencies had the option to develop an integrated Strategic Plan and DEI Plan.

The Oregon Water Resource Department (OWRD) believes that one integrated plan holistically advances diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) work and has opted to undertake a combined approach. The Department believes that it is not the responsibility of a few people in the agency, or of the DEI Team, but rather that it is the collective duty of all to create a culture that is welcoming to all, values different backgrounds and experiences, fosters a sense of belonging, and serves all Oregonians equitably. As such, the Department's objective is to integrate its DEIJ work throughout operations and programs. The Department seeks to identify components within the Strategic Plan that fulfill the agency's DEIJ objectives through an integrated Strategic and DEI Plan.

The Department submitted a draft integrated DEI Plan and Strategic workplan by the June 1, 2023, deadline for DEI Plan workplans. The original workplan was developed before Strategic Plan guidance was released by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Additionally, there were several uncertainties when the DEI workplan was submitted; particularly in regard to OWRD's budget as well as when a new agency director would be hired. Therefore, OWRD's workplan reflected that it would likely need to be modified once it had a better understanding of these uncertainties.

Since then, the 2023 session adjourned, and the agency understands its budget. Unfortunately, the agency did not receive funding or staff to support DEI-EJ work, which means that it has had to re-evaluate its approach from what was originally considered in its workplan (more details in the sections below). Further, the agency anticipates that it cannot afford to hire a consultant to assist with development of the Strategic and DEI Plan this biennium. Given that this work is to occur every three years for Strategic Plans and every two years for DEI Plans, the agency will need to develop approaches that work within and leverage existing resources, processes, and staffing.

OWRD believes that it is essential for the next Director to be involved in leading the planning effort. The agency initially anticipated that it would have a new director in Fall of 2023 and submitted its first workplan with that understanding; however, the recruitment process has taken longer than anticipated. The next Director is slated to be confirmed at the end of May with a start date of July 1 if confirmed.

After conferring with DAS and the Governor's Office, it was agreed that the Department would instead submit an updated workplan by the June 1, 2024, deadline including additional context for developing the next plan, information on work done to date, and a 2019-2024 Strategic Plan progress report. This document is intended to fulfill those deliverables. Although the new director proposed for confirmation is an internal candidate, it is likely that there will still need to be adjustments to the workplan given that he has not had the opportunity yet to fully weigh due to the timing of the announcement of his nomination and the due date of this workplan.

Updates on Related Agency Work

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

In its prior workplan, OWRD had proposed that it would provide Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training to managers and staff prior to beginning work to develop the plan. During the end of the last biennium, the agency, in partnership with the DEI Team, identified trainings last year and required managers to attend a four-part series to broaden their understanding of DEI concepts and increase their comfort level with having discussions around DEI issues. The DEI team also worked with two consultants to offer on a voluntary basis, trainings for staff and managers. These trainings were well received by those that attended; however, OWRD needs to identify actions to help put training into practice, and to integrate this work into everyday program functions and as part of our culture. The agency is evaluating whether it can find additional funding for DEI training for this biennium, given that it does not have a dedicated budget for DEI training. Another option may be to look for free training resources and have a staff person to help facilitate.

One effort that may help to continue focus on learning is a new effort by the DEI Team. The DEI Team recently launched a discussion group called Coffee and Conversations, which all staff (including managers) are invited to attend. Coffee and Conversations is an agency-wide, hour-long, informal learning opportunity and discussion group hosted quarterly by the DEI Team. Discussions will be on various brief educational materials, such as articles, videos, and podcasts. Coffee and Conversations is aimed at the goal of creating more discussion and thought related to DEI topics within OWRD. The topics discussed will hopefully be implemented into participants' day-to-day work and improve interpersonal relationships. It's an opportunity for folks to exchange ideas, appreciate the multitude of diversity in the agency, and broaden their perspective.

The agency is still investigating its options for an organizational assessment (as proposed to be completed in its prior workplan), but with a focus on less tailored and more affordable options, given that it was unable to obtain the resources for this budget cycle. Two members of OWRD leadership are participating in the Natural Resources DEI Cohort led by the Office of Cultural Change and the Department is sending a staff member to DAS meetings related to Strategic Plans.

This update is intended to focus on a few select activities of the agency previously identified in the agency workplan and is not intended to be exhaustive. Additional information can be found in the OWRD's:

- [Environmental Justice Report](#)
- [Government-to-Government Report](#)
- Affirmative Action Plan (on file)
- [Integrated Water Resources Strategy](#) (see below)

Integrated Water Resources Strategy

OWRD, in partnership with other state agencies, has been working to update the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The Integrated Water Resources Strategy is intended to address water quantity, water quality and ecosystem needs in an integrated manner, identifying recommended actions to meet our instream and out-of-stream water needs now and into the future. This update has included an

increased focus on equity. See the [first draft here](#). Agencies anticipated that the IWRS would influence the agency's Strategic Plans, workplans, budget requests, and legislative concepts; however, development has taken longer than anticipated.

Most recently, the Governor's office in mid-April asked agencies to pause development until new leadership at OWRD and other state agencies (ODA, ODFW and OWEB) can be involved in the process. As a result, it is likely that OWRD will be working to complete both the IWRS and the Strategic and DEI Plan at the same time. Agencies will be working in partnership with the Governor's office to determine next steps.

Governor's January 2023 Expectations

Employee Engagement Survey

The agency has sought to ensure that efforts are coordinated and integrated; therefore, the agency structured the 2023 staff engagement survey to provide initial foundational information for development of the next Strategic and DEI Plan. More discussion of this work is included later in this document.

Information Technology Strategic Plan

In December 2023, OWRD completed its IT Strategic Plan. The IS Section employed Info-Tech to facilitate survey diagnostics to help ascertain the current state of customer satisfaction, and the importance and effectiveness of core IT processes. The results yielded an overall satisfaction score of 64% with an IT value score of 73%. Two diagnostics together along with work sessions with IS Staff resulted in the identification of six key IT processes needing attention. Those core IT processes included: IT Strategy and Governance, Stakeholder Management, Project Management, Data Architecture and Governance, and Project Portfolio Management.

The IS Section's primary goal is to improve its IT maturity level, currently to move from Firefighter status to a Trusted Operator. By improving the section's maturity level, it will improve its ability to support the business as it strives to achieve its strategic priorities of modernization, securing Oregon's water future, and fostering a forward-looking team. More than ever before, the agency's broader strategic priorities rely on technology and improved IT maturity will enable the IS Section to meet those technological needs.

Further information can be found in the Department's IT Strategic Plan. As the Department seeks to identify priorities for the Strategic and DEI Plan, the agency must consider the IT needs to fulfill those priorities.

Progress Report and Current Strategic Projects

As called for in its first workplan, the agency developed a progress report on its implementation of the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, which is intended to inform the development of the next Strategic Plan. The progress report outlines work the agency has recently completed as well as work underway. More detailed discussion is included later in appendix C.

In developing its next Strategic Plan, OWRD is required to develop an action plan, identifying projects, strategic plan goal, strategic plan priority, project sponsor, project manager, status, and notes. OWRD

currently employs a similar tracking approach for priority projects. Its current project tracker is included in Appendix D.

Overview of DAS Guidance on DEI Plans and Strategic Plans

DAS Guidance on DEI Plans

The Governor's office published the 2021 State of Oregon [DEI Action Plan](#) as a reference document for DEI plan development. The Action Plan identified 10 key strategies for advancing DEI work across State of Oregon agencies. As part of the guidance to agencies for development of the DEI Plan, DAS has identified five areas of focus that must be addressed in the final plan: inclusive communications, community engagement, data, and diversifying the workforce and workplace inclusion.

DAS has also provided the following information to help evaluate DEI Plans:

- What are the outcome(s) you are hoping to create with this plan?
- How are actions and resources SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound)?
- How did you engage impacted multiple communities when creating the plan?
- What disaggregated data and landscape assessments did you explore or conduct to inform your plan?
- (for external facing agencies) What are your targets in terms of service to the communities you serve?
- How will this plan increase equity?
- How does this plan center race?
- How does this plan impact your budget, investment decisions, and/or resources? How are you prioritizing resources for this impact?
- How will you track progress and analyze impact?
- How do you plan on communicating your progress on the plan?
- What have you learned from this process?

DAS Guidance on Strategic Plans

The following list outlines all the strategic plan requirements as specified by DAS. The asterisk (*) denotes the sections that were included in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan, while the caret (^) represents sections that are partially included in the Department's existing plan.

- Vision*
- Mission*
- Values*
- Equity Statement
- Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis
- Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental (PESTLE) Analysis
- Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-Bound (SMART) Goals

- Include at least one goal related to Oregon Tribes and one goal related to achieving Diversity Equity and Inclusion.
- Strategy Development^
- Action Plan^
- Resource Allocation
- Monitoring and Evaluation

DAS has provided the following framework for evaluating Strategic Plans:

- Mission - Does the plan articulate a clear mission statement that reflects the agency's mandate?
- Objectives - Does the plan articulate high-level priorities that align to the organization's mission?
- Considerations - Does the plan indicate analysis of external factors that could impact achievement of mission? Does the plan reflect the agency's DEI-EJ plan? Does the plan incorporate the agency's IT Strategic Plan?
- Monitoring - Does the plan describe a process for performance monitoring and accountability? Does the plan describe an approach for regular reporting to ensure transparency?
- Goals - Does the plan articulate concrete goals that align to stated priorities? Are goals Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Timebound?
- Development process - Did agency engage their community in the development of priority areas? Did agency consult with Governor's Policy advisors to shape priorities?

Analyses Conducted to Date in Preparation for Strategic and DEI Plan Development

This section includes initial information to be utilized as the agency moves forward to develop its Strategic and DEI Plan.

Pre-2023 Workplan Outreach and Preliminary DEI Focus Areas

Work commenced in the spring of 2023 with the convening of a DEI workplan Committee, followed by a staff survey, workshop, drop-in hours, and one-on-one conversations to help formulate the DEI Plan, which then became an integrated workplan after DAS issued revised expectations. The work during this phase primarily focused on DEI as Strategic Plan guidance was not yet released.

Potential Key DEI Strategies and Focus Areas Identified in Spring 2023

As part of the guidance to agencies for development of the DEI Plan, DAS identified five areas of focus from the 2021 State of Oregon [DEI Action Plan](#) reference document, that must be addressed in the final plan: inclusive communications, community engagement, data, and diversifying the workforce and workplace inclusion.

OWRD, through its engagement with the DEI Team and other staff, has affirmed that much of the agency's DEI work falls within these categories. Preliminary areas of focus are identified below. Additional areas of focus may be identified during development of the Strategic and DEI Plan and Statewide Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

Identified action items below within each focus area are intended to provide examples of areas under consideration by the agency and are subject to change during the planning process.

