Oregon's Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning Program: A Participatory Evaluation

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List of Acronyms

IWRS	Integrated Water Resources Strategy
HB	Harney Basin
LJD	Lower John Day
MC	Mid-Coast
NPCC	National Policy Consensus Center
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
ODEQ	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
ODFW	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
ORS	Oregon Revised Statutes
OWEB	Oregon Water Enhancement Board
OWRC	Oregon Water Resources Commission
OWRD	Oregon Water Resources Department
PBP	Place-Based Planning
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
UGR	Upper Grande Ronde

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Executive Summary

In 2015, the Oregon Legislature passed ORS 536.220, which directed the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to develop an integrated water resources strategy and gave it authority to make grants and provide technical assistance to communities seeking to engage in place-based planning integrated water resources planning (hereafter place-based planning). The legislation provided a means by which Oregon communities could coordinate an assessment of the water needs of instream and out-of-stream water interests in their area and reach agreement on how those needs could be met now and in the future. Legislators structured the program to give persons who live, work, and recreate in a community an opportunity to jointly create a vision of their community's water future and outline a pathway by which they can realize that future. The pilot program also emphasized using state-community partnerships. Legislators expected that such partnerships would result in professionally vetted and broadly supported water resources plans, which the state could use when making decisions about technical and financial assistance for water resources projects.

ORS 536.220 specified that groups must include a balanced representation of interests, balance current and future in-stream and out-of-stream needs, facilitate locally developed solutions, use an open and transparent planning process that encourages public participation, develop plans consistent with existing state water laws and policy, and develop the plans in consultation with OWRD. OWRD developed a five-step planning framework to guide the development of place-based plans. The five steps included:

- Step 1 - Build a collaborative and inclusive process
- Step 2 - Gather information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge (instream and out-of-stream)
- Step 3 - Examine current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream)
- Step 4 - Develop and prioritize strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs
- Step 5 - Adopt and implement a local integrated water resources plan.

THE PLACE-BASED PLANNING PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

In 2021, the Oregon Water Resources Department contracted with the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University and Oregon State University's Cooperative Extension Program to conduct a joint independent participatory evaluation of the pilot place-based planning program. A participatory evaluation's primary purpose is to document the stakeholders' perspectives regarding their experiences with the program as well as to suggest ways that the program can be improved. Data for the participatory evaluation was collected between March 2021 and February 2022 through a review of program documents, scoping interviews, virtual workshops with the four pilot planning groups, a virtual workshop with state agency staff, an online survey distributed to participants in the four planning groups, and conversations with the OWRD place-based planning coordinators and program manager.

THE FOUR PLANNING GROUPS

In 2016, the Oregon Water Resources Department awarded place-based planning grants to the Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership, the Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative, the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership, and the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership. Each planning group had a unique set of water interests and needs to consider in its planning efforts: Harney Basin was in the midst of a groundwater crisis, the Upper Grande Ronde was interested in understanding their water budget and improving water availability for instream and out of stream needs, the Lower John Day group saw place-based planning as a way to further watershed restoration efforts in its planning area, and the Mid-Coast group viewed place-based planning as a way to kick-start a longer term effort to do regional water planning.

FINDINGS ON GROUP PROCESS

Balance of water interests: The planning groups made a valiant effort to incorporate a broad range of water interests. All the groups advertised their presence and posted information about upcoming meetings through local media and community groups, some groups varied the meeting times and locations, some groups held special events, such as landowner breakfasts and field trips to attract more participants, others implemented surveys to gather input from a broad set of interests, and all the groups formed working groups that could accommodate people with different levels and areas of expertise. Nonetheless, all the groups encountered challenges incorporating a balance of sectors and water interests into their meetings and plans. The unexpectedly long planning timeline led to member attrition over the years and exacerbated the challenge of retaining a balanced set of interests in the planning groups. The highly technical nature of water planning also made it difficult to recruit and retain participants from diverse socioeconomic and occupation backgrounds.

Consensus decision-making: All the groups incorporated a consensus process into their governing agreements. Some participants expressed frustration with the need for consensus, which they perceived as slowing down the planning process. Others argued that using a consensus approach would provide greater buy-in and ease plan implementation. Still others emphasized that skilled facilitators, who are not typically readily available in rural Oregon, are needed if consensus is to work well.

Transparency and public participation: The four planning groups took steps to make their planning processes transparent both internally and to the public. The groups created publicly accessible websites to make planning-related documents, such as meeting agendas, meeting and work group minutes, and draft reports were made readily available to members and the public. The planning meetings were open to the public and advertised in advance. The shift to virtual meetings during the pandemic resulted in less participation in some areas but facilitated it in others. One of the groups took advantage of the virtual workshops to make the recordings available to the public, and thereby potentially reaching a broader slice of their community. Maintaining a steady flow of information internally and to the broader public, however, required a considerable time investment on the part of the planning group coordinators. This highlights the importance of providing the groups with sufficient resources to hire dedicated staff for community outreach as well as project coordination and administration.

Capacity: The planning groups varied considerably in their financial and technical capacity to carry out place-based water planning. All the groups received an initial grant from OWRD, but the amounts were not sufficient to carry the groups through what turned out to be a six-year process. Areas of expertise that were in short supply varied by the group, but generally included facilitation, technical report writing, state water law, and water sciences, all of which are critical to the development of viable place-based water plans that address a balance of water interests and needs. The planning groups had anticipated that the state agencies would fill in the technical knowledge gaps, but the state agencies lacked sufficient staffing resources to fill many of the gaps. For example, some agencies had one representative for all four pilot projects, and the place-based planning guidance did not scope out the tasks for the state agencies for each step.

FINDINGS ON PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Three groups (Upper Grande Ronde, Lower John Day, and Mid-Coast) followed the five-step process in the order outlined in OWRD's planning guidance. Participants in the three groups agreed that following the sequence of steps in the framework enabled their groups to put workable governance structures in place, improve their understanding of the water resources and needs in their planning areas, identify strategies, and ultimately produce locally approved plans. The Harney Basin planning group chose not to follow the steps in sequence, but rather rearranged and combined the steps to better fit conditions in their planning area, which was experiencing a groundwater crisis.

The five-step process took three years longer to complete than anticipated. All the groups got bogged down with steps 2 and 3, mostly because the data needed to complete these steps were either not readily available, non-existent, or insufficient. Having incomplete guidelines at the beginning of the planning process also contributed to the excessively long timeframe. Participants felt that the process could have been streamlined if the OWRD had provided guidance and data at the beginning of the process. The state agency participants concurred and suggested that it would be helpful if all the relevant agencies were involved in scoping and development of the guidelines.

The planning group participants and state agency staff had similar suggestions for improving the five-step framework. Among the key recommendations were:

- Create a Step 0, which would include a) spending time to build trust among stakeholders and between the communities and the state agencies and b) creating a pre-packaged set of data and analyses for steps 2 and 3.
- Step 1 - Provide more training in how to conduct a multi-stakeholder process, community outreach, facilitation, and consensus decision-making.
- Combine Steps 2 and 3, and for both steps, pre-package at least some of the necessary data and along with explanations about the origin of the data and information. At the same time, provide opportunities during the planning process for stakeholders to compare models and data that fit their needs and objectives.
- Step 4 - Provide more guidance on prioritization of strategies
- Step 5 – Provide clearer sideboards on state review criteria for the Action Plans
- Create a Step 6 that provides guidance for implementation.

Place-based planning Is intended to be locally initiated and led, yet also carried out in partnership with the state. In practice, the local-state partnership concept has been fraught with tension as the state and local partners seek to determine where their respective authorities stop, and their partners' authorities begin. At the same time, agencies with the lead regulatory responsibilities in water resources, water quality, and fish and wildlife now find themselves in a position where they also must engage with community members as more or less equal partners.

The planning groups noted that they had expected the state to provide funding, technical assistance, cross-collaborative support, and guidance. However, they felt that the funding was insufficient, the guidance was late, and the technical assistance was insufficient. The groups stated that the state needed to be clearer about which decisions were to be made locally and which were to be made by the state, and that the place-based planning process needed to be flexible enough to account for the needs and capacities of different planning groups. The groups emphasized that the four state agencies involved in place-based planning (OWRD, ODEQ, ODFW, and ODA) have important albeit different roles to play in water management. Consequently, they felt that having the different agencies present during the planning meetings as stakeholders was critical.

Among the state agency participants, common themes included: 1) tensions with some of the groups over whether the data they provided was true or accurate, 2) challenges with carrying out the dual roles of data provider and planning group member, 3) the need for greater clarity from the state as to where its authority lies in place-based planning, and 4) a desire for the state-local partnership to be a co-equal relationship rather than having one or the other partner dominate. They emphasized the need for mutual learning: The state agencies need to have a better understanding of how the conditions vary in the planning areas, and the planning groups need to have a better understanding of the different elements that comprise the state and how they work.

FINDINGS ON STATE SUPPORT

The planning groups described the lack of critical data from the state as a major hurdle to place-based planning. The groups had difficulty finding out which agencies have what data, where the data are kept, and who within the state agencies they should contact to obtain specific kinds of data. Locating data was made more difficult by limited data sharing among state agencies and the need for participants to go to multiple sources for data.

State funding was critical. It enabled the groups to hire coordinators or engage consultants to do the work of organizing meetings, facilitation, or other essential tasks. The Learning Partnership project, which facilitated cross-collaboration information exchange, was an extremely valuable addition to the program. These events provided an opportunity for participants from the planning groups and state agencies to build relationships, share their experiences about place-based planning, and learn new skills.

Some state agency participants stated that their agencies were unprepared for the number and types of requests they received. Eventually, OWRD created a coordinated process for receiving and prioritizing

technical assistance requests and OWRD staff now have a much better idea of what those needs are and will be in a better position to provide basic data needs upfront if the program continues.

State agency staff emphasized that the success of place-based planning depends greatly on whether the program has support from upper-level management. One challenge that some participants identified with getting strong support from their agency's upper-level management was the mindset that "this is just a pilot." Another was the misalignment of state priorities with place-based planning, an issue that some participants suggested could be resolved by making planning be made a part of agency staff's job descriptions. They noted that for that to happen, executive level support is essential.

Some agency staff characterized their agencies as having poor vertical and horizontal coordination, a characteristic that they described as hampering their ability to participate effectively and consistently as technical assistance providers and planning group members. Participants were optimistic that they'll be better able to coordinate with others going forward, particularly across agencies, now that connections have been established.

PLACE-BASED PLANNING OUTCOMES

As of March 17, 2022, the Upper Grande Ronde plan was presented to and recognized by the Oregon Water Resources Commission, and the Lower John Day and Mid-Coast plans were under state agency review. The Harney Basin group anticipated having the groundwater section of their plan ready for state review in June 2022 and their complete plan done in 2023. In addition to their Action Plans, evaluation participants described many other positive outcomes of place-based planning. Among others, these included: facilitation of productive discussions between previously polarized water interests, increased local support for plan implementation, the ability to use the plans to leverage funding, identification of key data gaps, increased knowledge on the part of the planning groups of their water resources systems, and the creation of networks of individuals and groups actively engaged in water planning.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Evaluation participants identified several implementation challenges including:

1) Coming up with the funding needed to support implementation, including for community outreach and state staff support,
2) Ongoing lack of clarity about the roles of local communities and the roles of the state in implementation,
3) Filling data gaps, and
4) Building in monitoring systems to track progress toward the desired outcomes.

State participants expressed concern that a balance of water interests be retained during implementation and identified the need for ensuring accountability toward achieving the desired outcomes in the Action Plans on the part of both local communities and the state during implementation. One suggestion was that the planning groups make annual progress reports to the

Oregon Water Resources Commission. However, the participants indicated that such accountability mechanisms will need to be paired with resources so that there is greater likelihood that they will work.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

We ended the evaluation by asking participants to reflect on whether place-based planning is a good approach for integrated water resources planning in Oregon. The responses ran the gamut from enthusiastic support to qualified support to full-blown skepticism, with most participants falling into the qualified support category.

Enthusiastic supporters pointed out that top-down approaches to water planning haven't worked well in Oregon and place-based planning offers an opportunity to build the sense of ownership at the local level that will increase the likelihood of plans being implemented. Qualified supporters agreed that place-based planning was a useful tool but placed greater emphasis on the need for additional investments on the part of the state, such as making sure that planning groups have the data they need and that the planning groups and state agencies have the resources required to develop and implement locally led plans. One important caveat that the qualified supporters had was that the state needs to consider carefully where place-based planning is likely to be effective and where it is not, with complexity of water issues and scale of the planning area being two factors that likely will impact its effectiveness.

Skeptics of place-based planning, who were in the minority during the workshops and in the online survey, put forth two arguments: 1) Water is a state resource and place-based planning's emphasis on the local fits uneasily with a resource in which stakeholders around the state have a legitimate interest, and 2) Oregon's water resource problems are due primarily to an inadequate regulatory framework that needs to be fixed before place-based planning can make a difference. Supporters of place-based planning didn't necessarily disagree with these arguments but felt that regulatory reform efforts should take place in venues other than place-based planning.

