

# NOTE TO READER | Navigating this 2017 Public Review Draft

First, thank you for reviewing Oregon's 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) public review draft. The Water Resources Department is the lead agency responsible for updating Oregon's IWRS every five years. Doing so helps the state evaluate whether the recommended actions are meeting the goals and objectives of the IWRS and it also provides an opportunity to evolve or adapt to new information or issues.

This 2017 public review draft retains the original 2 goals, 4 objectives, and 13 guiding principles from the 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy. With just a few years into implementation, the project team felt it was important to keep the foundation of the original strategy intact. Below you will find references to what's "new" for the 2017 IWRS.

This draft has been released to the public for comment. It builds upon conversations with a policy advisory group that met on four occasions in 2016, as well as input gathered during open houses and public comment received in early summer of last year. Natural resources agencies that make up a "state agency advisory group" also reviewed the original strategy and offered updates or revisions of their own.

The following are some notes to help orient you to what elements are new to this version, how to comment, and what to expect for the remainder of 2017.

## What's New in the 2017 Version?

The 2017 Strategy introduces important topics not captured in the 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy. The reader will see new recommended actions, as well as some revised recommended actions throughout the document.

Much of the background information has also been updated with new reports or publications. This new version includes cited references at the end of each chapter, along with embedded links to resources or partner websites. Our hope is the 2017 edition can be optimized in an online, digital format, one that can be expanded upon with more information or resources in the coming years.

New recommended actions, including their supporting sections, are as follows:

### (1) Planning and preparation for "extreme events" including drought, floods, and the Cascadia earthquake

The 2017 strategy contains one new critical issue called "extreme events," calling for the state and its partners to better plan and prepare for more frequent or intense droughts, floods, and earthquakes. This new section, discussed in Chapter 3, also includes three new recommended actions. Where to find the discussion that supports these recommended actions is noted below:

- Recommended Action 5.5A: Plan and Prepare for Drought Resiliency (begins on Pg. **63**)
- Recommended Action 5.5B: Plan and Prepare for Flood Events (begins on Pg. **68**)
- Recommended Action 5.5C: Plan and Prepare for Cascadia Subduction Earthquake Event (begins on Pg. **70**)

### (2) Ensuring public safety/dam safety

Also in Chapter 3, this section falls under the critical issue "water-related infrastructure" and discusses the importance of modernizing Oregon's dam safety program, and includes new a recommended action:

- Recommended Action 7C: Ensure Public Safety / Dam Safety (begins on Pg. **82**)

(3) Providing an adequate presence in the field

Chapter 4 includes two new major sections to support the critical issue of water management and development. The first new section discusses the importance of supporting Oregon’s natural resource agencies that have personnel in the field. Field personal, which includes the state’s watermasters, play a variety of roles in water management. This new section includes a new recommended action:

- Recommended Action 10F: Provide an Adequate Presence in the Field (begins on Pg. **113**)

(4) Strengthening permitting programs for water quantity and water quality

The other major section focuses on strengthening Oregon’s permitting programs for water use and water quality. This includes expanding training opportunities, developing a mitigation strategy, and creating stronger linkages to other partner agencies such as the Department of Fish and Wildlife. This section includes a new recommended action:

- Recommended Action 10G: Strengthen Oregon’s Water Quantity & Water Quality Permitting Programs (begins on Pg. **115**)

(5) Developing additional groundwater protections

Chapter 4 also includes a new section focused on groundwater protections, following an existing section on instream protections for Oregon’s rivers and streams. This section is meant to provide the reader with a summary of existing groundwater protections in law, while calling for a long-term plan for sustainable groundwater management. This section includes a new recommended action:

- Recommended Action 11E: Develop Additional Groundwater Protections (begins on Pg. **126**)

(6) Funding

Chapter 4 includes a section devoted to funding, one of the original critical issues called out in the Strategy. In addition to providing funds for the Strategy’s development, water management activities, and feasibility studies, this section has been expanded to include the need to provide funding for planning and implementation of projects. New recommended actions in the funding section include:

- Recommended Action 13C: Invest in Local or Regional Planning Efforts (begins on Pg. **140**). Note: “13C” was formally focused on providing funds for feasibility studies. This action has been revised and is now numbered 13D (“invest in feasibility studies for water resources projects”).
- Recommended Action 13E: Invest in Implementation of Water Resources Projects (begins on Pg. **141**)

Some existing recommended actions have been revised to acknowledge progress made in recent years. When the 2012 Strategy was adopted, for example, it included actions to create a template for place-based planning and to authorize a water supply development program. Both of these recommended actions have been implemented, as described in the 2012 IWRS. Revisions were needed to take these actions, along with a few others, further to reflect current realities. For a quick look at which numbered recommended actions are “new” or “revised,” refer to the beginning of each chapter. Appendix A is an at-a-glance document of the Strategy, showing the goals, objectives, critical issues, guiding principles, and recommended actions of the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

## **Public Comments**

The public comment period will be open for 60 days. The Water Resources Department will accept comments on this Public Review Draft through **Monday, June 19, 2017**. The draft has been posted the Department's website and was shared via the Department's IWRS mailing list. Readers can access the online version here: [http://www.oregon.gov/OWRD/pages/law/integrated\\_water\\_supply\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/OWRD/pages/law/integrated_water_supply_strategy.aspx)

Public comments can be sent electronically to [waterstrategy@wrd.state.or.us](mailto:waterstrategy@wrd.state.or.us) or by mail to the Oregon Water Resources Department, c/o Alyssa Mucken, North Mall Office Building, 725 Summer Street NE, Suite A, Salem, Oregon 97301. Public comments will be shared with the Water Resources Commission during its meeting.

## **Timeline and Next Steps**

The Water Resources Department will notify other boards and commissions this spring, sharing the 2017 public review draft with the Watershed Enhancement Board, Board of Agriculture, Land Conservation and Development Commission, Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the Environmental Quality Commission. The Water Resources Department will provide updates to the Water Resources Commission in May and August 2017. The Commission will be asked to adopt the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy in November 2017.

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