Community Engagement:

- Identifying actions and resources to incorporate community engagement more consistently and proactively in agency work, and advance best practices and requirements of the updated Environmental Justice Laws from 2022.
- Providing staff training to conduct meaningful engagement, utilizing approaches based on the International Association for Public Participation (“IAP2”) spectrum of public participation that are appropriate for each project.
- Increasing understanding across all program areas of the importance and role of community engagement and necessity to better address water needs of environmental justice communities.

Inclusive Internal and External Communications:

- Develop inclusive strategic communications action plan.
- Identify agency information to be translated into target languages.
- Identify accessibility gaps and expand opportunities to participate and engage by ensuring e-reader compatibility, captions, transitioning from written to spoken word, and other accessibility tools.

Data:

- Identify data gaps in water management, community engagement, and accessibility.
- Improve understanding of the impacts of agency decision-making on environmental justice communities.
- Identifying tools and resources to assess community’s needs, cultural preferences, and barriers to engagement.
- Increase water data accessibility to all Oregonians.

Decision making and budgets:

- Facilitate greater and more diverse engagement in agency decision-making (rules, budget, legislation, plans, etc.).
- Assess impacts of potential decisions on environmental justice communities.
- Develop programs that address the needs of environmental justice communities.

Diversifying workforce and internal culture: Ensuring that our workforce reflects the diversity of Oregon communities is essential to our ability to provide services to all Oregonians. To be successful, we must also create an environment that is welcoming and values different life experiences and perspectives. A wider range of perspectives fosters creativity and innovation and enables the agency to better serve its diverse stakeholders. We must work to not only increase diversity of our workforce through recruitment, but also foster a culture where all staff can thrive. Examples include:

- Outreach to students and young adults to generate greater interest and understanding of water issues and water as a career.
- Implement Affirmative Action Plan to advance recruitment, selection, and retention that supports a diverse workforce and inclusive work environment.
- Creating a cultural shift, including providing training and other opportunities for staff to better understand DEI best practices and their role in creating a more inclusive environment.

Key Considerations from DEI Team

To inform development of the first workplan, the Department held a workshop, offered individual meetings, and hosted presentations with the agency's DEI Team. Feedback provided by the DEI Team from these events emphasized three main priorities for consideration as we develop and implement our integrated DEI Plan.

(1) Prioritize internal culture change and workforce diversity recognizing the importance of creating a more diverse and inclusive internal culture, as well as diversifying the workforce to ensure the agency's success in the future.

(2) Allow enough time for a third-party organizational assessment, while this is a key priority for the DEI team and was included in the Departments 2023-25 Agency Requested Budget, the funding was not included in the 2023-25 legislatively adopted budget. The Department is exploring an alternative that is more cost effective and determining whether it can cover the cost of the assessment through administrative savings.

(3) Provide adequate time for stakeholders, staff, and sovereigns to engage, while respecting their capacity and availability. Where possible, the agency will seek to build upon existing work and information to be respectful of internal and external parties' time and resources.

Draft PESTLE Analysis

A Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental Analysis (PESTLE) analysis evaluates external factors impacting an organization: political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental. Political factors include government policies; economic factors encompass growth rates and inflation; social factors consider demographics and cultural norms; technological factors evaluate innovations; legal factors assess regulatory frameworks; and environmental factors examine sustainability concerns. This analysis helps identify opportunities and threats for informed decision-making. Appendix B includes an initial draft analysis, which will be updated as the Strategic and DEI planning process progresses.

Since completing this draft analysis, the agency has received some information that the Governor's office is interested in water policy improvements. Four attorneys submitted a joint letter to the Governor's office, identifying key issue areas. Those areas include concerns about (in no particular order): (a) the critical need for efficient collection, sharing, and use of high quality water data; (b) the need for robust, coordinated water planning and management systems premised on integrated and place-based principles; (c) the need for a less rigid, more efficient water rights administrative system; (d) the need for better recognition and integration of Oregon's Native American Tribes and their traditional knowledge into state water policy development and administration; (e) the need for more attention to water security and equitable access to water resources by all Oregonians; and (f) the need for sufficient and sustained funding to appropriately manage water resources and administer water rights. OWRD will be taking this into account as it moves forward.

Employee Engagement Survey and Other Observations

The information in the prior section primarily focused on DEI topics due the focus of its early work, this next section focuses on preliminary analysis of some of the key areas identified in guidance for Strategic Plans, and to some extent DEI work.

Snapshot of Employee Engagement Survey Results

In the fall of 2023, the Department conducted an Employee Engagement Survey with several questions aimed at informing the strategic planning effort. The following section will evaluate the Departments mission, goals, vision, and values and highlight some key employee engagement survey results. Survey responses ranged from “1” being “strongly disagree” to “5” being “strongly agree.” The agency also asked three open-ended questions. The Department acknowledges that the survey alone cannot supplant the need for more focused engagement for the Strategic Plan, but it does identify some key items to consider.

Gallup Q12 Question	Benchmark Percentile	Mean
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.	27	3.57
I have a best friend at work.	31	2.98
I know what is expected of me at work.	33	4.13
I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.	42	3.91
My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.	45	3.99
The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.	50	3.96
In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.	56	3.47
At work, my opinions seem to count.	56	3.71
How satisfied are you with your company as a place to work?	56	3.8
There is someone at work who encourages my development.	56	3.84
This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.	61	4.04
In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.	63	3.98
My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.	71	4.43

Additional Engagement Questions	Mean
I am well informed about what is going on at my agency.	3.22
I feel encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things.	3.41
I plan to be working at my agency two years from now.	3.87
At work, I feel comfortable being myself.	3.9
Everyone at this agency is treated fairly regardless of ethnic background, race, gender, age, disability, or other differences not related to job performance.	3.99
I feel like a valued member of my team.	4.08
I strongly believe in my agency's values.	4.17
I understand how my role supports the overall business strategy of my agency.	4.17
My manager tries to understand my point of view.	4.25
How often do you feel burned out at work	N/A Percent

Mission, Goals and Vision Statement

The Department's mission is to serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management through two key goals:

- To directly address Oregon's water supply needs.
- To restore and protect streamflow's and watersheds to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's ecosystems, economy, and quality of life.

The vision of the Water Resources Department is to assure sufficient and sustainable water supplies are available to meet current and future needs.

The agency's mission was last updated in 1993. During that time the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board was also a part of the agency. Since 1993, the agency has grown and added new programs, while the agency's authority on watershed restoration and protection has been narrowed to primarily instream flows and stream restoration, as well as integrated water planning, as a result of the formation of OWEB as a separate agency.

Two questions were asked in the employee engagement survey to evaluate the mission, vision, and goals of the Department. One prompt asked whether, "The mission or purpose of my company (OWRD) makes me feel my job is important." The mean response was 3.96 with 75% marking "agree" or "strongly agree," 13% marking "disagree" or "strongly disagree," and 13% marking "neutral." According to the Gallup index, this score is in the 50th percentile for Government (City/County/State); therefore, there is an opportunity to better strengthen staff ties to the agency's mission.

The agency also included an open-ended question asking staff to describe the agency's purpose in three words/phrases. Below is a summary of frequently used words in staff responses; words highlighted in yellow are referenced in the agency's current mission, vision, or goals (see Table 1). The topmost frequently used words appear in the agency's mission, vision or goals, with the exception of "resource." However, there are several components of the current mission, vision, or goals that are not captured or rarely captured.

Table 1: Summary of Frequently Used Words by Staff to Describe OWRD Purpose

Commonly used phrases and words	Frequency
"manage" (manage, management)	62
"resource" (natural resources, resource protection, water resources, etc.)	51
"protect"	41
"future"	20
"serv" (service/serve)	17
"public"	11
"sustain" (sustainable/sustainably/sustainability)	11
"people"	9
"regulate"	9
"law"	8
"water rights"	8
"equit" (equitably)	7
"responsib" (responsible/responsibly)	7

"stream"	7
"conserv" (conserve/conservation)	6
"current"	6
"plan"	6
"supply"	6
"data"	5
"instream"	5
"monitor"	5
"steward"	5

These words are highlighted below in the vision, mission, and goals:

The Department's mission is to serve the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management through two key goals:

- To directly address Oregon's water supply needs
- To restore and protect streamflow's and watersheds to ensure the long-term sustainability of Oregon's ecosystems, economy, and quality of life.

The vision of the Water Resources Department is to assure sufficient and sustainable water supplies are available to meet current and future needs.

Given that the agency's mission and vision have not undergone review for over 30 years, the Department recommends review to ensure alignment with the current focus and priorities of the agency, as well as with the present and future realities of water management. As the Department considers whether to update the mission, vision, and goals, leadership should consider the legislatively mandated duties, existing workloads, future needs for agency services, and SWOT and PESTLE factors.

OWRD Core Values

The agency's core values are:

Integrity – We are accountable for all that we do. We act with honesty and promote transparency.

Service – We are dedicated to providing outstanding service and treating everyone equitably in our management and stewardship of state resources.

Technical Excellence – We base our resource decisions on law, science, and expertise.

Teamwork – We are united in our mission, relying on one another and working together with the communities we serve.

Forward-Looking – We seek innovative and practical solutions to the water challenges of today and tomorrow.

These core values were first established in 2019 during 2019-2024 Strategic Plan development. A dedicated team of staff invested significant time and effort in engaging staff and leadership to develop and implement our core values. Additionally, the team created branding for our offices, including business cards, email signatures, and posters. The Department continues to center our core values in

the work we do. Our core values are regularly discussed and are incorporated into section meetings, as well as periodically into all-staff meetings.

During the Employee Engagement Survey, we asked staff the question, “I strongly believe in my agency’s values.” The average score was 4.17 out of 5, with 81% of respondents either “strongly agreeing” or “agreeing,” while no respondents marked “strongly disagree” and only 5% marked “disagree.”

OWRD also separately received one unsolicited comment from a staff member regarding our core value “forward-looking.” The staff member requested that it be changed to “foresight.”

Based on the Employee Engagement Survey results, the significant effort and resources put into developing, implementing, and branding our core values, and the agency’s current need to prioritize limited resources, we do not recommend undertaking an effort to change the core values at this time.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Culture

OWRD included two questions in the engagement survey that were aimed at better understanding diversity, equity and inclusion at the agency. The first asked if staff felt that “everyone at the agency was treated fairly, irrespective of their ethnic background, race, gender, age, disability, or any other characteristic unrelated to job performance.” The mean response was 3.99 with 21% “neutral,” 71% “agree” or “strongly agree,” 3% “strongly disagree,” and 5% “disagree.”