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, this evaluation shows that OWRD's place-based planning model can be a very useful tool for bringing multiple water interests together to increase their collective understanding of local water systems and needs and to map out water futures that are mutually beneficial. However, the process requires adjustments, some of which are already underway. Oregonians have the opportunity to leverage what has been learned through the pilot place-based planning program to improve OWRD's model of place-based planning and to apply those lessons to other place-based approaches to integrated water resources management. We highlight nine key lessons that touch on issues that were raised repeatedly during the planning group and state agency workshop discussions, our review of program documents, and in key informant and scoping interviews.

1) *The state's place-based integrated water planning model can be a useful tool for water resources management in some places, but the state's guiding framework requires adjustment.*

We highlight three critical modifications: 1) a preliminary trust-building component to build more positive relationships between the state agencies and the communities in prospective planning areas, as well as to build trust among the stakeholders whose participation is necessary for developing implementable and inclusive water resources plans; 2) a component aimed at improving input from and coordination between OWRD and the other supporting agencies; and 3) a component focused on compiling foundational data and analyses into packages that the groups will need to develop their plans.

2) In some places and situations, the state's model of place-based integrated water planning may not be appropriate, and consideration needs to be given to providing state support for other place-based planning models.

It is important to recognize that other place-based and community-based planning models exist in Oregon and other states and have been documented as being successful approaches for resolving water and other resource issues. A comparison of lessons from the OWRD place-based planning model with those learned from other models would provide a strong foundation for future state-supported place-based planning in Oregon.

3) When a planning group is established, participants need to be selected or recruited to include not just a balance of interests, but also individuals with the types of skills and capacities needed to accomplish the work.

Oregon's pilot place-based integrated water planning process requires a wide range of collaboration and partnership skills on the part of local planning groups, as well as considerable technical knowledge and skills. At a minimum, the skills and knowledge required to do this type of planning include project management, community engagement, facilitation, water science, ecology or biology, climate science, water law, and technical plan writing. Where core technical skills are absent, groups may need to seek outside partners to fill the gaps.

4) A situational assessment of prospective place-based planning areas needs to be done to scope out the prospective planning area's water situation as well as its collaborative and technical capacity.

A situational assessment would enable OWRD to lay a solid foundation for place-based planning **before** the planning begins. The foundational work would include, at a minimum:
a) building or strengthening of trust relationships between the state agencies and communities in the planning area,
b) identifying strategies for filling gaps in local and state agency core competencies,
c) developing data and associated analyses tailored to the planning area's needs,
d) developing context-appropriate planning guidance, and
e) creating training materials tailored to fill gaps in local capacity or knowledge/skill sets.

5) *Steady and adequate levels of state funding for both local planning groups and the core state agencies are critical for place-based planning.*

Adequate and consistent funding to the planning groups allows them to hire dedicated staff to carry out core activities, such as project management, facilitation, and technical writing. It also fosters continuity in the groups' operations. Likewise, the state agencies require adequate and consistent funding to provide the level of technical assistance that place-based planning requires and be more engaged as members of the planning groups.

6) *State capacity to engage in place-based planning needs to be institutionalized.*

The structure and operation of some state agencies renders them less effective as partners in locally led planning processes. To improve their effectiveness in local-state partnerships, the supporting agencies' organizational culture and knowledge and skill sets will need to change. Such change will require support from mid and upper-level leadership in the core state agencies, greater vertical integration within agencies, and alignment of work plan priorities across the agencies. Agency staff will need to acquire new skill sets, such as how to engage with communities in place-based planning and how to build trust between state agencies and community members.

7) *Ensuring that place-based Action Plans adequately address the concerns of a balance of water interests, including instream and out of stream needs, requires paying careful attention to process design upfront and providing multiple ways for stakeholders to engage in planning.*

Our evaluation highlights the importance of skilled facilitation and the presence of paid staff with community engagement skills in bringing in a broad and balanced set of water interests. To address the issue of data skepticism, which can lead to planning groups ignoring relevant data and thus the concerns of some water interests, the state agencies and planning groups should consider integrating co-production of knowledge about locale-specific water systems.

8) *The respective roles of the state and planning groups in the local-state planning partnership and the state's expectations for what the groups should include in the Action Plans need to be clearly defined.*

The lack of clear sideboards for where the state should have an overriding say regarding Action Plan content, together with differences in expectations between the planning groups and OWRD (and other state agencies) as to the state agencies' data provision and planning group engagement roles, was a source of much frustration and tension. This tension manifested itself in the planning groups' seemingly contradictory desire for both greater flexibility and more structure. To reduce frustration in future efforts, the supporting state agencies and planning groups need to devote time upfront to a) defining what is meant by consultation with the state, b) defining what planning group members mean when they say they need flexibility, and c)

identifying and clearly articulating the expectations and roles of all parties in the local-state partnership.

9) *Outside of the place-based planning venue, investigate the need and possibilities for water rights and regulatory reforms.*

> In all the pilot planning groups, some participants voiced concerns that Oregon's legal framework, which enables water overallocation, does not support the state's goals of meeting current and future instream and out of stream water needs while also addressing water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs. Consequently, they believe that implementing place-based Action Plans is unlikely to result in more resilient water resource systems. Indeed, the evidence suggests that overallocation of water resources is already happening or about to happen in many parts of the state. It is prudent for the state to explore in venues other than place-based water planning, whether, where, and under what circumstances regulatory or water rights reforms might be necessary for achieving sustainable and resilient water systems.

In 2015, the Oregon Legislature revived the state's water planning efforts by authorizing OWRD to implement the pilot place-based integrated water planning program. Over the course of the past six years, the four pilot planning groups and the four core state agencies providing them with support, have invested considerable time, thought, and energy in putting the Legislature's vision for place-based planning into action. The journey to completed Action Plans has been neither easy nor short, but much learning, skill-building, and social network building has taken place on the part of the planning groups and state agencies along the way. Additionally, the state agencies now have a much better idea of where there are key data gaps and what steps the agencies can take to help fill them. By establishing a solid foundation that the state and communities can build on, the pilot place-based integrated water planning program improves the likelihood that Oregon can achieve the IWRS' goal of meeting instream and out of stream water needs while also addressing water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs.

Chapter 1 - Introduction to Oregon's Place-Based Planning Pilot Program

1.1 BACKGROUND ON OREGON'S PLACE-BASED PLANNING PILOT PROGRAM

In March 2021, the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) commissioned Portland State University's National Policy Consensus Center and Oregon State University to conduct a participatory evaluation of the pilot phase of the place-based planning program. The pilot program was being tested to determine whether the state's place-based planning approach is a good way to accomplish water resources planning. The evaluation provided individuals involved in place-based planning an opportunity to offer their on-the-ground perspectives on the success and value of the current place-based planning approach, its strengths and weaknesses, and suggestions for change that, if implemented, would improve state supported water planning and implementation. The place-based planning process was meant to follow the conditions specified in Oregon Senate Bill 266, and guidance laid out in the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy and the 2015 Draft Guidelines for Place-based Integrated Water Resources Planning. The conditions and guidance laid out in these documents are the touchstones against which the research team evaluated place-based planning. At the same time, the evaluation provided an opportunity to identify whether the conditions and guidance were appropriate for the contexts in which place-based planning occurred. This report describes the results of evaluation workshops for the four place-based planning groups and an evaluation workshop held for state agency staff, and results of an online survey distributed to members of the planning groups.

1.2 STRUCTURE AND APPROACH PROMOTED BY THE STATE

In 2015, Senate Bill 266 authorized the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) to make grants and provide technical assistance to communities seeking to engage in place-based integrated water resources planning.[1] The legislation provided a means by which Oregon communities could coordinate an assessment of water needs of instream and out-of-stream water interests and reach agreement on how to meet those needs now and in the future. Legislators structured the program with the intent to give people who live, work, and recreate in a place an opportunity to jointly create a vision of their place's water future and outline a pathway by which they can realize that future. The pilot program also emphasized using local-state partnerships. Legislators expected that such partnerships would result in professionally vetted and broadly supported water resources plans, which OWRD and other state agencies could use when making decisions about technical and financial assistance for water resources projects.

Established as a pilot program, place-based planning was initially set to expire in 2019. However, because the communities participating in the pilot took longer than expected to complete their plans, the program was extended to 2023.

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[1] Senate Bill 266. 78th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2015 Regular Session.

Box 1 – Requirements for Place-Based Plans

Oregon Senate Bill 266 specified that place-based plans must:

"(a) Be developed in collaboration with a balanced representation of interests;
(b) Balance current and future in-stream and out-of-stream needs;
(c) Include the development of actions that are consistent with the existing state laws concerning the water resources of this state and state water resources policy;
(d) Facilitate implementation of local solutions;
(e) Be developed utilizing an open and transparent process that fosters public participation; and
(f) Be developed in consultation with the [Oregon Water Resources] department."

In 2015, the OWRD provided funding for communities in four places — the Upper Grande Ronde River Sub-Basin, the Lower John Day River Sub-Basin, the Malheur Lake Basin (hereafter referred to as Harney Basin), and the Mid-Coast Region — to develop place-based integrated water plans (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Place-based planning areas selected for the pilot program. Map obtained from Oregon Water Resources Department.

A multi-stakeholder planning group was formed in each place to work with OWRD and its three sister agencies (Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)) to create their plans.

Box 2 – IWRS Place-based Planning Principles
● Use a locally initiated and led collaborative process ● Focus on voluntary and non-regulatory solutions ● Engage a balanced set of water interests ● Work in partnership with state agencies ● Address instream and out-of-stream water needs ● Adopt an open and transparent public process ● Build on existing studies and plans ● Recognize existing water rights ● Be compatible with state and federal laws and policies ● Recognize the public interest in water

The planning groups included:

- **Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership** (hereafter referred to as the Lower John Day (LJD) planning group)
- **Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative** (hereafter referred to as the Harney Basin (HB) planning group)
- **Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership** (hereafter referred to as the Upper Grande Ronde (UGR) planning group)
- **Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership** (hereafter referred to as the Mid-Coast (MC) planning group)

The plans are one of several tools aimed at implementing Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS),[2] which seeks to improve understanding of Oregon's water resources to meet the state's water resources needs. The draft planning guidelines issued in 2015, specified that place-based planning must adhere to IWRS principles (Box 2).

To facilitate plan development, the 2015 draft planning guidelines laid out a five-step planning framework (Table 1). When the pilot program rolled out in 2016, the IWRS and 2015 draft planning guidelines were the main sources of state guidance for the planning groups. The draft guidelines described the main elements that the state expected each step to include but lacked details. The OWRD provided additional guidance for Steps 3 and 4 in 2018, and for Step 5 in 2019.[3]

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[2] Mucken, A. and B. Bateman (Eds.) 2017. Oregon's 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy. Oregon Department of Water Resources: Salem, OR.

[3] OWRD. February 15, 2018. Draft guidance for planning step 3: Characterize Current and Future Water Needs/Demands and Challenges. Oregon Water Resources Department: Salem, OR.

Table 1 – Five-step planning process

Planning step	Guidance
Step 1	Build a collaborative and inclusive process
Step 2	Gather information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge (instream and out-of-stream
Step 3	Examine current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream)
Step 4	Develop and prioritize strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs
Step 5	Adopt and implement a local integrated water resources plan

1.3 State Guidance on the Role of the state and state Support

The IWRS principles specify that place-based planning should be locally initiated and led, but also that the planning groups should work in partnership with the state. The 2015 planning guidelines (OWRD 2015:8) described some of the roles that state agencies could play in place-based planning.

> "The role of state agencies in development of a place-based plan is to provide data and information, and generally, offer support, advice, and direction throughout development of the plan. The Water Resources Department [OWRD] and its sister agencies can help planning groups incorporate the goals and objectives of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy at the local level, and understand the regulatory structure in place today."

> "If resources allow, the Water Resources Department could serve as a planning member or act as a liaison for other natural resources agencies not able to commit staff resources to participate in planning-related activities, such as face-to-face meetings…A state agency could serve as a facilitator or play a co-convening role, if requested by local communities and if resources allow."

The OWRD was designated the lead agency for implementing and coordinating the program. In May 2017, the OWRD published a memo[4] clarifying its roles and responsibilities in place-based planning. The memo specified that agency staff could help the planning groups with the follow aspects of planning:

> "[A]ccess the information they need; develop plans that are consistent with the Place-Based Planning Guidelines and are acceptable to the Water Resources Commission;

OWRD. October 29, 2018. Draft guidance for planning step 4: Develop integrated solutions for meeting current and long-term water needs. Oregon Water Resources Department: Salem, OR.

OWRD. September 13, 2018. Draft guidance for planning step 5: Plan adoption and implementation. Oregon Water Resources Department: Salem, OR.

