



Funding Recommendations

Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning Grant

Background and Purpose

Place-based integrated water resources planning is a voluntary, locally initiated and led effort in which a balanced representation of water interests within a hydrologic area (e.g., basin or watershed) work in partnership with the state to understand their instream and out-of-stream water resources needs and identify solutions to meet those needs. As authorized through SB 266 (2015) the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) has \$750,000 to support these efforts through grants. This document announces OWRD's funding recommendations for Place-Based Planning Grants and provides an overview of the review and evaluation process.

Overview of Review and Evaluation Process

In December 2015, the Department received sixteen Letters of Interest¹ requesting grants to pilot place-based planning (see <https://bit.ly/owrdplanning>). Grant requests totaled more than \$3.6 million dollars. As to be expected with a new program, the Letters of Interest presented a wide range of ideas and approaches from different parts of the state. Letters of Interest were evaluated against a set of review factors by both OWRD staff and a state inter-agency team. The review factors included:

- *Evaluation criteria* – Criteria to identify strengths and weaknesses of the proposals in the areas of leadership, partnerships, capacity, integration, planning needs/outcomes, approach, need for assistance, readiness, and likelihood of developing a plan in 2-3 years.
- *Variation among pilots* – Factors that allow for testing place-based planning in places with different characteristics were considered, such as geography, scale, type of convener, capacity, proposed approach and background in water planning and collaborative planning.
- *Public comments* – OWRD received public comments on the Letters of Interest, which were considered during the reviews.

Summary of Groupings

OWRD, with input from the inter-agency review team, used the review factors above to sort proposals into the following four groups. Letters were grouped based on the strength of their proposal. Characteristics of each group are as follows:

- **Group A** – Proposals demonstrate strengths against all of the criteria, have a moderate need for assistance, demonstrated readiness, and a high likelihood of completing a plan in 2-3 years. This group includes [Lower John Day](#), [Tualatin](#), [Upper Grande Ronde](#), and the [Upper Willamette](#).
- **Group B** – Proposals performed well against the evaluation criteria, have emerging partnerships, a high need for assistance, demonstrated readiness, and present interesting opportunities to test the Guidelines in areas that have a high need and desire to pursue more integrated and collaborative approaches. This group includes [Malheur Lake](#), [Mid-Coast](#), [Pudding](#), [Rogue](#) and [Walla Walla](#).
- **Group C** – Proposals have capable leadership and existing partnerships, but they did not perform as well against some of the criteria, and aspects of the approach need to be strengthened. This group includes [North Coast](#), [Polk County](#), and [South Santiam](#).
- **Group D** – Proposals did not provide adequate information to evaluate some criteria, are at the initial phases of initiating a collaborative effort, and aspects of the approach need to be strengthened. This group includes [Eola Amity/Walnut Hills](#), [Lower Rogue](#), and [North Powder](#).

¹ One applicant withdrew their Letter of Interest from consideration. The Department evaluated fifteen Letters.

Funding Recommendations and Next Steps

At the February 2016 Water Resources Commission meeting, OWRD will recommend funding the following four pilot areas. The OWRD recommendation reflects the inter-agency team suggestion to recommend pilot areas from both Group A and Group B.

Letter of Interest ID	Funding Requested	Funding Recommended
E-08-06-UpperGrandeRonde	\$197,000	\$197,000 (Full Fund)
NC-06-21-LowerJohnDay	\$190,000	\$190,000 (Full Fund)
NW-18-01-MidCoast	\$330,300	\$135,000 (Partial Fund)
E-12-10-MalheurLake	\$205,500	\$135,000 (Partial Fund)
Totals	\$892,500	\$657,000

All four recommended pilots have strong local leadership and performed well against all evaluation criteria. This combination of four pilots maximizes variation to test the guidelines under a wide variety of circumstances and capitalize on unique opportunities for collaborative water planning.

OWRD recommends full funding for two potential pilots from **Group A, Upper Grande Ronde and Lower John Day**, for the following reasons:

- *Both proposals* – 1) Clearly communicate the qualities that make them a good pilot and the benefits they would receive from place-based planning, and 2) likely to develop a plan in 2-3 yrs.
- *Upper Grande Ronde (OWRD Eastern region)* – Builds on collaborative work around water resources and clearly communicates a local commitment to innovative approaches.
- *Lower John Day (OWRD North Central region)* – Builds on an existing partnership with a governance agreement and presents a timely opportunity to test integration with the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Strategic Action Planning process.

OWRD recommends partial funding for two potential pilots from **Group B, Mid-Coast and Malheur Lake**, for the following reasons:

- *Both pilots* – 1) Would provide significant learning opportunities during the pilot phase, and 2) will be able to work through Planning Steps 1-3 over the next 2-3 years with partial funding.
- *Mid-Coast (OWRD Northwest region)* – Presents the opportunity to maintain local momentum towards a more collaborative and integrated approach in a basin with distributed water challenges.
- *Malheur Lake (OWRD Eastern region)* – Provides a timely opportunity to pursue a collaborative partnership that will consider options to meet long-term water needs in a sustainable manner.

If funded by the Commission, each of these pilot areas would work with OWRD to ensure their approach follows the Guidelines and will lead to the development of a Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Plan. Allocation of funding will be tied to milestones that correspond with the Planning Steps in the Place-Based Planning Guidelines.

OWRD staff also recommend the remaining \$93,000 be held in reserve for future consideration by the Commission. These funds could be used in several ways, including smaller grants to assist with Planning Step 1 (*Build a Collaborative and Integrated Process*) for the existing pool of Letters of Interest. Even at a lower dollar amount, funding could help these communities leverage what resources they have and provide additional learning opportunities during the pilot phase.

Opportunity to Comment

Comments will be accepted from February 10, 2016 to February 18, 2016. Information about the Letters of Interest, as well as the opportunity to comment, is available at: <https://bit.ly/owrdplanning>.