The second question asked whether at work, staff felt comfortable being themselves, resulting in a score of 3.90. This included 36% “agree,” 33% “strongly agree,” 8% “disagree,” 21% “neutral,” 8% “disagrees,” and 1% “strongly disagrees” responses.

Though not initially included as a DEI measure, two other metrics provide some additional context. “My manager tries to understand my point of view” had a mean of 4.25, the second highest mean score of all of the questions with a breakdown of 48% “strongly agree,” 36% “agree,” 11% “neutral,” “disagree,” “strongly disagrees.” Another question, “At work, my opinions seem to count,” had a mean score of 3.71 with a breakdown of 6% “strongly disagree,” 10% “disagree,” 19% “neutral,” 37% “agree,” 28% “strongly agree.” Looking at the next question below provides additional context for these scores. While managers are attentive to staff, there are a number of challenges that the agency faces in empowering them.

OWRD included one question in our Employee Engagement Survey to help us better understand what staff think about the culture of the agency. Some of the most frequent positive and negative themes that came up are listed below. The positive themes reflect many aspects of our core values, while the negative responses are somewhat reflective of insufficient resources, agency growth and the addition of many new staff to the agency, as well as high workloads/demands on the agency.

The agency will need to consider the culture it seeks to develop, including one of inclusion and belonging, as it develops priorities in its plans. OWRD also acknowledges that culture change may take time and is less tangible but is an important component of helping the agency succeed in serving Oregonians, advancing its DEI work, and ultimately fulfilling its mission and vision.

Positive Response Themes		
Teamwork	Friendly, well intended, helpful, caring, welcoming	Professional
Hardworking / dedicated	Collaborative / Cooperative / Supportive	Quality / excellence

Negative Response Themes		
Workload/ Chaotic / inefficient	Lack of priority / reactive	Silos / Disconnects: sections, mgmt. / staff, field
Slow to change / growing pains	Lack of career development / recognition	Lack of accountability of staff

Other Engagement Survey Findings

This section includes a few additional select highlights from the employee engagement survey findings. Additional review of survey results will occur as the agency progresses with plan development.

Communication - The prior Strategic Plan efforts identified internal communications as an area in need of improvement. The agency has made some progress in this area through improvements to the Hydraulic Connection publication (a monthly internal newsletter), asking staff what questions they have for all staff quarterly meetings, and providing select informational sessions on work being undertaken.

The 2023 Engagement Survey asked whether staff feel “well informed about what is going on at the agency” with an overall mean score of 3.22 this included 11% “strongly agree,” 8% “strongly disagree,” with 55% falling at or below a 3. Additionally, in the open-ended questions staff mentioned working in silos and feeling disconnected from the rest of the agency.

Based on these results, work remains to improve communications within the agency. In developing next steps, the agency needs to ask more detailed questions to understand what staff need in order to understand how the agency can improve communications and information.

Workload – Workload was a common theme in the open-ended questions of the Engagement Survey. In addition, the survey asked, “How often do you feel burned out at work.” 5% of respondents marked “always,” 26% said “often,” and 45% said “sometimes.” Only 20% said “rarely” and 4% said “never.” This is an important consideration as any initiatives identified as part of the Strategic Plan need to be attainable and recognize staff workloads and capacity. Adding additional initiatives will require prioritization and making the hard choices on what the agency is not going to do.

Progress Report on 2019-2024 Strategic Plan

OWRD has developed a progress report summarizing where the Department has made progress to implement the current Strategic Plan (see appendix C). In reviewing the report, there are two key observations to consider as we develop our next Strategic Plan. First, it may be beneficial to review our mission, vision, and goals to ensure they reflect our current environment and challenges. Second, OWRD should consider modifying our strategic priorities and objectives to better align with the Department’s authority and ongoing work, ensuring a coherent and effective approach to our responsibilities.

Through evaluation of the Department’s current and past projects and their respective associated priorities and objectives, the Department has observed that some of the objectives are either overly broad or are too narrow. When objectives are overly broad, it can result in a lack of focus, making it challenging for the agency to allocate resources and prioritize, develop meaningful metrics and benchmarks, and measure impacts. It can also result in a strategic framework that is overly complex, difficult to communicate, and challenging to implement.

When priorities are too narrow, critical aspects of the agency's mission or mandate may be overlooked or neglected. This can result in important issues going unaddressed, limit the Department's ability to adapt to changing circumstances, missed opportunities to have a broader impact, and can result in disjointed efforts.

Some of these dynamics may be evident in the Gallup employee engagement survey findings, which highlight concerns regarding clarity on agency priorities and projects, role expectations, decision-making authority, the existence of silos, and challenges with coordination and collaboration. Therefore, the agency should, to the extent it seeks to use the existing 2019-2024 Strategic Plan framework as a starting point, ensure that it refines the priorities to attempt to achieve the right level.

Overly broad objectives within the Strategic Plan fall under priorities 1 and 2. More specific overlaps are identified below.

- Objective 1.1, "Advance responsible groundwater and surface water management" has the most overlap, as it includes both data and management elements, and its broad nature results in projects that advance several other priorities (1.2, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 1.3).
- Objective "1.3 Increase protection of public safety and health" and "2.3 Invest in Oregon's built and natural water infrastructure," overlap as the agency's public safety and health efforts relate to built infrastructure (well construction, dam safety).
- Objective "2.1 Understand Oregon's expected future water supply" and "2.2 Equip basins to plan for their water future" as well as advance responsible water management overlap in the areas of data collection and analysis; it may be helpful to create a priority that focuses on data instead of pulling it into several objectives.

Regarding narrower priorities where meeting water needs are concerned (2.3 built and natural infrastructure, 1.1 responsible management, and 1.4 instream and water conservation), there may be a need to evaluate whether these are too narrow and could be combined in some form. The Department should work on identifying a concise list of clear and actionable priorities that can be accomplished over the three-year plan timeline.

Two objectives that were focused on internal staff are also too narrow.

- Objective "3.1 Maintain technical excellence and improve customer service by investing in training for staff" focuses solely on training without addressing other essential elements contributing to workplace excellence. Some of the examples are broader than training and are consistent with actions required by the Department of Administrative Services and the Governor's Expectations. While training is crucial for skill development and knowledge enhancement, maintaining excellence involves a multifaceted approach. The employee engagement survey results provide some additional insights.
- Objective "3.2 Improve agency communications" has a narrow focus on internal communication and does not include an external focus. At the time of adopting this objective in 2019, the agency lacked dedicated communications personnel. Since then, the agency has received funding for two dedicated communications staff members and three public engagement coordinators. Significant gaps persist in both internal and external communications, and efforts are underway to enhance public engagement. Furthermore, communications and public engagement play pivotal roles in advancing the agency's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Environmental Justice (DEI-EJ) initiatives. Therefore, the agency should contemplate expanding the scope of this objective.

In addition, the progress report identifies completed and ongoing projects and responsibilities. The Department wants to ensure any changes made to the strategic plan are aligned with the agency's ongoing responsibilities and projects. There is space to reconsider whether projects are aligned with the mission, vision, and goals of the agency. However, most of the work the agency does is in direct response to the legislature, Governor's Office, the Department of Administrative Services, and critical areas of public interest (i.e., drought and dry domestic wells). With limited financial resources and staff capacity, OWRD must prioritize and clearly articulate priorities, being mindful that new projects without additional resources may result in other work not being done.

Lastly, the 2019-24 Strategic Plan lacked a clear focus on integration of diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice practices and principles. However, the projects undertaken in the 2019-2024 Progress Report demonstrate that the agency is pivoting its focus; there is an opportunity to be more intentional in the new plan. While creating a DEI plan is a requirement, the agency independently recognizes the critical importance of embedding DEI-EJ principles into agency programs and projects to better serve all Oregonians.

Draft Workplan

Planning Staffing Structure – Roles and Responsibilities

Coordinator: A coordinator will conduct day-to-day work and preparations for planning activities. This individual will develop materials, coordinate with the Strategic Plan Committee, DEI Team, IWRS team, IT Strategic Plan staff, Tribes, stakeholders, and leadership to move the work forward. Funding for a standalone coordinator was not included in the 2023-2025 legislatively adopted budget, and as such, these responsibilities will be included in an existing staff person's duties.

Strategic Plan Committee: The Committee will keep fellow staff members informed as the planning process unfolds. It will serve as a standing Committee for leadership to consult with during strategic planning, including on the process. This workplan may change once the Committee is established.

The time commitment for Committee involvement will be approximately 5 hours per month, which may vary depending on the planning work. This is likely to include attending 1-2 meetings each month, lasting 1-2 hours each, reporting to section/division staff 1-2 times per month during division/section meetings, and dedicating around 3 hours to miscellaneous tasks. The Strategic Plan Committee will be made up of two staff members from each division (total of 10) and five managers. To ensure a focus on DEI, the Strategic Plan Committee will include at least two members from the DEI Team. To ensure coordination with other ongoing actions and given the focus of the DEI components, the Strategic Plan Committee will also include at least one staff member focused on the IT Strategic Plan work, communications, human resources, and public engagement.

- 2 staff and 1 manager from Field Services Division.
- 2 staff and 1 manager from Technical Services Division.
- 2 staff and 1 manager from Water Rights Services Division.
- 2 staff and 1 manager from Administrative Services Division.
 - At least one from IT working on the IT Strategic Plan.
 - At least one from HR working on an inclusive workforce.
- 2 staff and 1 manager from the Director's Office.
 - At least 1 focusing on inclusive communications.
 - At least 1 focusing on public and community engagement.
 - At least 1 focusing on the IWRS.
- 1-2 staff engaged in DEI work.

To ensure integration, the staff coordinator will conduct regular check-ins with the following individuals and groups:

- DEI Team: The DEI Team will contribute ideas to ensure that the OWRD Strategic Plan integrates and advances DEI efforts.
- Environmental Justice Public Advocate (if different from positions on the Strategic Plan Committee).
- Tribal Liaison.
- IWRS Coordinator and/or IWRS Agency Group.
- IT Strategic Plan Group.

- Water Resources Commission.

Key Partners for Strategic and DEI Plan Development

Internal Partners / Participants

- Water Resources Commission.
- Agency Staff.
- Agency Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Team.
- Agency Leadership Team.
- Agency Management Group.

External Partners / Participants

- DAS and Governor's Office (guidance and direction on plans).
- Environmental Justice Council, Racial Justice Council – Environmental Equity Committee, Cultural Resources Working Group of Legislative Commission on Indian Services, and Natural Resources Task Force of Legislative Commission on Indian Services.
- Tribes.
- Cities/counties.
- Water Users – including agriculture, industries, and municipalities.
- Consultants.
- Community based organizations- environmental justice advocates, conservation groups, and other public interest organizations.
- Members of the public.
- Other natural resources agencies via the Integrated Water Resources agency team or Water Core team.