[4] OWRD. May 17, 2017. Memorandum clarifying the roles and responsibilities of OWRD in place-based planning. From the Oregon Water Resources Department to the Place-Based Planning Groups.

identify solutions that are consistent with state water law and are a good fit for the Department's other funding programs; and secure additional resources to support plan development and implementation."

Roles that staff could play, depending on their positions within the agency and work location included: "planning partner, planning assistance, technical assistance, and financial assistance provider, and program coordinator." Two Planning Coordinators were hired to coordinate place-based planning; one coordinator interacted closely with the Upper Grande Ronde and Lower John Day planning groups and the other with the Harney Basin and Mid-Coast planning groups. The coordinator working with the Mid-Coast group also served as a co-convenor for that group. The local watermasters were to engage as planning partners and technical assistance providers. Technical staff in OWRD's Field Services, Technical Services, and Water Rights Services Divisions provided technical assistance, with the Planning Coordinators serving as the liaison between the planning groups and the technical assistance providers. The Administrative Services Division assisted the planning groups with grants administration.

OWRD's three sister agencies, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), provided technical assistance and participated as planning group members in some places. In an undated and unsigned informal memo,[5] ODEQ described its roles as including the provision of information on water quality, providing technical support for water quality assessment sections of the step reports (e.g., GIS tools and data, training and support for water quality monitoring and data analysis, connections with other agencies that collect water quality data, and financial assistance for water quality planning, among others). The informal memo also described ways that its staff could be involved as planning group members, such as providing information about water quality issues and water quality improvement strategies and reviewing the planning groups' strategies to ensure regulatory consistency and best practices. ODFW's Water Policy Coordinator described that agency's role in place-based planning in an undated letter to the planning groups[6]:

> "[W]e would like to provide you with a list of technical resources we have available to assist in planning efforts. We will also join you at the table as a planning partner in this process as time and priorities allow. We can assist the group by participating in conversations, providing technical assistance, and reviewing and prioritizing project concepts for impacts or benefits to fish and wildlife.".

ODA was a strong supporter of the place-based planning program. One staff member participated in many of the planning group meetings for several years and regularly discussed place-based planning topics with ODA managers. ODA agreed that the staff member's role would be to provide technical, logistical, operational, strategic, and other relevant support to the place-based planning communities to help increase understanding of historic and future basin conditions; assist in identifying and fulfilling

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[5] The OWRD Planning Coordinators provided the evaluation team with a copy of the ODEQ memo.

[6] The OWRD Planning Coordinators provided the evaluation team with a copy of the ODFW letter.

data and information gaps and assist in development and prioritization of potential solution options, plans, and strategies. They also decided that ODA would be a non-voting member of the planning groups, on the grounds that the water planning was place-based and community-driven. Instead, ODA would provide necessary support and guidance for communities to determine what options and strategies might work best for their basins. In addition, ODA would provide expertise, guidance, and support, where needed, on new crop options and market access, as well as with relevant regulatory assistance.

Chapter 2 - Evaluating the Program: A Participatory Evaluation Approach

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

Our team used a participatory approach to the evaluation of the pilot place-based planning program. A participatory evaluation actively engages program participants in the design and implementation of the evaluation[7]. The evaluator's role is one of facilitating discussion among program participants, rather than providing an external objective assessment. A participatory evaluation is a reflection process, and its primary purpose is to elicit and document the stakeholders' perspectives regarding their experiences with the program and the ways that it can be improved.

2.2 EVALUATION DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation took place between March 2021 and March 2022. Evaluation data were collected using the following methods.

- A review of documents related to the place-based planning program
- Scoping interviews and design workshops with state agency staff and planning group participants to obtain input on what questions to ask during the evaluation.
- Planning group evaluation workshops
- State agency workshop
- An online survey
- Conversations with OWRD place-based planning coordinators and program manager

We hosted two two-hour virtual workshops per planning group, for a total of eight planning group workshops. The planning group workshops touched on each aspect of the place-based planning process, including planning group structure and function, planning group capacity, plan development (five-step framework), local-state partnership, elements of state support, outcomes, implementation prospects, tracking success, and views about the value of place-based planning as an approach to water

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[7] Zukoski, A. and M. Luluquisen. 2002. Participatory evaluation: What is it? Why do it? What are the challenges? Policy & Practice (5). http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/Evaluation.pdf

management. Forty-seven planning group members participated in the planning group evaluation workshops, including 7 from the Upper Grande Ronde, 12 from Harney Basin, 16 from the Lower John Day, and 12 from the Mid-Coast planning areas.

We hosted a 3.5-hour virtual workshop for state agency employees involved in the place-based planning program. Topics included: plan development (five-step framework), elements of state support, agency capacity, local-state partnership, planning outcomes, tracking success, and views about the value of place-based planning as an approach to water management. There were 22 participants in the state agency workshop, including 9 from the Oregon Water Resources Department. Other agencies represented in the workshop included: Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Oregon Health Authority.

In January 2022, we distributed an online survey to the planning groups to give individuals who were unable to participate in the planning group evaluation workshops an opportunity to contribute their perspectives, and to give all planning group members the opportunity to provide input on topics, such as the effectiveness of their group's facilitation, that they might have been reluctant to discuss in an open forum. Thirty-five persons completed the survey, including seven from the Lower John Day, six from the Harney Basin, ten from the Upper Grande Ronde, and twelve from the Mid-Coast. A separate synopsis of the survey results is included in Appendix F.

The scoping interview and design workshop guide, planning group evaluation guide, state agency workshop guide, online survey questionnaire, and online survey synopsis are included in Appendices B, C, D, E, and F respectively.

A dedicated notetaker and the facilitator/interviewer took handwritten or typed notes during the workshop discussions and interviews. We recorded the workshops and interviews digitally in case we needed to expand upon or clear up statements recorded in our notes. We relied on transcripts produced through the Zoom application to flesh out the notes but did not make full transcriptions due to timing and budgetary constraints. The participant statements included in this report are paraphrases based on our notes, rather than being direct transcriptions. To preserve anonymity of the participants, we have not attributed statements to specific individuals.

2.3 DATA ANALYSIS

We used a thematic analysis approach to analyze the data. The elements of the evaluation framework co-developed with the participants provided us with a set of overarching themes and secondary themes (Box 3). We first grouped each statement recorded in the workshop under the appropriate overarching theme. Within each overarching theme, we then grouped statements into secondary themes. In some cases, sufficient variability existed within the secondary themes to further sub-divide them into tertiary themes.

Box 3 – Overarching and Secondary Themes

Overarching theme: *Planning Group Structure, Function, and Process*
a. Secondary theme 1: Incorporating a balance of water interests
b. Secondary theme 2: Making decisions
c. Secondary theme 3: Transparency and openness

Overarching theme: *Planning group capacity*

Overarching theme: *Plan Development (Five-Step Framework)*

Overarching theme: *State Support*
a. Secondary theme 1: Local-state partnership
b. Secondary theme 2: Elements of state support
c. Secondary theme 3: Agency capacity

Overarching theme: *Reflections on Progress*
a. Secondary theme 1: Outcomes
b. Secondary theme 2: Implementation challenges
c. Secondary theme 3: State support for implementation
d. Secondary theme 4: Tracking success

Overarching theme: *Value of the Place-Based Planning Approach*

2.4 PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

We presented the evaluation results using several approaches. For some themes, we presented the results for each planning group, for others we aggregated the planning group results and contrasted them with the state agency perspectives (Table 2). For Chapters 4 through 10, unless otherwise specified, the narrative reflects only perspectives expressed by the workshop participants and does not incorporate the authors' views about the meaning or implications of the participants' statements.

A caveat regarding data interpretation: In conducting the evaluation, our team found that participants tended to focus on describing aspects of the program that didn't work well and providing suggestions for how to improve the program. As a result, the workshop discussions consisted primarily of constructive critique, with relatively little time spent talking about aspects of the program that had worked well and didn't require improvement. We believe this reflects the participants' desire to contribute toward improving a program that most participants felt was useful. The online survey results supported this belief: out of the 35 respondents, 16 indicated that they felt place-based planning was a useful approach for integrated water planning, 13 felt it was useful but needed changes, and only 6 described it as not a useful approach.

Table 2 – Presentation of results

Type of themes	Presentation of results	Relevant chapters
Themes pertained only to the planning groups, and clear differences existed across the groups	Planning group results presented separately	Chapter 3: Socioecological Contexts for the Place-Based Planning Areas Chapter 4: Planning Group Reflections on Structure, Function, and Process
Themes pertained to planning groups and state agencies, but considerable overlap existed across the planning groups	Planning group results presented in aggregate, and where relevant, contrasted with state agency findings	Chapter 5: Plan Development Process Chapter 6: Perspectives on the Role of the State Chapter 7: State Support in Place-Based Planning Chapter 9: Implementation Challenges Chapter 10: Final Reflections
Theme pertained to planning groups and state agencies, with clear differences across planning groups	Planning group results presented separately and then contrasted with state agency perspectives	Chapter 8, Outcomes of Place-Based Planning

Chapter 3 – Socio-Ecological Contexts of the Place-Based Planning Areas

Before describing the results, it is helpful to first understand the socio-ecological contexts in which each of the planning groups operated.[8] Table 3 summarizes key characteristics of the four planning areas. Three of the four areas are located east of the Cascade Range and have semi-arid or arid climates. As one might expect, all three planning areas experience ground and surface water shortages during the summer months when precipitation levels are at their lowest.

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[8] Data for this section, including Table 3, were drawn from the US Census Quick Facts (https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/US) for the major county or counties in each planning area and from the planning groups' action plans or draft interim implementation plan:
- Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership. 9/1/21. Step 5 Draft Report: The Lower John Day Integrated Water Resource Plan.
- Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative. March 2020. Harney Basin Groundwater Management Interim Implementation Plan (Draft).
- Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership. January 2022. Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership, Union County Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Plan.
- Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership. December 2021. Oregon's Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership Draft Water Action Plan.

Table 3 – Socio-ecological characteristics of the place-based planning areas

Socio-ecological characteristics	Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership	Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative	Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership	Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership
Geographic location and area	Located in north-central Oregon and consists of the Lower John Day sub-basin. The planning area encompasses 3,140 square miles, primarily in Gilliam, Wheeler, and Sherman Counties.	Located in southeastern Oregon; the planning area includes the Harney Basin, which covers 5,240 square miles. Most of the Basin is in Harney County.	Located in Union County in northeastern Oregon; consists of part of the UGR sub-basin. The planning area is nearly congruent with the watershed boundaries and covers roughly 2000 square miles.	Located in Lincoln County on the central Oregon coast, encompasses eight sub-basins. The planning area covers about 980 square miles.
Population	Roughly 5000 people live in the planning area; population density is 2.0 persons per square mile	About 7500 people live in Harney County, which has a population density of 1.9 persons per square mile.	Union County is home to roughly 26,000 people and has a population density of 12.6 persons per square mile	The planning area is home to roughly 50,000 people and has a population density of 47 persons per square mile.
Economic drivers	Agriculture, ranching, energy development, and waste handling are economic drivers. The area also supports numerous small businesses in the tourism and recreation sector.	Ranching, farming, retail services, and tourism are important economic drivers.	Agriculture, ranching, and forest products are important economic drivers.	Fishing, tourism, logging, real estate, public services, and small businesses are the major economic drivers.
Climate	Semi-arid climate. Most precipitation occurs from late fall to early spring.	Arid climate, with precipitation falling primarily from November through June.	Semi-arid climate, with most precipitation occurring in the late fall through early spring.	Mild and wet climate. Most precipitation occurs between November and March; summers are generally dry.
Water uses and concerns	Water uses in the area include irrigation, water for livestock, domestic and municipal uses, and instream uses, such as recreation, fish, and wildlife habitat, and maintaining water quality. Surface and groundwater shortages are common in the summer months.	The Greater Harney Valley is designated a Groundwater Area of Concern because the basin's annual use of groundwater exceeded recharge. The groundwater deficit is primarily attributable to an overallocation of groundwater for irrigated agriculture. Reducing this deficit has been a priority for the collaborative.	Most out of stream water use is for agriculture, the rest is residential and industrial use, concentrated in the county's eight cities. Fish, wildlife, and recreation account for most in-stream water use. Shortages for in-stream and out-of-stream water uses are common during the summer months and are expected to worsen in future.	The largest water uses are industrial users, hatcheries, and domestic users. Despite the abundant rainfall, some streams have inadequate flows during the summer.

Although the Mid-Coast has a considerably wetter climate, its summers are very dry and stream flow deficits are common during the summer months. The Mid-Coast differs significantly from the other three planning areas in several respects besides its climate: it covers a much smaller area, its population density is much greater, and it has a very complex water resources system encompassing eight sub-

basins. Unlike the other areas, the largest water users in the Mid-Coast planning areas are industries, fish hatcheries, and domestic users rather than agricultural operations.

The Harney Basin area was unique among the four planning areas in that it embarked on place-based planning after having been designated by the state as a Groundwater Area of Concern. This meant that while the other planning groups were focused on developing plans to deal with future water shortages, the Harney Basin group had to come up with solutions for an on-going water supply crisis.

