



## Situation Assessment and Workplan Development Willamette River Basin August 2022

### Overview

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) received funding from the 2021 Oregon Legislature to hire two positions to work on complex water management challenges with a focus on the Deschutes and Willamette River Basins.

In the Willamette Basin, the Willamette Basin Review feasibility study has been a focus of OWRD efforts in recent years, and with the passage of federal legislation in 2020 to reallocate water stored in the Willamette Valley Project reservoirs, implementation will be part of the agency's planned work. However, other complex water issues are facing the basin, some of which may need targeted attention and resources.

OWRD will conduct an initial situation assessment to help the agency and others gain a greater awareness of challenges facing the basin and reallocation implementation needs, using the results to create workplans that demonstrate when and how to spend staff time and resources.

### Objectives

Conduct a situation assessment to gain a greater awareness of the complex water management challenges facing the Willamette River Basin using input from OWRD staff, sister agencies, key stakeholders, and other interested parties.

Utilize information gathered from the assessment to identify and prioritize the challenges that can and cannot be addressed in the next five years, while defining the roles and responsibilities of the agency (e.g., lead, support-role, coordination, awareness).

### The Process: Situation Assessment & Workplan

The Department will carry out two parallel steps to assess the complex water management issues across the Willamette River Basin and identify the necessary actions needed for the implementation of the Willamette Basin Review (WBR) reallocation study.

Complex Water Management Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Host internal discussions with staff</b> working in groundwater, surface water, field services, transfers, water rights, dam safety, and well construction.</li> <li>2. <b>Review existing plans or studies</b> to situate the work and understand existing issues and established basin priorities.</li> <li>3. <b>Interview Tribal staff, basin stakeholders, and partner agency staff</b> to learn what issues, questions, priorities exist for the basin. Seek out others that may be interested in engaging.</li> <li>4. <b>With sister agencies, discuss results</b> of (1), (2) and (3) request input, determine alignment, and inform prioritization of actions.</li> <li>5. Using (1) through (4), <b>create a draft work plan</b> with recommendations for discussion and seek support from agency leadership.</li> <li>6. <b>Share workplan</b> with external parties, request input, and discuss shared priorities.</li> </ol>

Reallocation Implementation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Establish initial implementation priorities</b> with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and partner state agencies.</li> <li>2. <b>Review WBR documents</b>, including environmental review and authorizing legislation to understand constraints and recommendations.</li> <li>3. <b>Interview external stakeholders</b> that participated in the study to learn what issues or concerns they may have regarding implementation. Seek out others that may be interested in the study's outcomes.</li> <li>4. <b>Create a draft workplan</b> with recommendations for discussion and seek support from agency leadership.</li> <li>5. <b>Share workplan</b> with external parties, request input, and discuss shared priorities.</li> </ol>

## Assumptions

- **Initial Assessment:** This is scoped as an initial assessment and likely will not represent a comprehensive summary of every complex water issue facing the basin. The focus will be on water quantity issues – both instream and out-of-stream – while also recognizing the interconnectedness to water quality, land-use management, and other resource issues.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The sheer size and complexity of the Willamette River Basin will make it difficult to reach all interested parties and efforts will be made to include as many as possible while maintaining a feasible scope.
- **Setting Priorities:** Not all issues or projects can be a priority for OWRD in the next five-year period (2023-2027).
- **Agency Roles:** The intent is to identify work that can be completed or coordinated by the newly funded NRS 5 Basin Coordinator; although, some issues or projects identified by the assessment may be better suited for staff experts in other sections or divisions within the agency. Some external partners will lead projects, while OWRD may play a support function role.

## Discussion Questions

The questions below will form the basis of discussions with agency staff, partners, and other interested parties.

Complex Water Management Challenges	Reallocation Implementation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Challenges:</b> In the Willamette River Basin, what complex water management challenges are of greatest concern to you?</li><li>2. <b>Setting Priorities:</b> Which of those challenges do you think should be a priority for OWRD to address over the next five years?</li><li>3. <b>The Department's Role:</b> What role(s) should OWRD play in these issues or challenges? (Examples: lead, facilitation, coordination, general awareness, technical, or policy support)</li><li>4. <b>Collaboration:</b> Do you have an interest in partnering or supporting work on future projects?</li><li>5. <b>Information:</b> How would you like to receive information on progress?</li></ol>	<p>OWRD completed the <a href="#">Willamette Basin Review study</a> with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in December 2019 and we anticipate several implementation actions will be a focus area in the coming years.</p> <p>When posing the following questions to the Corps and external parties, OWRD will start the conversation with a draft list of known action items.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>What questions, concerns, or thoughts</b> would you like to share with the Department as it scopes the next steps for the reallocation and use of stored water from the Willamette Valley Project reservoirs?</li><li>2. <b>Are there issues or actions missing</b> from this draft list?</li></ol>

## Contact Information

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