Anticipated Methods of Engagement

To foster greater engagement in the development of the integrated Strategic and DEI Plan, OWRD will utilize various inclusive methods of engagement (i.e., workshops, surveys, etc.). Engagement will build on the information already gathered. The Department intends to conduct further engagement to identify perceived gaps in the existing plan, potential areas for improvement, priority actions, and the integration of DEI into our work. Engagement questions and workshops will be tailored to address the limitations of the already collected data, ensuring that efforts are not duplicated, and that engagement fatigue is minimized. A more refined engagement plan will be developed. Finally, the Department will work collaboratively with the Water Resources Commission to determine their desired level of engagement.

Preliminary Timelines

The Senate Confirmation Hearing for the next director is scheduled for the end of May 2024, with an official start date of July 2024. Given the timing of the appointment and this workplan, the agency anticipates that changes to this workplan will be necessary. In addition, the Department expects this

Strategic and DEI Plan development to take longer and require more engagement than future updates because the new director will want to conduct more individual meetings than the agency will be able to support in the future. Furthermore, with the update occurring during an odd-year, long legislative session, leadership and staff necessary to complete the plan will be attempting to balance work between session and this effort. The Department has put forward a realistic schedule below, but will strive to complete work sooner, if possible.

Building a Foundation and Environmental Scan - May - December 2024

- Develop approach for soliciting internal and external input.
 - Phase A: New director onboarding. Prepare questions for individual meet and greets for the new director with interested external parties. Schedule those individual meetings with the director and develop consistent approach to capturing information. This will occur before other engagement actions are defined.
 - Phase B: Prepare questions and facilitation methods for conducting staff surveys and external surveys, as well as focus groups if needed. Develop approach to leverage the Strategic and DEI Plan Committees. Engagement should include the Water Resources Commission, DEI Team, all-staff, tribes, public and interested parties, other state and federal agencies.
- Establish communications approach and materials for the planning process, including methods to provide updates on the planning process and how to stay informed of progress and implementation internally and externally.
- Hold internal kickoff meetings and schedule future meetings based on engagement plan.
- Conduct outreach, gather feedback, and data.

Feedback Synthesis, Compile and Review the Data: January to March 2024

- Create reports and recommendations based on the environmental scan and engagement data.
- Identifying any gaps or biases in the data, addressing them as needed. This could include conducting further research or seeking out additional input from underrepresented groups.
- Create a tracking method so that contributors know how their input was considered in the final plan.

Strategic Priorities and Objectives Development: April to July 2025

- Establish priorities, objectives, and actions in alignment with DAS guidance and OWRD's mission, vision, and values.
- Develop metrics for measuring success:
 - Ensure that priority action items are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) and consider impact on marginalized and underrepresented communities.
 - The actions should lead with racial equity in mind.
- Allocate resources, including financial, human, and technological resources, to support the implementation of the action items.

Drafting: April to August 2025

- Draft integrated Strategic and DEI Plan.
- Present the draft plan to internal partners for feedback (i.e. ACT, Committee, Commission) and integrate feedback.

Final Edit: August 2025

- Share draft with OWRD's Communications team and prepare for final publication.

Publication: September 2025

- Submit the final plan by September 1
- Inform staff and external partners how their feedback was used.

Workplan Adaptability to Meet the Needs of Oregonians

This workplan may need to change to meet the best interests of Oregonians and OWRD staff, as well as to execute the vision of the next OWRD Director and Water Resources Commission. The Department will engage with the Governor's Office and DAS prior to making significant changes to the workplan.

Factors that may Require Adaptability

Factors that may contribute to adjustments in the workplan include but are not limited to:

- Onboarding of the new Director in July.
- The time needed to engage with staff or external partners in a manner that prevents harm to populations that we strive to better serve.
- Actions required to align the strategic plan with the Integrated Water Resources Strategy and prevent duplicative engagement efforts that unduly burden interested parties. As agencies refine next steps on the IWRS, OWRD will seek opportunities to coordinate efforts as appropriate.
- Governor Kotek has recently signaled an interest in water policy, and the agency is prepared to adjust actions to incorporate the Governor's water priorities as they are refined.
- Best practices or lessons learned from other agencies as they complete their plans.
- Best practices or lessons learned as agencies participate in the DEI Cohort.

Key Factors to Consider in Plan Development

Limited resources: Limited staff and budget pose challenges to the planning process and to advancing DEIJ work.

Time: Having adequate time is important for relationship building, buy-in, and engagement; however, it may be challenging to balance this need with the need to develop a plan timely with other agency work.

Communication: Effective communication is essential for successful engagement and plan development. Challenges such as unclear communication and a lack of transparency can hinder engagement efforts and lead to misunderstandings, harm, or distrust.

Project management: The agency has a number of new projects from the legislature and the Governor, in addition to its own priority projects to advance its mission. Managing the variety of projects and workloads, as well as public engagement is an ongoing challenge.

Staff engagement: It can be difficult to create spaces where all feel welcome to contribute, learn, and grow. The plan may not adequately advance the key focus areas if staff members do not feel adequately

supported to participate in the plan development process. Successful engagement takes time and planning; occasionally approaches need to be modified based on feedback and assessing what is working and what is not.

External engagement: If OWRD does not engage with a diverse range of parties, including tribes and environmental justice communities, the plan may not reflect the needs and interests of all Oregonians the agency is seeking to serve. Additionally, external partners may not have the capacity to engage in a meaningful way. We will need to seek ways to effectively utilize and be respectful of their time, including incorporating their contributions from other agency work.

Data and information gaps: OWRD may lack the data and resources needed to develop evidence-based plans and create metrics to track progress over time. This can make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of strategic goals and adjust plans as needed.

Be mindful of best practices in change management: It is important for leaders to support change through clear communication, education, and collaboration with staff members. Creating a shared understanding of agency initiatives and involving staff in the planning process can help to build support for and sustain change. The agency should undertake work in a manner that reduces stress associated with change, and enhances resiliency to change, and is supportive of changes needed to understand and address DEIJ work. The agency will need to take actions to reduce fear of the unknown, unconscious biases, perceived threats, lack of understanding, and feelings of emotional resistance.

Appendix A

Definitions

Racial equity means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally. This commitment requires a paradigm shift on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.¹

Diversity means honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals. It emphasizes the need for sharing power and increasing representation of communities that are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced. These differences are strengths that maximize the state's competitive advantage through innovation, effectiveness, and adaptability.²

Equity acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.³

Inclusion is a state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues. Ultimately, inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.⁴

Environmental burden means the environmental and health risks to communities caused by the combined historic, current and projected future effects of: (a) Exposure to conventional pollution and toxic hazards in the air or in or on water or land; (b) Adverse environmental conditions caused or made worse by other contamination or pollution; and (c) Changes in the environment resulting from climate change, such as water insecurity, drought, flooding, wildfire, smoke and other air pollution, extreme heat, loss of traditional cultural resources or foods, ocean acidification, sea-level rise and increases in infectious disease.⁵

Environmental justice means equal protection from environmental and health risks, fair treatment and meaningful involvement in decision making of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, immigration status, income or other identifies with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies that affect the environment in which people live, work, learn, and practice spirituality and culture.⁶

Environmental justice communities are communities of color, communities experiencing lower incomes, communities experiencing health inequities, tribal communities, rural communities, remote

¹ 2022 State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan.

https://www.oregon.gov/das/Docs/DEI_Action_Plan_2021.pdf

² 2022 State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan

³ 2022 State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan

⁴ 2022 State of Oregon Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan

⁵ ORS 182.535(2)

⁶ ORS 182.535(3)

communities, coastal communities, communities with limited infrastructure and other communities traditionally underrepresented in public processes and adversely harmed by environmental and health hazards, including seniors, youth, and persons with disabilities.⁷

Meaningful Involvement means:

- a) Members of vulnerable populations have appropriate opportunities to participate in decisions about a proposed activity that will affect their environment or health;
- b) Public involvement can influence a decision maker's decision;
- c) The concerns of all participants involved are considered in the decision-making process; and
- d) Decision makers seek out and facilitate the involvement of members of vulnerable populations.⁸

Racial justice means systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all people.⁹

Remote community means a community with low population density and high geographic remoteness.¹⁰

⁷ ORS 182.535(4)

⁸ ORS 182.535(7)

⁹ ORS 176.350(11)(b)

¹⁰ ORS 182.535(9)

Appendix B: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental Analysis (PESTLE)

Continued on next page.

<p>Political</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is often not agreement on how water issues should be resolved, which can make it difficult to address policy and management challenges. • Legislative focus on water has led to significant new resources and new responsibilities, which often require planning and time of existing staff. • Influence may alter the agency’s approach to its work, resources, and ability to sustainably manage water resources.
<p>Social</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality impacts to drinking water supplies and drying of domestic wells are driving new workload. • Varying societal expectations and understanding about water management, science, costs, and supply. • Media coverage of water issues influences public opinion, which may increase focus on certain water issues. • Public acceptance of new technologies or innovations in water management influences adoption of new solutions. • Water is essential to most of what people value and there are widely different views on how water should be allocated and managed. • Increased focus on understanding and addressing the needs of environmental justice communities. • Water is often treated as if it is an unlimited resource. • Oregonians engaged in water issues are not satisfied with Oregon's water management system; they want change.
<p>Legal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New laws may require the agency to make significant changes to business workflows and rulemaking. • Oregon Water Laws need modernization to better address the water challenges we face today. • Rulemaking, litigation, and protest program workloads exceed available OWRD and DOJ resources. • Federal laws impact state water management and workloads especially in relation to the Endangered Species Act.
<p>Economic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency budgets and support for programs relies on Oregon’s economic performance. • Fees for fee-supported OWRD programs have not kept pace with costs. • Growth can drive increased water demand for residential and industrial purposes. • Operational costs continue to increase. • The job market remains competitive in Oregon and in water-related careers. • Real estate prices and housing shortages poses challenges for recruiting and retaining staff.

Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technologies have advanced significantly in the last decade.• OWRD has many older databases and systems that take significant resources to maintain.• AI is an emerging technology: need to assess if and how AI can help OWRD and address any concerns with AI use.• Asks by business units are outpacing capacity of the IS section.• Business units report that many current technology solutions are not meeting their needs.• Increased public records requests and litigation, as well as hybrid work increase need to digitize existing paper records.• Customers increasingly request (and federal government requires) digital payments; OWRD does not have a digital payments system.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drought increases staff workloads across various sections of the agency.• Climate change is driving changes in the hydrologic cycle, that will require the agency to update and adapt its policies, data, and management.• Diminishing water supplies requires the Department to engage with other states on water management issues.• Water is a finite resource; increased complexity and conflict as the resource is fully appropriate.