The Lower John Day planning group faced the challenge of developing a plan to balance water supply and demand when much of its water supply is affected by demand that occurs outside its planning area. The Upper Grande Ronde's major water issues included: a limited supply of surface water in summer and fall, uncertainty about the sustainability of its groundwater supply, sub-standard water quality, and the need for the basin to become more resilient to the impacts of natural hazards such as flooding and drought.

Chapter 4 - Planning Group Reflections on Structure, Function, and Process

For place-based planning to result in a sense of ownership on the part of a broad set of water interests, program managers believed it was important that the composition, organizational structure, and operating rules of the planning groups reflect the core principles embodied in the IWRS. Step 1 in the 2015 Draft Guidelines called for the places participating in the pilot to:

> "[C]reate a structure and process that fosters collaboration, bringing together various sectors and interests to work toward the common purpose of maintaining healthy water resources to meet the needs of the community and the environment."[9]

Additionally, the planning groups were to be structured to "ensure a balanced representation of interests and a meaningful process for public involvement."

In the planning group evaluation workshops, we asked questions aimed at understanding the extent to which participants in the pilot program perceived that their planning group had 1) incorporated multiple water needs, 2) relied on a consensus decision-making process, and 3) used an open and transparent process that encouraged public participation. Additionally, we asked the participants to describe the challenges their group encountered with incorporating these principles into their approach to place-based planning, how they addressed those challenges, and suggestions they had for other groups seeking to incorporate these principles into their planning processes.

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[9] Source: Oregon Water Resources Department. February 2015. Draft guidelines: A tool for conducting place-based integrated water resources planning in Oregon.

4.1 INCORPORATING A BALANCE OF WATER INTERESTS

> "Time is very valuable. Engagement will always be a challenge." (LJD participant)
>
> "You lose people when it gets to be a "marathon". (HB participant)

The planning groups made a valiant effort to incorporate a broad range of water interests: all the groups advertised their presence and posted information about upcoming meetings through local media and community groups, some groups varied the meeting times and locations, some groups held special events, such as landowner breakfasts and field trips to attract more participants, some of the groups implemented surveys to gather input from a broad set of interests, and all the groups formed working groups that could accommodate people with different levels and areas of expertise. Nonetheless, all the groups reported having encountered challenges incorporating a balance of sectors and water interests into their meetings and plans.

4.1.1 Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership

The Gilliam County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and Mid John Day-Bridge Creek Watershed Council are the co-convenors of the LJD planning group. Seventeen organizations have signed its Declaration of Cooperation. The LJD's Declaration of Cooperation defines Basin Water Interests as "local governments, tribal governments, utilities, major industries or employers, agriculture and forestry groups, conservation groups, special districts, and state and federal agencies that are located within, serve, or whose members have interest in the planning area." The LJD planning group allowed agencies and organizations to be members, but not individuals acting on their own behalf. The participants noted that the sparsely populated Lower John Day sub-basin had a relatively small pool of potential participants, and, as a result, the group struggled to engage a broad set of water interests.

During the LJD's workshop, participants listed the following water interests as missing or under-represented: outfitters and guides, city and county planners, and federal land management agencies (US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management). Although the group did not allow individual landowners (or other stakeholders) to participate as members, agricultural interests were at least partially represented through the Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The LJD planning group experimented with holding meetings in the evening and at breakfast time when agricultural landowners were more likely to be available. However, ultimately most of the meetings were held during late morning. Participants suggested that one factor that may have reduced participation of some water interests is that the group's governing agreement specified that participants must be affiliated with a formal interest group or agency, thus precluding participation by individuals unaffiliated with a formal group.

Workshop participants noted that because of the heavy time commitment, it was difficult for persons who were not paid to participate in the group to become or stay involved. Among others, city and county planners in the LJD planning area were unable to participate owing to their limited budgets.

Consequently, membership was skewed toward persons working with the area's Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Watershed Councils, conservation non-governmental organizations, and state agencies.

Participants had the following suggestions for increasing participation in the planning group:

- Frame outreach messages to emphasize the non-regulatory nature of place-based planning and that it won't affect water users' rights.
- Pay participants whose participation isn't supported as part of their jobs. However, others cautioned that this was a double-edged sword because it could lead to participation for payments as opposed to participation out of genuine interest and commitment.
- To reach landowners, engage them indirectly through presentations to SWCD Boards and Watershed Boards, which by statute must be composed of landowners.
- In-person events are a good way to engage community members. One engagement strategy that proved very successful for the LJD group was a landowner breakfast. However, in March 2020, COVID intervened, making it impossible for the group to continue such events.
- The lengthy planning process was identified as a major impediment to broad-based engagement, with some water interests, notably the municipalities, being unable to commit to participation in such a long process. For LJD participants, this raised the question of when the best time to engage people is, and the need for being strategic about when the planning group seeks feedback from those who cannot participate for the entire time. For the municipalities and counties, the group reported that the most effective outreach was having the co-convenors engage them one on one through informal conversations.

4.1.2 Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative

The Harney County Court and Harney County Watershed Council are the co-convenors for the HB planning group. The Harney Basin Working Agreements does not define the basin's water interests, but instead notes that "All participants come to the table with interests and/or expertise in water resources planning in the Malheur Lake Basin and make up the Collaborative" (HB 2018:2). The Collaborative's organizational structure includes the full group (e.g., Collaborative), a Coordinating Committee that deals with process tasks, Working Groups, which gather information and create informational products on focused topics, and Support Resources.

Water interests that the Harney Basin planning group identified as either missing or not well-represented included irrigators who use large quantities of water, senior water rights holders, landowners, and community members who did not work on water-related issues as part of their jobs. Participants indicated that some senior water rights holders may have felt like they would be in an adversarial role if they joined the collaborative. They noted that many farmers and ranchers found it difficult to participate because meetings and work group sessions that are held during the day eat into their work hours and those held in the evenings, eat into their family time. Nonetheless, the group is

optimistic that it will eventually address all water needs equally, as the group's leadership strongly supports doing so.

Participants agreed that it was important that the plan be locally driven, but some also felt that it was important to include statewide stakeholders, as they would help ensure that the instream, ecosystem needs, and water quality aspects are incorporated into the final plan. However, some participants have expressed concern that the group is composed disproportionately of persons who work for organizations that pay them to participate in planning meetings. Because of the significant time commitment, they found that it was difficult for landowners, whether ordinary residents, farmers, or ranchers, who were not funded to participate, to engage in planning.

During Step 1 of its planning process, the Harney Basin group embarked on an intense community engagement campaign. Key outreach strategies included: advertising place-based planning by word of mouth and in local news outlets, having the Watershed Council members and convenors go out into the community to generate interest, and development of a website aimed at agricultural water users. Participants indicated that the group benefited initially from the Basin's designation as an Area of Concern for groundwater, something that grabbed the attention of the community at the time. Participants believed that their initial effort to engage a broad set of water interests was solid, but as time dragged on, the group experienced a lot of attrition on the part of state agency representatives as well as community members. They noted that the consistent participants tended to be those who were paid to attend the meeting and work on the plan. Harney Basin participants identified the lack of funding for state agency staff as a major hindrance to long-term consistent participation by state agencies. Of particular concern was the absence of ODFW field staff, whose contribution the group believes is essential for in-stream water resources planning.

Participants reported that the COVID pandemic, and the need to switch to virtual meetings, contributed to further member attrition. However, they noted that once the group moved to a hybrid participation model (in-person and virtual participation), participation began to increase. Several participants emphasized that lack of clarity around the planning process coupled with the long timeline for developing a plan also had a negative impact, with some participants finding themselves having to continually struggle to find funding to remain involved. Participants thought that attrition could be reduced if the group were clearer about the roles of participants, as well as what the group seeks to accomplish and when they will accomplish it.

4.1.3 Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership

Union County is the convenor of the UGR planning group. During meetings early on in its formation, the Stakeholder Committee for the group decided that signatories were restricted to individuals or groups living or working in the planning area. Thirty groups or individuals have signed the UGR's Memorandum of Understanding. The UGR's Step 5 report describes two key missing water interests in the area: recreational users and a large wood products company based in the area. The group reached out to the

recreational users early in the planning process, but no local recreational water interests were willing to participate. The forest products company participated in the planning group's initial meetings but dropped out owing to staff turnover.

The UGR workshop participants stated that around 70 people showed up at the first several meetings, and lots of groups were involved when the memorandum of understanding was developed. However, as the process dragged on, many participants dropped out. Attrition was attributed to turnover in staffing at participating organizations and agencies, the slow progress of the group, which dissipated citizen energy and interest in the process, and the highly technical aspects of some parts of the plan.

Participants reported that the timing of meetings also affected who could attend, and therefore, which water interests were represented. Instream water interests tended to be represented by state agencies, whose staff generally were available to participate during the day. Out of stream interests tended to be held by farmers or ranchers, most of whom could not attend meetings during the day. Ultimately, the group opted for evening meetings ranging from 4-6 pm and 5-7 pm, depending on the time of year to accommodate varying schedules. Participants thought this may have helped capture more representatives of out-of-stream interests. However, the group remains divided as to what time works best for meetings.

One participant identified the group's consensus decision-making process as a hindrance to broad participation. They noted that some people may have felt pressure not to voice their views or that their views were not valued, and either withdrew or chose not to become involved.

One participant commented that attrition was not necessarily negative. In his view, those who were committed to the process ended up doing a lot of work, and perhaps the group was better off without people less willing to help or who did not want to spend the time educating themselves so that they could participate effectively.

Nonetheless, the workshop participants agreed that the group will need to engage a broader set of stakeholders as it moves into an implementation mode. Several participants thought this was likely to be a challenge given the history of distrust within the valley for state programs, distrust that is exacerbated by polarized external politics. They felt that achieving broader engagement will require that the group change the feeling among some residents that the community derives no benefits from state-funded programs.

Suggestions for improving outreach and participation included:

- Work with OWEB and OWRD to get resources for a staff person dedicated to doing the outreach needed to maintain a diverse representation of water interests at the table.
- Hold meetings in the evening; hold meetings in person, provide food, and keep the process short.

4.1.4 Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership

The Mid-Coast Partnership has had multiple co-convenors during its lifespan. When the Partnership was first established, the co-convenors were the City of Newport and the OWRD. The Seal Rock Water District and Lincoln County are currently co-convenors for the Mid-Coast Partnership. The Mid-Coast Partnership's Charter used a very inclusive definition of who the water interests in the region were:

> "The Partnership includes, but is not limited to, representation and input from municipal water providers; special districts/water districts; industrial water users; local businesses and economic development organizations; coastal residents, rural homeowners, and landowners; conservation/environmental organizations; timber/forestry groups; agricultural groups; fishing groups; recreation groups, academic/scientific community; city and county governments; state and federal agencies; tribes; and elected officials."

This inclusive approach was reflected in the large number of partners (53) listed on the Mid-Coast Partnership website. Four roles existed within the Partnership: the Partnership as a whole, a Coordinating Committee, ad hoc Sub-Groups, and a Project Team. The Coordinating Committee coordinated Partnership activities; the Sub-Groups gathered and presented information needed to complete the step reports, and the Project Team dealt with administrative and process tasks.

The Mid-Coast workshop participants stated that they had adequately incorporated water quality and quantity for in-stream and ecosystem needs. However, they noted that they found it challenging to address out of stream needs, especially water quantity for local water suppliers. Neither industrial or commercial water users were present during the planning process.

The process of putting together the partnership and establishing the governance charter took much longer than the group had expected. However, one participant remarked that this may have been beneficial because it created a consistently safe space where representatives of the different water interests could converse. They felt that this made it possible to bring together representatives from water interests who, if they had been dropped into a room in 2016, would not have been able to work together. The process of creating the governance document thus provided time to establish trust between the key water interest representatives. In this participant's view, it took more time, but ultimately, they were able to create a strong planning group.

Other participants questioned the value of the long start-up period. They felt frustrated by how long it took to establish the planning group and its charter and suggested that some people may have opted out of the group because it didn't seem to be making progress. Their advice was to get the word about the partnership out quickly, and then move forward. Another participant concurred, noting that representatives from water supplier cities and one of the area's larger water users came to the meetings early on, but after a year and a half with no visible progress, dropped out because they saw no value in the project for them.

Others in the group attributed the attrition by the municipalities to the fact that Newport was the fiscal host for the Mid-Coast place-based planning grant. They reported that this raised suspicions among some of the smaller municipalities that place-based planning was primarily an exercise aimed at setting the City of Newport up to receive funding to develop a dam for water storage. When describing why the smaller cities either did not join the group or dropped out early, one participant said,

> "The cities didn't feel like they had ownership of the program. This planning group didn't originate from all the cities and water purveyors getting together to say, "We want in on the process." Instead, it originated in one city with a few people, then the rest found out about the collaborative by going to the beginning meetings."

The group identified several challenges they faced in trying to bring a balance of diverse water users to the table:

- Like other planning groups, it was difficult for the Mid-Coast planning group to find a time to meet that would allow individuals to participate if doing so was not part of their jobs. Some participants thought that having evening meetings could be more productive as people who could not attend during the day might be able to come after work.
- The Mid-Coast planning area is very spread out so it is difficult to have frequent in-person meetings as people must drive long distances to attend them.
- The need to switch to virtual meetings during the COVID pandemic proved beneficial in that it allowed the number of people participating to increase. Some participants recommend that the group incorporate Zoom in live meetings as they move forward to accommodate a larger number of participants.

To engage a broad set of water interests, the Mid-Coast group held numerous meetings during its first year. Participants reported that this led to meeting fatigue, with a subsequent decline in the number of participants. Now that the group is moving toward implementation, participants are optimistic that interest will pick up again. One challenge that the participants identified to balancing water interests was that several voices tended to dominate, making it difficult at times for the group to reach consensus. This was generally addressed by skillful facilitation.

The Mid-Coast participants suggested the following strategies for reaching a balance among water interests:

- Develop a process to structure the group's composition before groups are established. Then identify the roles and backgrounds needed for each of the sub-groups, as well as the maximum number of core members representing a specific water need or interest.
- To encourage state agency participation, agency managers could demonstrate their support for place-based planning by giving their staff permission in writing to include place-based planning in their work plans.

- First develop a framework that identifies the potential costs and benefits of participation for all major public and private sectors, and then contact the primary public, non-profit & private sectors to discuss the project, and gauge their potential level of involvement. Re-engage with those groups that chose not to participate periodically to see if their interest level had changed or to identify the barriers to active participation.

4.2 COMING TO AGREEMENT

4.2.1 Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership

The LJD planning group used a consensus minus 10% approach to decision making. Participants described the process as "working in a way that has felt like true consensus," in that the 90% rule was never tested. The group used a public "thumbs up, thumbs sideways, thumbs down" process to gauge whether it needs to discuss an action further or if it can move forward as proposed. One participant, however, wondered if using such a public process might not have made it hard for people to be authentic when indicating whether they supported a decision or not. They thought that having to do a show of thumbs in public might place peer pressure on those who disagree with a decision.

Participants emphasized that in addition to striving for consensus on decisions, it was equally important for the group to get consensus on definitions, such as water storage, before it started the planning process. They believed that having consensus on key definitions made it easier to get consensus on decisions later.

Some of the steps the group took to build consensus included:

- The convenors put time into doing the groundwork and developing position statements that reflected the positions of the group.
- The group found that field trips facilitated consensus building. Participants found it helpful to see what the water management challenges and solutions were on the ground and the field trips provided motivation for moving forward.
- The group worked to come to agreement on a standard set of givens and facts, a process that they found helped them move away from pre-decided positions and reduced tensions within the group. However, it was difficult and time-consuming to bring newcomers up to speed on definitions and facts that had already been agreed upon.

The group recommended that time be built in at the beginning of each meeting for participants to review the group's purpose, goals, and process around decision-making and consensus.

4.2.2 Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative

The Harney Basin planning group's Working Agreement defined consensus as occurring when "all group members can live with the recommendation or decision (HB, 2018: 3)." Participants used a 1-5 scale to indicate their level of support for a decision. The levels were:

1. I enthusiastically agree.
2. I agree.
3. I am on the fence, have questions, or am neutral.
4. I have serious questions or concerns, but am not willing to block forward movement of the group.
5. I object and will block forward movement of the group.

If anyone indicated a 5, consensus was not reached. When rating their support for a decision, people had to provide the reasons for why they supported or did not support the decision. Workshop participants noted that this approach allowed participants to voice their concerns and opened a space for the planning group to address those concerns.

However, some evaluation workshop participants noted that what happens after consensus remains a point of confusion for the group. They recommended that future groups incorporate into their governance agreements a description of what happens after the group reaches consensus. HB group participants also expressed a lack of clarity about what elements of the plan required consensus, and whether consensus was necessary for each of the individual elements or just for the final plan?

Some participants suggested that a tool in between majority vote and consensus was needed for coming to agreements. They said that while consensus worked well when they were meeting in person, it became much more difficult to apply when they had to switch to virtual meetings and bogged the group down. When meeting in person, it was easier for the group to have periodic check-ins that allowed everyone to be brought along until all were comfortable with the direction or concept being proposed. A larger question raised by the group was how meaningful consensus decision making was given that there is no assurance that the solutions arrived at locally through consensus will carry any weight with OWRD.

4.2.3 Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership

The UGR planning group's governance agreement defines consensus as a "decision that all parties support." They used a consensus-minus-two approach to decision-making, with a 3-point scale for participants to indicate their level of support for a particular decision:

1. I agree with the decision and will publicly support it.
2. I agree with the decision but will refrain from publicly supporting it.

3. I can live with the decision (and will not disparage it in public).

Participants noted that they would have preferred a different model of decision making but OWRD insisted on consensus and consensus minus two was the compromise. However, in practice they tried to get everyone to agree on each decision.

The group was divided in its views about the merits of using consensus decision making. Some participants thought that consensus was a very high bar that considerably lengthened the time that it took to reach decisions. One participant commented that when it came to agreeing about data, things often would get heated. Folks would say, "If things move forward in that way, the group will not get my vote." In such circumstances, requiring consensus meant potentially losing either people at the table or important nuances of the data gaps or issues at hand. Another participant questioned whether consensus was an advisable approach in a group with 15 different water interests. They suggested that requiring consensus might have discouraged some groups from voicing their honest opinion, and it may have made it difficult for some agencies or organizations to join the group

Others, however, described the consensus requirement as a good way to address any lingering questions, and make the planning process more credible to the basin's stakeholders. Participants stated that hashing out disagreements in the subgroups rather than in the larger group had worked well for them to get to the bottom of contested issues without slowing down the timeline too much. To reduce tensions and speed up the planning process, some UGR participants suggested that in the future, the memorandum of understanding should be structured to make space for articulating alternate opinions and voices in the step reports and plan, rather than forcing consensus.

4.2.4 Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership

The Mid-Coast's governance agreement states: "Consensus on a topic of interest will be reached when all members of the collaborative can make one of the following statements about a project, recommendation, or action:
1. I agree with the decision and will publicly support it.
2. I agree with the decision but will refrain from publicly supporting it.
3. I can live with the decision and won't disparage it in public or stand in the way of its implementation."

To arrive at consensus, the group used two exercises: thumbs up/thumbs sideways/thumbs down and red card/green card. Some participants felt these were tools worked well during in-person meetings for sharing or indicating perspectives without sharing details. Others, however, expressed uneasiness about the group's use of thumbs up, sideways, down, a practice which they felt was not sufficiently discrete. Another challenge participants identified with the consensus exercises is that they didn't translate well into the virtual meeting environment that the group shifted to with the onset of the COVID pandemic.

In the past year, the group has shifted to a decision-making model that its members described as informed consent. Used in this context, informed consent means that there are no major objections to the proposition under discussion. Under this model, silence is taken to mean consent. Several participants voiced concern that this model of decision-making shifts responsibility on each participant to raise issues and tends to exclude persons who are hesitant to speak up.

To facilitate arriving at consensus, one participant suggested using an incremental approach:

> "Make sure to test it out on smaller issues or decisions first, before getting to major issues. Ensure there are a common set of facts serving as a basis, rather than primarily opinions of each participant or subgroup/sector."

Mid-Coast workshop participants had diverse perspectives about whether consensus-based decision making was a good approach. Some participants felt that consensus was a powerful and useful tool for building regional plans. Others commented that by requiring consensus, the group had lost momentum at critical points because one person or organization disagreed. One participant noted that there was ongoing confusion within the group about what consensus meant, with some interpreting it incorrectly as unanimity. They pointed out that consensus involves identifying what the group agrees upon but is not a process that can be stopped by a single perspective or entity.

4.3 TRANSPARENCY

4.3.1 Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership

The convenors and participants in the LJD adopted a variety of strategies to ensure that the group had "an open and transparent process that fosters public participation". The meeting agendas were made publicly available prior to the meetings in the local papers and on social media, and all meetings were open to the public. A website accessible to the public, was created where meeting minutes and agendas could be posted. Occasionally the group conducted surveys to get feedback and information from the public. Group members also presented updates on the LJD Partnership's progress at city council, county court, agricultural, and SWCD and watershed council board meetings. Beginning in 2020, the Partnership held virtual meetings, which, as with in-person meetings, were open to the public.

4.3.2 Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative

HB participants described their place-based planning process as being as transparent and open as it could have been. Nonetheless, they noted several barriers to full transparency:

- Bringing newcomers or people who had not attended meetings in a while up to speed was a challenge, and, especially early on, made the meetings repetitive.

- Much of the work is done between meetings. For participants with limited time to spend on the project, it is easy to miss meetings and thus not be up to speed about the information shared at the meetings.
- It is hard to balance openness and transparency with making progress.
- The COVID pandemic and the need to shift to using virtual meetings has made it difficult for those with poor internet connectivity to stay engaged.

Strategies that the HB participants have found useful for fostering openness and transparency included:

- The convenor keeps people informed about the Collaborative's activities through, in the words of one participant, "Lots and lots of outreach through all types of media."
- Meeting minutes, presentations, and reports produced through the Collaborative's work are posted on the Harney County Watershed Council's website.

To foster internal information sharing and transparency, the group holds a coordinating call every other week. It initially held full group meetings quarterly but has shifted to monthly meetings to improve the flow of information between the full group and the work groups, which meet monthly.

4.3.3 Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership

The UGR Partnership participants stated that they considered their process to be an "open book". Anyone could come to any meeting, and all side conversations were noted and shared. Meeting times and agendas were posted to the Union County website, as are minutes and reports. Within the group, the Steering Committee meetings were open to anyone to attend, although few people did. The minutes for the Steering Committee meetings were initially emailed but eventually were posted to the website to make them more widely accessible. The UGR Partnership used multiple strategies to keep the broader public informed including publicizing meetings in a local newspaper and on the Union County website, doing presentations on the Partnership's progress at community events and with municipalities in the planning area, annual radio spots, one-on-one phone calls, and in-person meetings.

4.3.4 Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership
The Mid-Coast Partnership participants indicated that the group has invested substantial energy into making their planning process open and transparent. The Partnership also sends out press releases for all its meetings to the city councils, local newspapers, and other media. Prior to the pandemic, field trips were also a useful tool for engaging community members. Reaching out to specific groups was a useful strategy for engaging the smaller public water systems and Mid-Coast residents. One participant pointed to the Mid-Coast's new website as being a "huge help in keeping partners up to date by posting meeting

Water treatment plant field trip in the Mid-Coast area. Photo provided by OWRD.

videos, meeting summaries, and attendance sheets." However, another participant described the new website as "a nightmare to navigate," and wondered how accessible it really was to the public.

Participants described a survey that Oregon Kitchen Table sent out for the Partnership as being an especially useful tool. Participants commented that aside from its value as a public outreach tool, the survey provided information that the group has since incorporated into its step reports. The group later obtained a grant from Oregon Kitchen Table to host Spanish language listening sessions, hoping to fill in some missing perspectives by drawing in Spanish-speaking members living in the planning area. However, participants reported that the group could not sustain this effort due to limited capacity.

Despite these outreach efforts, the group found it challenging to engage a large segment of the broader public in place-based planning. Place-based planning as outlined in the planning guidelines is a highly technical process. Consequently, as one participant remarked, there's "a pretty steep learning curve to have a voice in this process." They added that the amount of technical detail one must absorb creates an intimidating environment that makes participants lacking technical backgrounds doubt the usefulness of their contributions. One participant noted that holding meetings at a local hotel when the group was meeting in person may have been intimidating to some community members.

Midway through the planning process, the Partnership ran out of funds to pay the consultants who they had engaged to do facilitation and technical work. Workshop participants stated that this created a vacuum during which the Partnership made little progress, leading to a decline in the general public's interest in the process and causing some partners to drop out.

The cost of gas to get to the meetings was mentioned as by some participants as a barrier to some potential participants. However, group members noted that the Partnership's shift to virtual meetings may have alleviated this barrier for participants with good internet connections.

Strategies the workshop participants identified as helpful for encouraging participation included:

- Holding the meetings in different towns so that different groups of people could attend the meetings.
- Combining the meetings with food helped create a more informal setting that promoted relationship building.

4.4 PLANNING GROUP CAPACITY TO ENGAGE IN PLACE-BASED PLANNING

4.4.1 Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership

The Lower John Day planning group members described their group as having relatively high capacity to engage in place-based water planning. The participants noted that many of the group's members had substantial technical capacity, and they were able to rely on their state partners, especially ODFW and OWRD for the data to include in the Step 2 and 3 reports. They also were fortunate enough to have a member who had the skills for conducting the GIS and hydrological analyses for the Step 2 report. The participants also emphasized that the group had a strong knowledge base to build on since it is composed of residents with substantial local knowledge about the planning area's water system as well as broad and deep connections into the local communities. Participants also identified themselves as fortunate in that the group had enough funding to bring on a skilled facilitator. They described interest among the group members in place-based planning as being very high and noted that many group members took on the tasks of report writing and getting work done in the subgroups.