Appendix C: Strategic Plan Progress Report

Strategic Plan Overview

In 2019-2024 the Department set out three priorities and established objectives in support of said priorities. **Note that the numbering of priorities is not an indication of rank of importance; it is only used for cross-referencing purposes in this document.**

Priorities	Objectives
1. Modernize our management of Oregon’s surface water and groundwater resources to meet instream and out-of-stream uses	<p>1.1 Advance responsible groundwater and surface water management</p> <p>1.2 Modernize water transactions systems and processes</p> <p>1.3 Increase protection of public safety and health</p> <p>1.4 Improve instream protections and increase water conservation</p>
2. Work to secure Oregon’s instream and out-of-stream water future in the face of increased water scarcity.	<p>2.1 Understand Oregon’s expected future water supply</p> <p>2.2 Equip basins to plan for their water future</p> <p>2.3 Invest in Oregon’s built and natural water infrastructure</p>
3. Foster a forward-looking team dedicated to serving Oregonians with integrity and excellence	<p>3.1 Maintain technical excellence and improve customer service by investing in training for staff</p> <p>3.2 Improve agency communications</p>

Priority & Objective Status

The following sections will present information on each priority and objective with summaries, potential suggested outcomes, and Integrated Water Resources Strategy actions excerpted from the 2019-2023 plan, followed by a summary of the work completed and is being undertaken to advance each objective. Actions marked with a “~” symbol identifies projects that advance an element of the [2021 State of Oregon DEI Action Plan](#). Note that other projects that are not marked may advance an element, however, the agency has sought to denote those that have more obvious components. Future work should improve this tracking.

Priority 1: Modernize our management of Oregon’s surface water and groundwater resources to meet instream and out-of stream uses

It is the Departments responsibility to continually elevate and modernize the management of Oregon's surface water and groundwater resources, aligning them with contemporary standards to effectively meet both instream and out-of-stream uses. This responsibility has been integral to our agency's mission for over a century. The Department recognizes the presence of opportunities for improvement and is committed to continually enhancing our approach to resource management.

1.1 Advance responsible groundwater and surface water management

Summary: Responsible water management is water management decisions informed by data and information.

Potential outcomes of this objective could include: increased number of stream measurements and groundwater level measurements collected and processed, elimination of the backlog of unprocessed surface water and groundwater data, improved verification of permit conditions for new permits, better equipped Watermaster and other water management staff, increased installation of water use measurement devices and use of the data, evaluation of groundwater management areas, and completed reviews of policies such as those for groundwater availability and water use measurement.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 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.
- 2.B Improve water-use measurement & reporting.
- 10.F Provide an adequate presence in the field.

Actions taken since 2019:

- 2,910 stream measurements taken in 2023; 154 more than in 2019.
 - Gaging stations increased by 5 since 2019.
- 3,022 groundwater level measurements collected in 2023; increase by 109 more than in 2019.
 - The state well observation network increased by 35 wells since 2019 there were 384 wells in the state observation well network in 2019 and 419 in 2023.
- Developed 2022 policy [report](#) on water use measurement and reporting.
- New Surface Water staff added at end of 2023 began work on the publication of backlogged Surface Water data resulting in a small reduction in the backlog.
- Increases in field staff have resulted in increased site visits and verification of permit conditions for water rights and transfers.
- Critical groundwater area conditions are being evaluated every three years, with the last one being completed in [2021](#).
- New enforcement section and staff to assist watermasters with addressing noncompliance; revisions to OWRD enforcement authorities; 295 enforcement actions.¹¹
- Additional field staff to support water regulation and distribution, proactive investigation into water law compliance, increased interagency field collaboration, complaint response, and surface water and groundwater data collection.
- Established internal process for the review of water supply plans for new and renewing Confined Animal Feeding Operations- (SB 85 - 2023).
- Received one-time funding for data collection equipment for surface water and groundwater data collection equipment.
- Engaged contractor to scope and develop business case for IT system improvements for Field Services Division.

¹¹ Statement corrected 6/10/2024.

- Surface Water staff received two grants from the USGS Water Use Data and Research program to develop and deliver products needed to summarize satellite-based ET data to irrigated fields statewide for 2016-2021.

Actions in progress:

- Conducting Groundwater Allocation Policy Rulemaking updates. ~
- Initiate the update of the Surface Water Availability Reporting System by hiring staff and beginning scoping using resources provided in the 2023-25 session.
- Cooperate with the USGS on the development of the Precipitation Runoff Modeling System for Oregon to establish key data for planning and future basin studies.
- Update and refine the Deschutes Storage Report methods and documentation, as part of the agency's Deschutes Basin workplan.
- Updating the Water Measurement Cost Share Program; seeking projects for one-time funding.
- Implementing new laws and planning for updating rules for the enforcement of water violations, including those related to cannabis operations (HB 2929, SB 326, SB 954 - 2023; HB 4061 - 2022).

1.2 Modernize water transactions systems and processes

It is important to periodically evaluate processes and procedures to check for improvements and efficiencies that might be gained from modifying practices or considering new information. The Department seeks to ensure the accuracy and quality of processing, while also maximizing efficiency.

Potential outcomes under this objective could be updated processes and procedures for water right transactions, new tools, improved processing efficiency for water right transactions, as well as increased customer accessibility.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 10.G Strengthen water quantity and water quality permitting programs.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Customer FAQ document developed and available online. ~
- Reinforced expectations for staff responsiveness to customer inquiries.
- Added more detailed information to Initial Reviews to better help applicants understand their options. ~
- Added more detailed explanations and strengthened the legal sufficiency of Proposed Final Orders to better help applicants understand our findings and recommendations. ~
- Improved permit condition language in coordination with Field Services Division, Groundwater Section, Dam Safety Section, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.
- Developed a Notice to Permittee provided with each water right permit to answer potential questions and inform permittees of other state agency approvals that may be necessary. ~
- Improved user-friendliness of Land Use Information Form and Alternate Reservoir application form.~
- Improved notification procedures to counties and irrigation districts.

- Improved notifications to other OWRD sections so they can better track specific allocations (e.g., notifications to Surface Water Hydrology so they can update WARS).
- Improved peer review processes and document quality control.
- Updated mitigation letter and guidance sheet to better explain to applicants their mitigation requirements and options under Division 33.
- Developed a Temperature Control Reporting Form so that permittees are aware of what form that reporting requirement must take.
- Updated Watermaster Review form in coordination with Field Services Division to provide more clarity on watermaster recommendations.
- Developed checklist for processing requests for assignments to better communicate application deficiencies to applicants.
- Updated Emergency Water Use (drought) permit application form and processing procedures to increase processing efficiency.
- Developed 5-year permit renewal processing procedures in coordination with Planning, Collaborative, and Investments Section.
- Improved management and tracking of file folders to improve public records requests response timelines. ~
- Updated Certified Water Right Examiner directory to remove outdated CWRE contacts.
- Improved and uploaded to the website a guide for developing maps for water right applications. ~
- Improved tracking and procedures related to drought transfer applications to reduce processing timelines.

Actions in progress:

- Evaluating opportunities to reduce water right transaction processing times and increase processing efficiencies, working with staff and interested parties in 2024/2025.
- Work to reduce water right transactions backlog:
 - Water Right Applications: 1,206 final orders issued.
 - Transfers Applications: 1,120 final orders issued.
 - Certificates: 3,033 certificates issued.
- Work to reduce contested case backlog: 226 protests, 174 of those are protests of instream water right applications (as of March 27, 2024); 151 resolved since 2019.
- Coordination between FSD and WRSD staff to improve processes and communications related to languishing permits and transfers with past-due claims of beneficial use.
- Ongoing work with OWRD staff (TACS, FSD, & GW) and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation to better coordinate injury evaluations for transfer applications in the Deschutes Basin.~

1.3 Increase protection of public safety and health

Summary: The Department is charged with regulating well construction and the safety of dams. These actions help protect the public's safety and health by lowering the risk of dam failure and preventing commingling and contamination of aquifers. The Department also helps the state prepare for, respond to, and mitigate for impacts of drought.

Potential outcomes of this objective could include: an increased number of high-hazard dams with completed and exercised Emergency Action Plans, greater seismic resiliency, improved drought preparedness, and increased well inspections and well log reviews.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 5.5A Support continued basin-scale climate change research efforts.
- 5.5B Assist with climate change adaptation & resiliency strategies.
- 5.5C Plan and prepare for a Cascadia subduction earthquake event.
- 7.C Ensure public safety/dam safety.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Completed modernization of Dam Safety Statutes (2019) and rules (2020). ~
- Obtained funding to expand the engineering team and contract dollars to assess dam safety risks. ~
 - Increased dam safety staff from two full-time engineers to four full-time engineers.
 - Worked with dam owners to ensure development of Emergency Action Plans for 100% of high hazard dams; engaging in up to 10 emergency action plan exercises per year.
 - Funded 32 engineering assessments and inundation analysis of 18 dams.
 - Contracted for statewide extreme precipitation analyses.
- 235 dams were inspected in 2023 as compared to 158 in 2019.
- Engaged with Klamath Domestic Well Group (2021-2022) to support drought relief activities. ~
- Set up phase I of the Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund (HB 2145 – 2021); in 2022-2023, OWRD evaluated 323 applications and awarded 202 grants, totaling \$5.4M. ~
- Completed a comprehensive update of the Continuity of Operations Plan and developed supporting training material.
- Completed modernization of Well Construction Statutes (2021) and Rules (2024). Modernized well construction IS systems to comply with the new laws that were enacted in phases over a three-year period. Implemented 100% technical well log reviews and reported on the status of the reviews to licensees. ~
 - Completed 4,282 technical well log reviews from January 1, 2023- December 31, 2023 (new work since 2019).
 - Completed 1,580 well inspections conducted in 2023; compared to 823 in 2019.

Actions in progress:

- Establishing a permanent Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund, managing remaining active grants, and processing new applications for the additional \$1M authorized in March 2024. ~
- Standing up Harney Domestic Well Fund and conducting initial funding cycle offering for the Harney Domestic Well Fund (applications due May 31, 2024). ~
- Nearing completion of the Statewide Drought Vulnerability Assessment. ~
- Participating in Department of Land Conservation and Development’s Hazard Mitigation Plan drought workgroup.

- Completing well construction program modernization work associated with the implementation of HB 2145 (2021).

1.4 Improve instream protections and increase water conservation

Summary: As water resources come under increasing strain, conservation becomes vital for preserving our environment, economy, and Oregonian lifestyle. The Department has a role in incentivizing instream flow protections and promoting water conservation.