Participants noted that a critical gap in the group's expertise was knowledge of how to analyze future climate scenarios that can help them understand the likely impacts of climate change on the lower stretches of the John Day River. One participant felt that it also would have been helpful if everyone within the group had a good understanding of water law since such knowledge will be critical once the group moves into plan implementation. Other participants emphasized that the group could have used more assistance with report writing, a task which one participant described as a "big lift" because of the complexity of water issues in the Lower John Day planning area. Although the group hired a consulting firm to write their Action Plan, different group members and the main facilitator created much of the text.

Suggestions the participants had for future groups undertaking a similar planning process included:

- When establishing a new planning group, take time early on to figure out who will write the reports and create a formal plan for getting all the reports done. The group had not realized how much work it would take to write the five reports.
- Hire an outside consultant with expertise in writing technical reports on water issues. Taking the task of report writing off the participants' shoulders will free up their time to deal with substantive issues. Additionally, it is important to have someone neutral to the process to write up the reports.

4.4.2 Harney Basin Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative

Participants in the Harney Basin workshops indicated that they were fortunate to have a hydrologist on board who was an expert in the planning area. They noted that his expertise proved indispensable for helping the group understand how technology changes in irrigation could save groundwater, as well as

assisting with the work on groundwater dependent ecosystems. Initially, the agricultural work group had participants who were professionals with lived experience and relevant skills for exploring agricultural groundwater issues, but as the planning timeline dragged on, these participants lost interest, and dropped out. Participants noted that members with strong skills in social science and economics were needed but missing from their group.

Strong leadership was another important factor participants identified as contributing to the HB Collaborative's capacity to engage in place-based planning. Specifically, workshop participants stated that a key strength in their leadership was that the leaders took seriously their responsibility for ensuring that all water needs are addressed in their plan. Thus far only the groundwater section of the HB Collaborative's plan is underway, but the Collaborative has worked hard to incorporate all groundwater interests into that section.

Although the participants acknowledged that having hydrological expertise and strong leaders was helpful, nonetheless, they felt that the OWRD was expecting too much out of a community-based planning group. One participant described the process as a burden on communities lacking the time and other resources necessary for such technology-heavy planning:

> "Did we have the time? Skills? Access to data and mapping technology? Not really. The process is set up in a way that results in people writing reports who lack the time, expertise, and access to information that is needed. Writing all these reports is too big of a burden for the collaborative members."

Another participant voiced concern that the technical process laid out by OWRD does not allow much room for integrating local knowledge about water in the Basin.

> "It was clear from the guidance that was developed that they (OWRD) wanted a technical plan. But how does this integrate with the real knowledge of people who are using water in the basin? It's challenging to link these skills."

Others felt that the way place-based planning was structured mitigated against the inclusion of landowners, precisely the persons with the greatest on-the-ground knowledge of the planning area. One participant described the challenges of trying to carve out opportunities for bringing in local knowledge in the framework of a lengthy planning process:

> "For groundwater situations, landowner expertise is necessary here. Landowners have the best on the ground knowledge and skills. They are aware of advances in technology in farming practices. But they are not paid professionals. They're volunteering time outside of making a living. In the future, we need to keep agricultural people engaged throughout the entire process, we need to be timely, and make actions happen."

One participant brought up the community's limited financial capacity as a barrier to effective use of OWRD's model for place-based planning:

> "Funding is a key piece of the puzzle: We'll never have perfect information for planning. However, you still need significant funding to figure out the foundational pieces that everyone needs to be able to agree upon."

The group offered several solutions to address these capacity gaps:

- The agencies involved in place-based planning need to spend time compiling the data and doing the basic analyses and mapping for the groups. Doing so would provide the foundational information that will ensure success.
- OWRD needs to provide clarity on what the sideboards are for place-based planning — what planning tools should be used and what should go into a plan. Having clarity on this would keep the groups from spinning their wheels and not really knowing what success looks like.
- The state agencies must be involved in place-based planning. That requires that there be funding for state agency staff to be involved. This is also the case for the federal agencies. Both are important resources who have a lot of expertise, expertise that is necessary for developing the place-based Action Plans.

4.4.3 Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership

The UGR participants described their group as having very good technical skills. Additionally, they noted that their grant was structured to permit them to hire a technical consulting firm to manage the project. Where they lacked in-house technical expertise, they were able to lean on the state agencies to do the technical work. However, participants reported that they struggled to get information from OWRD. One participant thought that the difficulties with getting that information were because they didn't know how to ask questions or how to prioritize their requests to get the information they needed. Alternatively, they noted, it might have been that the group lacked the ability to communicate their data needs clearly to state agency staff in Salem.

Early in the planning process, the group divided into technical work groups addressing agricultural, instream, and municipal issues. They were able to align the skills of the group's members with the topics of interest. One area of expertise that the participants identified as lacking was that of experienced facilitation. The group filled this gap by having the project manager and one of the group's co-convenors participate in a training program on facilitation. Participants reported that they would have preferred to hire an experienced local facilitator rather than doing the facilitation themselves, but they could not find anyone located in the area.

The main challenges the UGR group encountered had to do with the limited state agency capacity to engage in the planning process.

- There was a lot of turnover in agency staff.
- The level of engagement by state agency staff varied greatly depending on the individual's interest in place-based planning and their workload.
- The agencies were greatly underfunded and lacked the capacity to provide thorough reviews on each of the step products.

Suggestions that were mentioned for addressing these challenges included:
- Decreasing the planning timeline to minimize the likelihood of staff turnover
- The legislature should provide the agencies with the financial resources needed to provide adequate staffing at the field level
- Establish periodic performance reviews of state agency staff by planning group members to help agency leadership determine staffing priorities.

4.4.4 Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership

The Mid-Coast group reported that it had many of the skills needed to do place-based planning. Additionally, some state agencies engaged as active participants all the way through, which participants thought helped boost the group's technical expertise. Participants noted that they had technical assistance support from Oregon State University and the Army Corps of Engineers. The group initially contracted out project management and facilitation but lacked the funds to continue the contract mid-way through the planning process. The work groups took on responsibility for moving the process forward while the group sought additional funding.

Planning meeting for the Mid-Coast.
Photo provided by OWRD.

Despite the group's in-house expertise, participants found it hard to meet the state's expectations, especially for Steps 2 and 3. In part that was because many group members had a steep learning curve on water resources management. One participant commented, "Having a full comprehensive understanding of instream and out of stream needs before trying to do all of this would have been helpful."

The group offered the following suggestions for similar processes in the future:

- The state should issue a strong directive to keep state agencies engaged the entire time. It is important for the state agencies, including district staff to be involved the entire time.
- Additional funding and technical support would help make the process less exhausting for those who choose to be engaged.

- Consistent, neutral facilitation throughout the process is essential.
- Having a dedicated paid project manager to coordinate the group's activities would greatly improve the likelihood for success.
- Give all participants a formal orientation to the primary water resource issues, with a special emphasis on regulatory aspects.

Chapter 5 - Plan Development Process

"Were the step products useful? Yes, but at times it felt like we were stuck on a step forever!" (HB participant)

"I'm amazed at how much we have gotten done in 6 years. The 5 steps are what saved us." (MC participant)

5.1 PLANNING GROUP REFLECTIONS ON THE FIVE-STEP FRAMEWORK

Three groups (UGR, LJD, and MC) followed the planning step process in the order outlined by OWRD. Participants in these groups stated that it was generally a helpful guiding framework, albeit with the caveats described later in this section. Overall, they agreed that the framework enabled their groups to put workable governance structures in place, improve their understanding of the water resources and needs in their planning areas, identify strategies, and ultimately produce locally approved plans. The three planning groups are optimistic that their plans will receive state recognition in 2022.

After completing Step 1, the Harney Basin planning group decided not to follow the step process in a linear fashion. Participants described the linear step framework as unsuitable for a planning area experiencing a groundwater crisis. Due to deficits in both groundwater and surface water, the Basin's inhabitants were already unable to meet their instream and out of stream needs. Consequently, the HB group concluded that it was more useful to first clarify their goals, and then figure out pathways and tools for achieving them. They opted to do Step 4 (identify and prioritize strategies for solving water resource issues) while also working on Steps 2 (supply) and 3 (demand). The group wished to first establish a shared understanding of its end goals. Once those were established, it then would work backward from the goals to identify assumptions about how the system worked and chart a pathway from the current state to the desired state, filling in knowledge gaps to the extent possible. HB participants pointed out that this approach, known as backcasting, has been used as an effective approach to conservation planning when complex systems with high levels of uncertainty are involved.

Harney Basin participants acknowledged that their approach likely has increased the amount of time it will take them to develop an integrated water resources action plan. However, they felt that spending that time has been productive, in that it has allowed group members to learn a lot about each other and the basin. Their hope is that the development of their action plan may go more smoothly than it

otherwise would have gone because of the "journey the entire collaborative had been on together". However, participants indicated that a drawback of the lengthy planning period, is that it has been hard for the group to keep people engaged. They noted that taking this alternative path was also difficult since OWRD did not provide detailed guidance for Step 4 until after they had already begun working on Step 4. In the words of one participant, "we spent a lot of time stumbling around" developing the Step 4 strategies. Another participant stated they the group has also spent time "spinning their wheels", figuring out how to fit what they've done so far back into the 5-step framework required by the state.

The Harney Basin experience has led many members to conclude that the state needs to support different styles of place-base planning to account for the variability in basin contexts and differences in their planning needs. Harney Basin workshop participants pointed out that the planning needs of a basin that is already experiencing a major groundwater deficit are likely to be very different from basins that have the extra water and resources. Moreover, lacking sufficient groundwater information or other water information from the state, the HB group believed it was impossible to follow the linear process laid out in the framework. Some members suggested that the state should develop an alternative process that accounts for the high levels of uncertainty in basins lacking clarity about their groundwater budgets, and where water is already overallocated. Because of Harney Basin's groundwater crisis, group members felt there is high potential that a regulatory solution to overallocation will be implemented, rather than the voluntary agreement pathway that the group has identified as a priority strategy.

A common theme voiced by the LJD, UGR, and MC planning groups was that the step process took years longer to complete than anticipated. The Harney Basin group, which opted to do Steps 2, 3, and 4 simultaneously, is still engaged in the planning process, and concurred that the process is too long. All the groups got bogged down trying to complete steps 2 and 3, in large part because of data issues. The data needed to complete these steps were either not readily available, non-existent, or insufficient. Issues the planning groups encountered with data gaps and data accessibility are described in the section on state support.

Participants in the four groups noted that the lengthy planning timeframe had several negative consequences:

- A significant amount of turnover occurred in participating organization and agency staff, leading to inefficiencies as the groups worked to bring newcomers up to speed.
- Some participants were discouraged by the lack of progress and seeing no value in it, dropped out of the planning process.
- The lengthy time frame caused many community members to lose interest in place-based planning, which workshop participants thought might make generating interest for implementation more challenging.

In all four groups, participants stated that having incomplete guidelines at the beginning of the planning process was a factor contributing to the excessively long timeframe needed to complete their plans. Participants recognized that this was partly because place-based planning was a pilot program, but the

lack of detailed guidelines for Step 5 at the beginning of the process meant that they lacked a clear idea of what the state was expecting the finished plans to look like. In some cases, the groups had to wait for guidance to be developed before embarking on a step, which further slowed the process. In addition to having guidance ready ahead of time, participants felt that the process could have been streamlined if the OWRD had specified what its expectations were with respect to instream and ecosystem needs.

5.2 State Agency Reflections on the Five-Step Framework

The state agency workshop participants indicated that the 5-step process was a useful framework but agreed that it needs adjustments to reduce the planning timeline, minimize the likelihood of turnover in participation, and enable the groups to engage a broader set of water interests, including the broader public in the planning process. The state agency participants echoed the planning groups' comment that it was important to have the process fully laid out before the planning groups begin. They felt that providing the groups with a template of what is expected in the plan would focus the groups' attention on the end goal and reduce the likelihood that they would get lost in the details of Steps 2 and 3. One participant noted that the guidelines for Steps 1 and 2 are needed (specific guidelines exist only for Steps 3-5).

5.3 Challenges Specific to Each Step

This section describes challenges the groups and state agency staff identified with each step and provides suggestions from the planning group and state workshop participants for addressing those challenges.

5.3.1 Create a Step 0: Laying a Foundation for Place-Based Planning

Many planning group participants and state agency staff concurred that another step should have preceded Step 1. Participants offered three suggestions for a Step 0.

5.3.1.1 Trust building

Harney Basin and Mid-Coast participants recommended incorporating a trust building phase prior to Step 1. Because there is so much distrust of OWRD in the Harney Basin, participants there recommended that the place-based planning program add a step devoted to building trust between OWRD and the basin's residents. Such a step would involve OWRD coming out to the basin and spend time having coffee and talking and building relationships with community members. Mid-Coast participants were more concerned about building trust internally, noting that putting together a planning group with a balance of interests and developing a governance agreement would have been easier if more time had been devoted to the various water interests getting to know each other first.

Like the planning group participants, the state agency participants also suggested that future planning efforts should incorporate a trust building phase. In their view, Phase 0 needs to focus on building trust between the OWRD (and other state agencies) and the local groups, as well as on building trust among competing water interests within the planning groups. They suggested that the planning groups could get to know the agency staff during this phase, learn who the experts are on water issues, and find out what tools are available for them to work with. Although it takes time upfront, in the long term, participants thought that having a Phase 0 to build trust will likely increase the likelihood that the plans will be implemented.

5.3.1.2 Data preparation

All the planning groups recommended that OWRD and other state agencies take time prior to starting any new place-based planning to identify the existing data needed for each planning area, package that data so that it is readily available, and indicate any critical information that is lacking or unavailable. Some participants went even further and suggested that the state should provide planning groups with pre-prepared summaries of water demand and water supply (Steps 2 and 3), thereby greatly reducing the time needed for the groups to complete those steps. However, there was pushback within the groups on suggestions that the state should provide all the necessary data and analyses. Some participants believed that it was beneficial for the groups to learn how to find data, and to dive into the data, own it, and understand it. Nonetheless, even these participants agreed that having more data ready at hand would speed up the process.

State agency participants concurred that providing more data and developing the necessary tools and technical products upfront would decrease the time needed for the groups to complete their plans. Some state participants questioned whether data, tools, and products provided by the State would be accepted by local groups to characterize existing conditions, as well as for creating solution options and monitoring effectiveness of solutions after implementation. They suggested that it might be more effective in the long run to work with the researchers and local groups as well as agencies to co-produce datasets, tools, and products.

5.3.1.3 Dispelling misconceptions about scientific data

Several agency participants noted that in some of the planning groups, there were members who held assumptions about water resources in their planning area that weren't supported by the facts. Participants felt that one important task of a Step 0 devoted to trust building would be to dispel these misconceptions by working to create a shared understanding of the information available, the basics of water science, and what data is appropriate to use to answer different questions.

5.3.2 Step 1: An On-Going Process

Participants in all the planning groups stated that Step 1 should not be viewed as a discrete step, but rather needs to happen throughout the planning period. They noted it is important for the groups to continually pay attention to engaging people and getting them up to speed. All the groups indicated that they periodically revisited their ground rules, in part to bring newcomers up to speed and in part to remind longer-term members of their operating principles. The Mid-Coast group suggested that OWRD develop more explicit guidelines on what should be included in a governing agreement.

The state agency participants reported that all the groups experienced difficulties in engaging and/or retaining a balance of water interests. Most concurred that the groups needed additional guidance on how to build and run a multi-stakeholder collaborative process. Some participants reported that the training that the planning groups received early on in collaborative and consensus-based processes was essential, but they felt that periodic refresher trainings could help remind the groups, and especially new members, of what it means to be collaborative and what consensus is.

State agency participants also noted more guidance is needed on steps the groups can take to ensure that ground rules are followed, and ways to create safe spaces where strong opinions can be voiced, but in a respectful manner. Several state agency participants indicated that training about bias and power dynamics in group processes could help keep outsize personalities from dominating discussions. The issue of new members joining part way through was also discussed: State agency staff felt that not only did newcomers need to be brought up to speed on the group's ground rules, but they also needed to be made aware that to participate effectively, they would need to spend some time learning about the work that the group had already done. Another theme that emerged for Step 1, was that OWRD needs to develop tools to help the groups engage the broader public.

5.3.3 Step 2: Simplify and Shorten; Make Data Available

Although participants in each planning group recognized the importance of describing their planning area's water resources, they all agreed Step 2 took too much time to complete. Participants reported feeling frustrated and "stuck in the mud" on Step 2. One participant summed up Step 2 as follows: "We tried to be exhaustive, and it became exhausting".

Many participants recommended combining Step 2 and Step 3 since water supply and water demand are intertwined. Others thought the two steps should remain separate. They noted that doing them separately forced the group members to get to know each other while working on the less contentious task of describing their area's water resources before embarking on the more contentious task of identifying water needs. They felt that doing the less contentious work first provided an environment in which competing water interests became humanized and enabled less divisive discussions in Step 3.

The state agency participants acknowledged that they were greatly under-prepared for the data requests and questions about the data that surfaced during Step 2. However, they are much better prepared for supporting similar planning process in the future now that they know what to expect, have pulled together much of the necessary data, and have a process in place for responding to technical assistance requests. Several state agency participants concurred with the planning groups that combining Steps 2 and 3 would be preferable. State agency participants also noted that the planning groups' Step 2 reports were much longer and far more detailed than they had anticipated, and that the reports could be produced much more quickly if the planning guidelines provided a clearer idea of the level of detail and length expected of the reports.

5.3.4 Step 3: Simplify and Shorten; Make Data Available

Views about Step 3 were similar as those for Step 2: The data were hard to locate, the analyses were very technical and difficult for many participants to understand, and the needs assessment took too long to complete.

The groups suggested that the state agencies streamline Step 3 by identifying and making data on current and future water needs available to the groups. Doing so would allow the groups to focus on discussing their planning area needs, addressing issues surrounding competing needs, and identifying goals for future needs. As with Step 2, some Step 3 reports were longer and more detailed than OWRD had anticipated. The groups suggested that placing sideboards as to the level of detail expected from Steps 2 and 3 would reduce the time needed to complete the plans.

State agency comments on Step 3 echoed those they described for Step 2.

5.3.5 Step 4: Potentially Redundant with Step 5; Provide Training in Prioritization

Some planning group participants thought that Step 4 was redundant with Step 5. They suggested combining the two steps to reduce the number of reports, thereby saving time. However, other participants commented that some redundancy in the two steps was useful as it enabled the groups to work through sticky issues regarding strategies before drafting an action plan.

State agency participants indicated that the groups had a difficult time prioritizing the strategies they developed during Step 4. Providing training in the use of decision support tools could help the groups develop clear priorities.

5.3.6 Step 5: Provide Clearer Sideboards

A common theme among the planning groups for Step 5 was that OWRD needs to provide a better idea of what must be included in an action plan for it to meet the state agencies' review criteria and get state

recognition. In addition, participants suggested that OWRD clarify what planning tools are available and what laws and policies the groups need to take into consideration as they develop their action plans.

From the perspective of state agency participants, the main challenge with Step 5 was that the guidance for it was not developed until several years after the groups began their work. This created a lot of uncertainty within the groups, since they lacked a clear idea of what the state was expecting them to produce as a final product. Providing clear and detailed guidelines about what should be in the plan earlier on would alleviate much of this anxiety. One state agency participant noted that it's important for the state to emphasize that place-based action plans are living documents, and that the groups need to build adaptive management into their plans so that they can adjust it as conditions change. To avoid last-minute surprises during the Step 5 agency review, several participants recommend having a formal review by a team that includes at least one technical expert and one expert in regulatory affairs of each step report. They cited OWEB's Focused Investment Partnerships process as a good model.

5.3.7 Create a STEP 6: Implementation

Some planning group participants recommended adding a Step 6 which would provide guidance for how to structure implementation and the steps groups can take to increase the likelihood of plan implementation. Table 4 (located on the next page) summarizes the changes suggested in the guiding framework for future place-based planning.

Chapter 6 - Perspectives on the Role of the State

Place-based planning Is intended to be locally initiated and led, yet also carried out in partnership with the state. In practice, the local-state partnership concept has been fraught with tension as the state and local partners seek to determine where their respective authorities stop, and their partners' authorities begin. At the same time, agencies that have historically viewed themselves as regulators now find themselves in a position where they're being asked to engage with community members as more or less equal partners. In this section, we explore how the planning groups and state agencies are navigating this new and sometimes contentious terrain.

In the planning group and state agency workshops, we asked participants to discuss what they envisioned the local-state partnership should look like and to identify aspects of state support that worked well, where there were challenges, and suggestions for improvements.

Table 4 – Suggestions for revising the five-step planning framework

Planning Steps	Previous Guidelines	Recommendations for OWRD
Step 0	N/A	Add a Step 0. Spend time building trust among stakeholders in planning groups as well as between planning groups and state agencies. Create a pre-packaged set of data and analyses for Steps 2 & 3.
Step 1	Build a collaborative and inclusive process.	Provide more training in how to conduct a multi-stakeholder process, community outreach, facilitation, consensus decision-making as well as trainings in water sciences and issues.
Step 2	Gather information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge (instream and out-of-stream).	Combine Steps 2 & 3. Pre-package some of the necessary data and data analyses.
Step 3	Examine current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream).	
Step 4	Develop and prioritize strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs.	Provide more guidance on prioritization of strategies.
Step 5	Adopt and implement a local integrated water resources plan.	Provide clearer sideboards on state review criteria for the Action Plans.
Step 6	N/A	Add a Step 6. Provide guidance on implementation.

6.1 PLANNING GROUP PERSPECTIVES ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE STATE

The planning group discussion focused primarily on issues related to funding, technical assistance, cross-collaborative support, and guidance. The groups expected that the state would provide:

- Guidance for the different steps of the planning process and what to include in the action plan
- Data or information about where the groups could get data
- Assistance with analyzing and interpreting data
- For groups with inadequate funding, additional funding or assistance with fundraising
- Agency staff to engage in planning meetings and work groups
- Input on whether the step reports and action plan met the IWRS principles and other requirements of the state

These expectations were only partially met. In the words of a UGR participant,

> "We expected more support and information than there ended up being. Over time, an understanding developed that the collaborative would have to do most of the work ourselves."

The main consequence reported by all four planning groups was a greatly lengthened planning timeline with the associated costs of 1) high levels of frustration within the groups themselves, 2) members dropping out, and 3) the broader community losing interest when progress was slower than anticipated. Additionally, the two groups that were seriously underfunded (the MC and HB groups) had to divert time and energy to fundraising once their initial funding from OWRD ran out.

There was considerable confusion within the groups about which decisions were to be made locally and which were to be made by the state. One LJD planning group participant articulated the uncertainty their group experienced as it tried to work out which decisions were its to make and which were decisions controlled by OWRD.

> "Sometimes it seemed like OWRD was really hands off: "This is your place-based planning group, you're in charge." Other times they would come in and say, "No, you can't do that, you need to do this." Perhaps part of this was due to the fact that this was a pilot. There was a lot of back and forth about whether the group was making the decisions or if OWRD was."

From the planning groups' perspective, not only was the division of decision-making authority between the planning groups and the state unclear, but so also was the division of authority within the state agencies. The confusion that existed over within-agency authority with respect to place-based planning became apparent after the UGR's state agency review. A UGR workshop participant expressed feeling blindsided when the first version of their action plan, which they had submitted believing that it met the state's criteria for balancing water interests, was considered inadequate:

> "You never know who exactly is speaking for the state. This was concerning. Who has authority? Who has the authority to provide feedback? Who has the authority to make decisions? Does the local employee have the authority to represent the state? The review process made it appear that the people in Salem had the authority."

The theme that the state needs to clarify its expectations about the role it has in making the plans also emerged during the Harney Basin and Mid-Coast workshops. One Mid-Coast participant related that there was initially fear within their group that OWRD would have an undue influence on the process and the final product. Over time, that fear was alleviated for many participants as OWRD staff showed that they could be objective and neutral and lived up to the expectations of them established in their charter. However, there are still participants within the group for whom this remains a source of

tension, and who feel, "It doesn't matter what we do, if OWRD doesn't agree with it, then it's not going to be valid."

In the Harney Basin group, participants questioned whether OWRD leadership understands what will be done with the plans or what the plans mean to the communities and the state. They voiced concern that the Water Resource Commission will be "blessing the plan", yet HB members still lack a clear sense of what that means. One participant commented,

> "We will fail as a state unless we figure out how or what the plans mean to the communities involved. The state needs to be upfront. You don't want to set false expectations. But it needs to be a big enough expectation that it drives people to continue to come together and move forward."

HB participants added that the failure of the state to define its expectations makes it challenging for them to create the broad sense of ownership they will need to implement their plan.

The HB group noted that the issue of unclear expectations also has to do with what OWRD envisions as the goal of place-based planning. One HB participant framed the issue in the form of two questions:

> "Question 1: Is place-based planning supposed to be a tool for the planning groups to identify voluntary actions that can be taken to return an overallocated basin or aquifer to sustainability?
>
> Question 2: Alternatively, is place-based planning supposed to be a process that the planning groups use to ensure basins or aquifers don't become overallocated? "

Deciding whether the answer is question 1 or question 2 is important because the data, water needs, and planning process required to address these two scenarios are very different.