Outcomes under this objective could include: increased outreach on instream flow restoration and water conservation opportunities, increased stream monitoring, refined mitigation programs, and increased water use measurement.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 10.A Improve water-use efficiency and water conservation.
- 10.C Encourage additional water reuse projects.
- 11.B Develop additional instream protections.
- 11.D Protect and restore instream habitat and habitat access for fish and wildlife.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Water Project Grants and Loans resulted in conserved water converted to instream water rights per ORS 543A.305. A number of grant funded reuse projects are also underway.
- Feasibility Study Grants funded studies to explore potential conservation and reuse projects.
- Adopted rules for converting hydropower water rights into instream water rights.
- Established the Walla Walla Serious Water Management Problem Area, requiring measurement and reporting of groundwater use from permitted basalt wells in the Walla Walla Subbasin.
- Oregon Water Resources Commission concurred with Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission to designate the Nehalem River as a State Scenic Waterway (2019).
- Began audit of water right permits issued within or above each scenic waterway to confirm or update how close total allocations are to the allocation caps specified in statute.
- The number of water use reports required has gone up commensurate with the number of new water rights issued.
- Processed 173 applications for new instream water rights and issued 140 final orders, including resolving 16 protested instream water right applications through settlement or holding contested case hearings.
- Presented multiple educational training sessions (internal and external) on the Instream Lease, Instream Transfer, Allocation of Conserved Water, and Deschutes Basin Groundwater Mitigation Programs. ~
- Beginning in 2020, facilitated monthly meetings with streamflow restoration partners to inform and consult about upcoming and ongoing restoration projects. ~
- Instream Transfers: In 2019 the Department completed 150 permanent and long-term instream transfers, representing 399.57 cfs, compared to 168 permanent and long-term instream transfers, representing 422.38 cfs at the end of 2023.

- Instream Leases: In the 2019 season there were 287 active instream leases totaling 1,081.26 cfs. By the end of the 2023 season there were 280 active instream leases totaling 5,008.93 cfs. Six of those leases were power rights protecting 4,376.52 cfs instream.
- Allocation of Conserved Water: In 2019 the Department had approved 97 applications for allocation of conserved water, resulting in 212.922 cfs of permanently protected water. By the end of 2023 the Department had approved 110 applications for allocation of conserved water, resulting in 265.362 cfs both permanently protected and an additional 46.132 cfs temporarily reserved instream.
- Passed legislation to make the split season leasing program permanent in 2023.

Actions in progress:

- Working with Washington so that water protected instream in Oregon in the Walla Walla Basin is shepherded across state lines to the mouth of the river.
- Coordinate with tribes on instream flow protections associated with storage projects funded through Water Project Grants and Loans, including for the Stayton ASR Project. ~
- Offer grants that investigate the feasibility of instream protections that are part of reuse, conservation, or storage studies (Feasibility Study Grants).
- Offer grants for the implementation of water projects that meet instream or out-of-stream water needs, and provide economic, environmental, or community benefits. Grant applications with instream flow protections receive more points in grant application evaluation.
- Mapping out process of converting the remaining minimum perennial streamflow's to instream water rights in the Willamette Basin.

Priority 2: Work to secure Oregon's instream and out-of-stream water future in the face of increased water scarcity.

In response to escalating challenges driven by climate change, a growing population, and aging infrastructure, factors that bear the potential to adversely impact both instream and out-of-stream uses, the department has elevated this priority. The overarching objective is to proactively secure Oregon's water future, recognizing the imperative to address these multifaceted issues to ensure the resilience and sustainability of water resources in the state.

2.1 Understand Oregon's expected future water supply

Summary: The Department makes water allocation decisions based partly on water availability. As the timing and volume of available water change throughout the year, it's crucial for the Department to grasp these shifts and adapt accordingly.

Outcomes under this objective could include: updated and/or new tools for communities to understand their water resources and an updated Water Availability Reporting System.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 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.
- 5.5A Support continued basin-scale climate change research efforts.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Supported additional DOGAMI geologic mapping in areas of Gilliam, Harney, Hood River, Sherman, Umatilla, and Wasco Counties.
- Continual updates to the Groundwater Information System (GWIS).
- See 1.4 for more information on the Walla Walla SWAMPA.
- Completed the Harney Basin Groundwater Study (cooperative with USGS). ~
- Completed an assessment of groundwater resource concerns around the state.
- Completed a business case assessment using consultant services to examine the economic value of water and the impact of water investment. ~

Actions in progress:

- Conducting the Walla Walla Groundwater Basin Study (cooperative with USGS and Washington Department of Ecology). ~
- Conducting the Statewide Water Budget Study (cooperative with USGS). ~
- Completing the Statewide Drought Vulnerability Assessment. ~
- Updating Oregon's water availability system - with new data and analytical approaches into modeling efforts and developing computer programs to update water models.
- Statewide ET Project- developing field- and watershed-scale estimates of consumptive use from irrigated agricultural lands for 1985-2022 using satellite-based ET data, estimates of open water evaporation from over 80 major lakes and reservoirs for 1980-2022, and a peer-reviewed report. Collaborating with Oregon State University (OSU) to validate the satellite-based ET data and establish a technical assistance program to lead production of the data moving forward.
- Working with local partners, the Bureau of Reclamation, and OSU to identify locations and install 30 new AgriMet stations in key agricultural areas across the state. These stations measure the weather data used to calculate reference crop evapotranspiration (ET) and precipitation data.
- Initial scoping and planning for the Oregon Water Data Portal concluded in June 2023. Stage 2 development involves identifying and evaluating existing technical tools and software resources from state agencies for OWDP development and piloting the portal. ~
- Provide data and technical assistance to USACE for development of the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Willamette Valley Project reservoirs.

2.2 Equip basins to plan for their water future

Summary: Communities and stakeholders interested in a basin frequently seek or aim to engage in water planning to ensure their water security. They often require support in planning, accessing, and analyzing data, and identifying optimal water management solutions for addressing critical water issues. The Department aims to collaborate with basin parties to safeguard their water future.

Outcomes under this objective could include: Potential outcomes to demonstrate success for this objective may include: an improved understanding of current and future water supply, development of basin characterization reports, an updated Water Availability Reporting System, and an increased number of basins/communities with a water plan (e.g., drought contingency plan, place-based plan, water management and conservation plan, etc.).

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 9.A Continue to undertake place-based integrated, water resources planning.
- 9.C Partner with federal agencies, tribes, and neighboring states in long-term water resources management.
- 13.C Invest in local or regional water planning efforts.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Permanent [Place-Based Planning \(PBP\) program](#) adopted into law; three PBP's completed and recognized by Water Resources Commission (WRC); another nearly complete; provided funding and assistance.~
- Completed [evaluation](#) of PBP pilot program.
- Convened [Regional Planning & Management Work Group](#) in 2022 (HB 5006). ~
- [Tribal Water Task Force](#) convened in 2022. ~
- Filled two new positions to work on complex water resources issues and help implement agency basin-focused workplan priorities, starting with the Deschutes Basin and Willamette River Basins.~
- Provided funding to support current place-based planning groups in Harney (Malheur Lake), Lower John Day, Mid-Coast, and Upper Grande Ronde. ~
- Conducted Harney Basin groundwater study, completed in 2022. ~
- Collaborated on the [Walla Walla River Basin Groundwater System workplan](#), published in 2021, designed to characterize and quantify the groundwater-flow system to inform basin-wide scale management plans.

Actions in progress:

- Standing up a permanent Place-Based Integrated Planning Program, preparing to distribute funding in 2025. ~
- See Water Data Portal above under priority 2.1.
- See Water Availability above under priority 2.1.
- Hiring Senior Water Advisor to work on complex water issues and help implement agency priorities in the South Central and Eastern Region.
- Revising Malheur Lake Basin Program rules through Division 512 rulemaking.
- See Walla Walla Basin information above under priority 2.1. Collaborate to complete the [Walla Walla River Basin Groundwater System study](#) as part of the Walla Walla long-term planning work with the State of Washington, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and local interests on long-term management in Walla Walla Basin.
- Carry out actions in Department Willamette and Deschutes basin workplans.
- Developing program requirements for Water Project Community Engagement (HB 3293 – 2021) to make support available for community engagement plans for water projects. ~
- Conduct settlement process with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Water Rights. ~
- Engage in Chewaucan Basin planning process facilitated by OSU. ~

- Continue to serve as partners, providing technical support and guidance to local planning groups in the Upper Grande Ronde, Lower John Day, Mid-Coast, Harney, and Deschutes basins for planning and implementation activities. ~
- Improve ability to plan for work in Klamath Basin Region by splitting management workloads in the Field Services Division.

2.3 Invest in Oregon's built and natural water infrastructure

Summary: Oregon's water infrastructure plays a crucial role in storing, delivering water, and providing various services and benefits. However, this infrastructure is aging and requires repair, replacement, or removal. With growing water scarcity, there may be a need for new or modified built and natural water infrastructure to meet both instream and out-of-stream water needs.

Outcomes under this objective could include: Updating funding programs for feasibility studies and water projects, as well as analyzing alternative funding sources for both natural and built infrastructure.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority:

- 10.E Continue the water resources development program.
- 11.A Improve watershed health, resiliency, and capacity for natural storage.
- 13.D Invest in feasibility studies for water resources projects.
- 13.E Invest in implementation of water resources projects.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Managed 18 direct appropriations since 2019 for water projects totaling \$65,902,750.
- Awarded 37 grants through Feasibility Study Grants totaling \$4,133,323 between 2019-23.
- Awarded 22 grants through Water Projects Grants and Loans totaling \$35,515,750 between 2019-23.
- Awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to 2 cities totaling \$457,050 to address fish passage requirements for dam upgrade projects.
- Awarded American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to 4 place-based planning groups totaling \$1 million. ~
- Launched Irrigation Modernization Grant Funding Opportunity; received 10 applications requesting \$25,900,067 in 2024.
- Conducted evaluation of WPGL and FSG and identified recommended actions for improvements in 2019-2020.
- Participated in Oregon Water Vision development to draw attention to need to invest in water, particularly water infrastructure. ~

Actions in progress:

- Annual offering of Feasibility Study Grants.
- Starting in 2024, offering two funding cycles a year for Water Project Grants and Loans.

Priority 3: Foster a forward-looking team dedicated to serving Oregonians with integrity and excellence

The Oregon Water Resources Department, despite its modest size, shoulders the substantial responsibility of overseeing the management of Oregon's water resources for the collective well-being of all present and future generations. Realizing the significance of a well-supported and cohesive team, the Department recognizes that the achievement of our broader strategic priorities is contingent upon providing our staff with the necessary support to succeed. In light of this recognition, the Department has identified a strategic focus on investing in the development and empowerment of its managers and staff, acknowledging this as a pivotal means to advance our organizational objectives.

3.1 Maintain technical excellence and improve customer service by investing in training for staff

Summary: Further developing the expertise and experience of staff through regular training will sustain and enhance the excellent work and service we provide. Initiatives such as cross-training, succession planning, desk manuals, and other efforts offer development opportunities for staff, enhancing their understanding of how their work contributes to the agency's mission. Additionally, these efforts aid in retaining institutional knowledge and preparing the Department for staff retirements.

Outcomes under this objective could include: Developing succession plans, ensuring employees demonstrate knowledge and capabilities in utilizing best practices, increasing the number of positions with backup, and ensuring that all positions have an onboarding plan and/or desk manual for the transfer of knowledge.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority: NONE.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Training
 - Offered staff diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings in coordination with DEI Team: and required managers to attend a DEIJ training series in 2023. ~
 - All staff have open access to prerecorded workday trainings; including technical skills, leadership development, IT, DEI training, and many others.
 - Established agency-wide GIS training access to support transition from desk-top to web-based GIS tool.
 - Some examples of trainings offered to staff over the past several years, include business writing class offered to all staff; Attorney's General's Public Law Conference; requiring existing staff to undertake same training as new staff on agency policies; conflict de-escalation training offered to all-staff; and encouraging staff to undertake other trainings as appropriate. ~
 - From 2022-2023, provided weekly trainings to managers on a variety of policy, procedure, and employment topics.
 - Agency also supports staff accessing trainings from other state agencies such as the Oregon Government Ethics Commission (government ethics laws and lobbying), Oregon Secretary of State's Office (rulemaking), Oregon State Library (research, legislative history and others) and the Public Records Advocate (public records laws).
- Developed a succession plan for three critical positions in 2023.

- Developed onboarding training program in Workday for new hires.
- Established a cross-divisional team – Hydro-Training Team - focused on surface water flow measurements techniques and standards and addressing gaps in communication, coordination, and technical support.
- Organized a field trip for water rights staff to observe measurement and other devices, such as water supply intakes and fish passage, connecting permit conditions with on the ground implementation.

Actions in progress:

- Began work to develop desk manuals and other procedural reference documents. Examples: added to desk manuals used by Water Rights Section caseworkers and Office Specialists; developing a desk manual for the Natural Resource Specialist 3 position that processes limited license and assignment applications; drafting a desk manual for processing public records and other support duties.
- Some sections are working to build specific cross-training into staff workloads or establishing formal training systems as the agency grows.
- Develop Training and Safety Program- Complete initial assessment of WRD's safety policies and practices.
- Implement agency succession plan for critical positions and continue to evaluate positions to add to plan.
- Educating employees on state agency policies.

3.2 Improve agency communications.

Summary: Communication is vital to our operations but can be challenging. We can enhance our procedures and practices to facilitate the flow of information to those who require it. This entails improving communication between managers and staff, among different divisions and sections within the Department, and across various offices.

Outcomes under this objective could include: improved inter-division communication, increased understanding of existing and new agency policies and programs, and a greater understanding of each other's work.

2017 IWRS Recommended Actions addressed by this priority: N/A.

Actions taken since 2019:

- Improved internal staff newsletter (Hydraulic Connection) with new content segments and more visually pleasing graphics. ~
- Conducted staff survey evaluation of quarterly staff meetings and modified based on input; conduct survey before meetings for staff to submit questions to ensure content is relevant to their needs. ~
- Encouraging regular multi-disciplinary team meetings for coordination and information sharing, such as for work in the Deschutes and Harney Basins.
- Launched GovDelivery to improve subscription offerings and establish consistency across informational outlets. ~

- DEI Team launched quarterly Coffee and Conversations in 2024 to create a forum for understanding and discussing DEI-EJ related topics in the agency. ~
- Periodic informational sessions about specific agency work (i.e., groundwater allocation rulemaking info session; formation of the PCI team).

Actions in progress:

- Conducting quarterly check-ins with staff as part of the Performance Accountability and Feedback model.
- In 2023, OWRD launched the first employee engagement survey; working on developing and implementing actions based on survey results. Survey will be conducted annually going forward. ~
- Assessing mechanisms to improve staff access to agency handouts, briefing materials, talking points, and to stay apprised of agency actions. ~
- Evaluating priorities for the new communications staff, given limited resources and the need for a defined communications workplan.

Appendix D: Ongoing Projects (April 2024)

Project	Description	Category	Status	Notes (work complete, Progress, Challenges, etc)
Protest Backlog Reduction	Facilitate the referral and completion of administrative hearings or other procedures to alleviate the backlog.	Water Rights	Meeting Expectations	We have resolved 61 protests since 7/1/21 and currently have 4 applications in the Contest Case Hearing process. There are 226 protests pending on a combination of water right, transfer and extension of time applications. The number has risen (from 138) since 7/1/21 due to 113 new instream water right protests received in one day.
Walla Walla Long-Term Planning	Work with the State of Washington, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and local interests on long-term management in Walla Walla Basin.	Basin Support	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Phase II of the Strategic Plan. • Select bi-state flow study preferred alternative(s). • Bi-state water management framework and legislative report. • BOR Watersmart grant.
Willamette Basin Complex Issues and Reallocation	Develop basin situation assessment, workplan, and implement the Willamette Reservoir Reallocation.	Basin Support	May Fall Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment and Basin Workplan complete. • Reallocation workplan complete. • WRC Meeting presentation in June 2023. • Planning and hosting discussions with stakeholders and agencies about forming implementation workgroup for reallocation tasks. • Initiated scoping process for conversion of minimum perennial streamflows. • Challenge: Federal agencies will delay filing transfer application to allow for additional ESA consultation with BOR, which will not begin until after the programmatic EIS and ongoing ESA consultation are complete (Dec. 2024). WRD has requested a schedule (awaiting).

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<p>Develop and Implement Plan for Spending the \$5 million for dam safety flood, analysis, and assessments</p>	<p>\$5 million (\$1 million general funds and \$4 million ARPA funds) to contract for professional engineering services to perform flood methodology, inundation assessments, and engineering analyses for dams.</p>	<p>Dam Safety</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •19 contracts awarded and projects completed for \$1 million of general fund. 21 contracts signed funded by r \$4 million of ARPA. •ARPA funded projects are in progress and completion for most is expected by Dec 31, 2024.
<p>Harney Conservation Reserve Program</p>	<p>State and federal funds to enroll GW users in voluntary program to cancel groundwater irrigation rights & replace irrigated ground with native grasses.</p>	<p>Basin Support</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a CREP handout for further information. • Public comment can be received for 30 days after notice is published. • PEA is finalized. • Working on getting state side payment process complete. • FSA is updating their CREP handout to include provisions in the Harney GW CREP. Applications can be accepted once complete. • Draft OWRD contract is being finalized. • Anticipate rollout 2024 irrigation season. • FSA secured funding which may result in an additional signing bonus for participants in the program. • Currently working on outreach materials.
<p>Develop plan and implement/purchase of data collection equipment</p>	<p>\$3 million for surface water and groundwater data collection equipment.</p>	<p>Groundwater Surface water</p>	<p>May Fall Behind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drilling ongoing for 2 wells in Walla Walla - cost ~\$800,000. • Working on other small scale observation well projects in the Klamath, Hood, Deschutes, and Willamette basins. •Developing contracts for drilling, equipment list to DAS along with solicitation, DOJ has approved. •Established IGA with BOR to purchase and installed 15 new AgriMet weather stations (~\$175,000). •\$1.2 million order received for stream and canal gaging equipment.

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<p>Basin Water Budgets & GW Recharge for Major Basins in OR</p>	<p>Contract with USGS to do the work; WRD staff support with data & analyses; HB 2018 and POP 110.</p>	<p>Groundwater Surface water</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Continued SC collection for baseflow analysis (~5000 samples collected); initial plotting and analysis underway. •Initial baseflow estimates (graphical separation method) completed; QA/QC underway. •Public engagement for HB 2018 being scoped. •NRS 4 Senior Hydrologist started 1/15/2024. •Completing analysis to identify where new gages are needed. •Initial baseflow data release drafted; initial reports in progress. •USGS continuing work on coding and model validation.
<p>Expand Observation Well Network</p>	<p>HB 2018 and associated POPs.</p>	<p>Groundwater Surface water</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 projects completed ~\$300,000 (Rogue, Umatilla, and Harney). • Drilling in progress for 2 wells in Walla Walla ~\$800,000. • Drafting RFP for 1 project in Hood basin. • Negotiating with landowners on access agreements for as many as 7 additional projects (Klamath, Hood, and Willamette) Identifying additional projects. • Contracting process remains a challenge; drillers booked out; bids are extremely high (\$650-\$700 per foot) and BOLI now requires we pay prevailing wage for drilling work.
<p>Statewide Evapotranspiration Project</p>	<p>HB 2018 (2021) deliverable; field-scale estimates of consumptive use irrigated agricultural lands, estimates of evaporation from reservoirs (1985-2022) using remotely sensed ET data. HB 2010 (2023) Collaboration with OSU Extension. POP 111 (2023) Agrimet contract.</p>	<p>Groundwater Surface water</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Draft statewide ET report delivered by DRI (80% complete). •Working with DRI to finalize statewide ET geodatabase for 1985-2022. •OpenET delivered data review report of historical ET data for Oregon and one technical training. •Contracted with BOR-Agrimet and OSU Extension to purchase and install 15 new stations. •Developed workplan for HB 2010 collaboration with OSU; worked with DRI to draft scope and budget for OpenET contract.
<p>Walla Walla Basin Study</p>	<p>Basin study with U.S. Geologic Service.</p>	<p>Groundwater Surface water</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Data collection is complete. •Analysis and report drafting are primary tasks left to complete. •GW and SW staff working on OFR's that need to be published before the USGS report. •Working to free up 2 FTE of GW staff to focus on data and analysis (continues to be a challenge due to issues in the LUBGWMA). •NC engagement coordinator making large strides at improving public outreach related to the study.

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<p>Water Availability Reporting System Update</p>	<p>Coordinate research, outreach, project management, and technical activities for the project, refine estimates of water availability, incorporate new data and analytical approaches into the modeling effort, and develop computer programs critical for updating the model; hire staff (HB 5043 POP 111 - 2023).</p>	<p>Surface Water</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hired new (2 - software engineer and research hydrologist) and vacant (2) positions, recruiting additional positions. •Completed agency-wide project introduction to solicit feedback to inform project vision and scope. •Comparing alternatives and evaluating feasibility of relying on outputs from Statewide Recharge project.
<p>Water Measurement Cost Share Program</p>	<p>Develop spending plan; approach for administering; update materials \$1M ARPA funds plus ~\$100,000GF.</p>	<p>Field</p>	<p>Behind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •PCI met with RM's 4/9 and discussed potential improvements to this process as well as getting a snapshot of projects in the pipeline RMs/WMs are aware of around the State •FSD will advise applicants to pre-apply to save place in line for funding allocations; PCI/FSD will continue using current forms for near term while updates/improvements are drafted. •Developing scope for program update to increase impact and improve program. •Individuals are still accessing funding under existing processes.

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<p>Water Projects Grants and Loans - irrigation modernization</p>	<p>WPGL - \$50 million for irrigation modernization projects that leverage federal funding opportunities and provide public benefits in each category of benefits described in ORS 541.673; for projects involving surface water rights where the project conserves water, the intent is for priority to be given to projects that legally protect a portion of the conserved water instream commensurate with the amount required under the approach described in ORS 537.470. (SB 5506 section 228, HB 5030 Section 10 - 2023).</p>	<p>Water Projects</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Announced funding in November 2023, applications due January 17, 2024. •Hosted informational webinars December 4 and 7, 2023. •Ten complete applications received requesting \$25,900,067 in funding. •Technical Review Team meeting to score applications and make funding recommendations April 30 and May 1, 2024. •Water Resources Commission to make funding award decisions at June 13-14, 2024, meeting. •Funding cycle 2 announced April 11, 2024. Applications due July 10, 2024, and Water Resources Commission will award funds at December 2024 meeting.
<p>Set up Harney Domestic Well Remediation Program</p>	<p>\$500,000 for the Domestic Well Remediation Fund for replacing, repairing, or deepening domestic water wells affected by declining ground water level/ HB 3092.</p>	<p>Well Construction</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Currently accepting applications through May 2024. •Next steps: Review applications received in early June/July 2024.
<p>HB 2145 - Phase II Water Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund</p>	<p>Launch broader WWARF Program.</p>	<p>Well Construction</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations - Not Started</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not started.
<p>Confined Animal Feeding Operations</p>	<p>Establish internal process for the review of water supply plans for new and renewing CAFOs (SB 85 - 2023).</p>	<p>Field</p>	<p>Meeting Expectations - Not Started</p>	

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SB 5561 Cannabis Package (special session) IT Project	Field and Enforcement database upgrade.	Field	Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •FAD Analysis complete on 4/30/2023. •Desired to begin work on low hanging fruit MVP items. •Submitted to POP Development spreadsheet as potential POP for 25/27 to explore 1 of 2 options resulting from this work.
HB 2145 - Implement electronic submittal of start cards and well logs for July 2024	Electronic submittal by 2024.	Well Construction	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •WCC meeting regularly with IS on implementation needs. •WCC continuing to review project buckets within Teams and continue to review and update buckets as needed. •WCC continuing with communication plan to get word out to industry.
Integrated Water Resources Strategy work plan development	Develop interagency work plan to guide the implementation of the IWRS (HB 5043 POP 101 and HB 2010 Section 10-11 - 2023).	Other Projects	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work will not begin until after the IWRS Update is complete in 2024.
Develop Training and Safety Program	Complete initial assessment of WRD's safety policies and practices.	Administration	May Fall Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Safety Committee meeting monthly. •Conflict (Verbal Excellence) training made available for staff. •Finalize project plan for site hazard analyses of gaging stations, determine training priorities for rest of biennium. Competing priorities have slowed progress.
Work Reimagined	Determination of Department processes associated with hybrid work (i.e., position eligibility), including alignment with DAS policies and guidance.	Administration	Meeting Expectations	Phase 1 complete (Egress Door/Reception and Parks storage). Phase 2 (WRD Storage) completed, but behind schedule. Phase 3 (Restacking) was behind however new draft guidance for enterprise received. The remaining project will be combined with new statewide space utilization guidelines once finalized. Could result in estimated 30% space reduction statewide with completion date of 2027.
Drought Vulnerability Assessment (special session)	\$300,000 General Fund to contract for a statewide drought vulnerability assessment for both instream and out-of-stream needs.	Other Projects	May Fall Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reports completed from UNL-NDMC, OSU-OCRI, UO. •Work underway on final report.

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Integrated Water Resources Strategy Update	Update of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy.	Other Projects	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •IWRS first draft released for public review in March 2024. •Anticipate adoption in 2024.
1998 Stewardship and Supply Initiative	Produce an updated scope as well as estimated cost and timeline for implementing the 1998 Stewardship and Supply Initiative and a proposed approach to sequencing development of river basin assessment reports by Oct. 1, 2024 (HB 2010 Section 7 - 2023).	Planning	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The internal team met twice to begin scoping and research. Report is under development. •Sister agencies will be brought into the project team in May. External interested parties to be engaged in summer.
Water Reuse and Recycled Water Legislative Report	Coordinate with DEQ to develop recommendations and other resources to expand beneficial water reuse or recycled water programs or projects in state and produce a report to the legislature by Sept.15, 2024; progress report December 31, 2023. hire staff (HB 2010 Section 22-23 - 2023).	Water Rights	May Fall Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not started.
HB 2145 - Report to Legislature	Report to the legislature on well log reviews and inspections by January 31, 2025.	Well Construction	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Work will not begin until Mid-to-late 2024.
Voluntary Groundwater Agreements	Conduct rulemaking clarify provisions to guide voluntary agreements and facilitate agreements; hire or contract to assist agreements development (HB 2010 Section 43 - 2023).	Basin Support	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early drafting statewide rules underway, RAC will be formed after initial draft.

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Enforcement of Water Violations	Implement new laws; update rules and develop workflows for field operations and enforcement of water law violations, including related to cannabis operations (HB 2929, SB 326, SB 954 - 2023; HB 4061 - 2022).	Field	May Fall Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Underway prior to statewide rule drafting. • Reviewing recent legislation to see if Water Use reporting, CAFO changes and others are also appropriate to address in these rules.
Water Use Reporting - HB 2010	HB 2010 requires rulemaking to implement new authority to require water use reporting (HB 2010 Section 26 - 2023).	Field	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible interface w/ 250/260 in ROW 30?
Establish Place-based Planning program	Establish Place-based planning grant program and distribute \$2 million; hire staff and conduct rulemaking (HB 5043 POP 106 and HB 2010 Section 15-16 - 2023).	Grant Program	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating PBP framework to reflect new statutory language, lessons learned from the PBP Pilot, the 2022 Independent Evaluation, and the 2023 State-supported Regional Water Planning and Management Workgroup Recommendations. • Scoping rulemaking. • Evaluating and improving technical assistance process. • Monthly interagency coordination meetings.
Groundwater Allocation Rulemaking	Modernized groundwater allocation rules that is more sustainable and protective of senior water right holders.	Groundwater Surface water	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly workgroup meetings. • RAC roster of 30 formed Info sessions held. • Convened 8 RAC meetings & 2 info sessions; several additional outreach presentations given. • 90-day public comment period (March 1 - May 31, 2024); 4 informational sessions and public hearings scheduled (April & May, 2024). • Complicated rulemaking and other demands on staff. • Next: Compile oral and written comments for review prior to WRC consideration for adoption Sept 2024.
Harney Groundwater Rulemaking Division 512	Review existing rules; Develop CGWA/SWMPA rules; convene RAC.	Groundwater Surface water	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Informational sessions prior to August RAC (GW study, Classification, SWMPA, Voluntary Agreements, CGWA). • 6 RACs Completed to date.

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WARRF Expansion	Conduct rulemaking to expand WARRF to include domestic wells impacted by reduced drinking water quality (HB 2010 Section 5 - 2023).	Water Projects	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	
Water Project Grants and Loans Rulemaking	Increased grant program administration, promotion, review and fiscal transaction for Water Projects Grants and Loans; conduct rulemaking (HB 2010 Section 27 - 2023).	Water Projects	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	•PCI is beginning work.
Certified Water Right Examiner Requirement	Update rules to align CWRE requirement rules with new statutory requirement and coordinate with OSBEELS on technical experience provisions (HB 3187- 2023).	Water Rights	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	Worked with OSBEELS (primarily) and stakeholders to develop procedures for implementation of the bill. This was completed. 3 applications were reviewed. One was incomplete and returned. One did not meet the criteria in the bill and one was approved. CWRE exam for '24 was completed in early April. Scoring is not yet complete. Bill sunsets July 1, 2027. (Note: Dwight suggests rules are not needed until/unless sunset is extended.).
HB 3293 - Water Project Community Engagement	Make support available to local organizations and local governments for purpose of developing local community engagement plans for water projects.	Water Projects	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Drafted best management practices . •Having interagency partners review best management practices Began external engagement in March 2024 with info session; conducting roundtables in spring . <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Expecting to start rulemaking in summer/fall 2024.
2022 Cannabis and Enforcement Legislation	Implementing HB 4061 relating to cannabis water use and water enforcement.	Field	Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Website and handouts online. •Continue Phase 1: Raise awareness of bill. •Targeted "how to" videos in production complete. •Guidance and rulemaking needed.
CTUIR Water Rights Settlement	Scope work and facilitate settlement process as described in ORS 536; hire staff (HB 5043 POP 801 - 2023).	Basin Support	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Position filled to assist with settlement negotiations and process; Conversations continue between the settlement parties.

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Tribal Water Workgroup	\$100,000 GF (one-time) pass through of funding to Portland State University, Oregon Consensus, to continue current facilitation of the Tribal Water Task Force. (SB 5506 Section 226 - 2023).	Workgroup	Meeting Expectations - Not Started	
Workgroup on Fee Based Programs	Stakeholder engagement to develop more sustainable, long-term funding mechanisms to support fee programs ARPA.	Other Projects	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workgroup underway; next meeting 4/22.
Chewaucan Basin Planning	Engage in planning process facilitated by PSU; hire staff (HB 2010 Section 8-9 - 2023).	Basin Support	May Fall Behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local watermaster engaging and providing support while position hired to do this work; had a failed recruitment for position and reposted with 11/19/2023 closing date.
2025-27 ARB Development	Public outreach and development of policy option packages for Agency Request Budget.	Legislative	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two public meetings held (3/13, 4/9); WRC briefing (3/21). • Soliciting public feedback until 4/22. • POPs due to DAS by 4/30. • Next public meeting 5/7.
Water Right Transaction Process Improvements Legislative Concept	Public outreach and discussions to evaluate legislative opportunities to improve water right transaction process ahead of 2025 legislative session.	Legislative	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First public meeting 4/30.
Klamath Temp Transfers and Leases for Det. Claims Sunset Date Legislative Concept	Authority to approve temporary transfers and leases for determined claims in the Klamath sunsets in January 2026. Needs legislative approval for authority to continue.	Legislative	Meeting Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislative language due 4/30.