All the groups emphasized that the four state agencies involved in place-based planning (OWRD, ODEQ, ODFW, and ODA) have important albeit different roles to play in water management. Consequently, they felt that having the different agencies present during the planning meetings as stakeholders was critical. As one UGR participant noted, "It's very important to have agency folks there as stakeholders. They can provide knowledge of state laws and guidance for each step." A LJD participant echoed this perspective, noting,

> "I had expected more consistent participation by the state agencies, but this did not happen. Only OWRD was consistently present. This was a problem because all the agencies have a role to play in water planning."

ODA had a strong presence in the groups at the beginning of the program, but its involvement tapered off after the staff member who had been participating on a regular basis left the agency and the position

was left unfilled for budgetary reasons. Depending on the group, ODFW and ODEQ staff were more or less involved, and as a result, the in-stream and water quality aspects of the plans were less well-addressed in some groups than they might have otherwise been. Although OWRD had solid participation by the planning coordinators, some of the groups indicated that they would have liked the local water masters to be more engaged.

The HB and MC planning groups emphasized that place-based planning process needed to be flexible enough to account for the needs and capacities of different planning groups. One HB participant stated,

> "Every community will be a bit separate. One-size-fits-all in the state structure won't work. There needs to be a suite of potential place-based planning structures that could be approved by the Commission. There needs to be different potential structures based on the needs of the specific basin."

Another noted that groups needed to be given the flexibility to "tackle steps on a collaborative timeline", rather than being required to follow each step in the planning process in the order specified by the state.

In the Mid-Coast group, participants stressed the need for the state to be flexible in terms of what interests were expected to be involved in place-based planning. One MC participant noted that because interests that might be important in one area might be less relevant in another area, "Flexibility needs to be built into the interests involved since they vary so much between collaboratives". Another MC participant emphasized that the state needed to be flexible enough to let communities incorporate their own ideas into the plan:

> "Collaborative members need to see that their ideas are being used and the state needs to be flexible enough to let that be a big piece of it. It should determine the process but not determine exactly what they're going to do, what the outcome is. This must come from the people."

6.2 State Agency Perspectives About the Role of the State

In discussing what they expected the role of the state to be in place-based planning, state agency participants described five main roles: 1) Provider of data and analytical methods, 2) problem solver, 3) teacher/trainer, 4) plan co-producer; and 5) guidance provider and decision-maker for whether a plan adequately meets state criteria. Of these roles, participants identified data provider, plan co-producer, and guidance provider/decision-maker as being sources of tension with the local planning groups.

The theme of data provided by the state being dismissed as either untrue or inessential threaded through many of the state agency participants' comments. One OWRD participant described the tensions that arose around the state's data provision role:

"Naively, in the beginning I saw our role more as tech advisors, providing groups with data and methods and I assumed the groups would accept us as experts. But I found a lot of skepticism about the data we provided."

Moreover, they noted that some groups were selective as to which data they used, "The groups are asking us for information, but not always using it. Whether they use it depends on how it fits local goals." Another participant who had a similar experience, described this dynamic as demoralizing: "There was a feeling that our expertise was not really welcome. It was off putting. That really changed how I saw the process."

Participants who had expected the state's role to be that of plan co-producer also expressed feelings of disillusion with how events unfolded. One OWRD participant expressed hopes for co-production:

"I hoped there would be co-ownership and commitment from both the state and local communities. I wanted that so it would be more successful. But some of the groups forgot that it is a partnership. I still would prefer that partnership piece."

Another OWRD participant concurred that it sometimes seemed like the planning groups had forgotten that place-based planning was meant to be a partnership:

"I didn't have an idea of what the state-local partnership should look like. But it felt uneven. The feeling I had from the planning groups was that the state was in a support role not a partnership. It seemed like 80:20 and I would like to see it 50:50. You need a true partnership."

A third OWRD participant acknowledged that the state agencies' lack of capacity and resources contributed to the difficulties of co-producing the place-based plans. But they agreed with co-workers that the willingness of the groups to co-produce their plans with the state was also an issue:

"Some groups forgot over time that this was a partnership. Yes, it's their plan, but with partnership from the state."

One participant commented that the state agencies needed to approach place-based planning with a united front and provide consistent messaging from the start that defined the roles and responsibilities of local and state partners. They suggested in future to begin place-based planning by acknowledging that there are things that locals know better but to also point out that the state agencies also have relevant data, as well as useful analytical tools.

A related theme had to do with whether state agencies should have a formal voice in planning group decisions, rather than merely providing data and information. One participant from ODFW asked,

> "How is the group held accountable if we aren't stakeholders? We need to have that voting capability. We were there as a stakeholder to speak for fish and wildlife across the state and represent in-stream interests. If there aren't other groups to represent our interest, we need to have that voting capability to make sure the group is accountable and including what we present to them."

However, others felt that since it was a place-based and community-driven process, the agencies should refrain from voting.

The question of whether state agencies should have a formal voice in planning group decisions is related to the even larger question of where the state should have decision-making authority in place-based planning and where it should leave decisions up to the planning groups. An OWRD participant articulated the challenges associated with drawing a clear line for where the state's decision-making authority should stop, and the local group's authority begin:

> "I had expectations that the agencies would provide more sideboards for the planning groups. But then we stepped back from directing them to wanting them to have ownership, rather than feeling like the state was pushing on them."

Another participant argued for clarity from the state on where its authority lies in place-based planning:

> "If a state agency (one or more) is going to override [a planning group decision], the state needs to make this clear, "We're trying to enroll everybody's agreement to the best possible solution, but in the final analysis, the state is going to decide what's going to get done." Without this, participants can become jaded."

One OWRD participant pointed out that the question of what the local-state partnership for place-based planning should look like raises another more fundamental question: What is the state? They explained that it is important to remember that the state isn't monolithic: there are agencies, interagency teams, divisions, and sections, each with its own perspective, and the individuals within those institutions each have their own perspectives as well. The roles that "the state" could play will depend on knowledge and skills of each of those elements. Given these differences, the participant added, it's important to "demystify the state" by clarifying to the planning groups what it means to work with "the state". They, as well as other participants in the state workshop, felt that just as the state agencies need to have a better understanding of how the conditions vary in the planning areas, so too do the planning groups need to have a better understanding of the different elements that comprise the state and how they work.

Chapter 7 - State Support in Place-Based Planning

7.1 PLANNING GROUP PERSPECTIVES

During the planning group workshops, we asked participants to describe what aspects of state support for place-based planning worked well, what was challenging, and suggestions for improvement. Most of the conversation around state support centered on technical and financial assistance. Participants also mentioned the Learning Partnership events during these discussions.

7.1.1 Technical assistance

During the planning group workshops, the discussions around technical assistance focused on data gaps and data accessibility.

7.1.1.1 Data gaps

All the planning groups identified the lack of critical data as particularly challenging. Participants in the LJD and UGR groups reported that the OWRD does not have gauging and metering data on water use in their planning areas, making it difficult to determine where water use is likely to exceed water supply. As one LJD participant noted, the lack of such data makes meeting expectations difficult:

> "I don't know how we can meet expectations if we don't know what impacts our efforts will make. Where are the best locations to develop projects? We don't have data about water quality, quantity, use, or availability for specific locations."

The Harney Basin participants expressed frustration about waiting years for the results of an OWRD-commissioned groundwater study that will provide the data they need for their water resources analysis. Having the study ready when their planning process began would have made it easier for them to have used the step framework. Many were discouraged that in 2021 they were still working on Step 2 of the groundwater portion of their plan and had no clear sense for when their entire plan might be completed. In the interim they have relied on information that they think is right, but they would like to have it verified through the OWRD basin report before finalizing their analyses.

The data gaps made it challenging for the groups to feel comfortable about integrating local knowledge into their plans. As one MC participant stated,

> "Folks would say, "Hey, we're seeing this every day in our work and recreation, but we don't know how to name it and how to get data to support what we're seeing." We tried our best to work through these pieces together in the plan. But lots of questions arose around this type of knowledge."

As a result of the lack of data, the completed plans contain many caveats, which made some participants wonder how useful they will be for moving forward with implementation. Others argued that, as a group they had a lot of local knowledge about their basin's water conditions and they could still move forward despite the many data gaps. One LJD participant noted,

> "We have quite a bit of data and even where there are data gaps, we have a good sense of where the primary issues reflecting ecological health are. We will get a lot done with the data we have. I feel like as data gaps are filled, the data will reflect what we already know."

7.1.1.2 Data accessibility

All four groups reported that it was difficult, particularly at the start of the program, to find out which agencies have what data, where the data are kept, and who within the state agencies they should contact to obtain specific kinds of data. Participants commented that locating existing data was made more difficult by the lack of or limited data sharing among state agencies, the need for participants to go to multiple sources for data, and the inability to obtain some key types of data collected by the state agencies on publicly accessible internet sites.

Many participants thought that the state should have provided the necessary data to the groups rather than making them seek it out, noting that this would have greatly reduced the time it took to complete the planning process. However, a few participants disagreed, arguing that having to acquire the data has increased local capacity to engage in water planning and implementation. Holders of this view commented that their groups now have a better idea of what baseline data exists for their region and who to reach out to if they wish to obtain data in the future.

In 2017, OWRD developed a formal process for planning groups to use when requesting technical assistance. The only person who commented on OWRD's technical assistance request system said that it was easier to get data once the system was introduced, but it was time-consuming to request data and often the data were not made available until after the reports were completed.

7.1.2 Financial Assistance

Participants in all four groups described state funding as critical. Having state funding enabled the groups to hire coordinators or engage consultants to do the work of organizing meetings, facilitation, or other essential tasks. The groups differed in how they choose to spend their funding: paid planning coordinators or engaged consultants. The UGR and Mid-Coast Partnerships opted to contract with consulting firms to do project management, facilitation, and technical work. The Harney Basin group used its OWRD grant to hire a project manager and engage an outside facilitator. The LJD Partnership used its OWRD grant to pay the co-convenors and a facilitator, as well as paying some project partners who help complete some of the work tasks.

The LJD and UGR Partnerships received the full amount that they requested in their applications for OWRD funding. Participants in both groups reported that they had sufficient funds from the outset to complete the planning process, although both were also able to obtain supplemental funding. The HB and MC group received only half of the funding they requested in their application for place-based planning grants. Both groups found that they were seriously underfunded and had to seek additional funds before they could move past Step 2. The HB Collaborative was able to locate the funds it needed soon enough to keep their project coordinator on. Initially they had hired an outside facilitator, but they later contracted with a locally-based facilitator who was less expensive. The MC Partnership ran out of funds mid-way through their planning. Its Work Groups temporarily took over the tasks the consulting firm had been doing until the Partnership acquired funding to hire a project manager.

Although the MC Partnership continued to work on planning during this interim period, participants described it as a challenging time during which attrition increased and productivity slowed considerably. MC participants commented that the funding shortfall was due largely to the group's lack of understanding of what place-based planning would entail, the amount of time it would take to do the work, and the cost of using a consulting firm to manage the project. One MC participant noted that if the process had been doable within the original timeframe, their funding would have been adequate:

> "No one knew how long this would take, how much it would cost, how much technical assistance would be needed, how much money the collaborative would even get. I felt the funding was fair. We didn't have the capacity to keep track of the timeline and how to budget accordingly. We were going as we went. The funding felt fair for the _original_ timeline."

7.1.3 Learning Partnership Events (Peer-to-Peer Support)

Participants in all four groups reported that the Learning Partnership project, which was supported with funding from The Ford Family Foundation, The Oregon Community Foundation, and OWRD, was an extremely valuable addition to the pilot place-based planning program. Sustainable Northwest played an important role in the two earliest convenings and provided in-kind support. The learning events provided an opportunity for participants from the planning groups and state agencies to build relationships, share their experiences about place-based planning, and learn new skills. One HB participant described the learning events as important for helping them build cross-collaborative connections and added that these events were "one of the better things that came out of the place-based planning process."

State agency participants agreed that these events were extremely helpful for a variety of reasons:

- They led to greater information sharing between the planning groups, enabling those that were slower at completing some of the steps to benefit from the experiences of faster groups.

- They helped build trust between the state agencies and the participating planning group members, as well as between members of different planning groups.
- They provided opportunities for skills training for planning group members and state agency staff.

Learning Partnership event. Photo provided by OWRD.

State agency staff reported that state participation in these events was strong and included higher-level administrators as well as program and technical staff. They indicated that this had the side benefit of providing visibility for the program within the participating state agencies. However, they noted that budget constraints limited the number of planning members who could participate, and the program was discontinued when the COVID pandemic started. Given the overwhelming popularity of these events, state agency participants suggested that similar peer-to-peer learning opportunities should be incorporated into future place-based or other planning efforts.

7.1.4 Planning Coordination

OWRD provided two dedicated staff to serve as Planning Coordinators for the pilot place-based planning program. One of the coordinators was assigned to assist the UGR and LJD planning groups; the other coordinator assisted the HB and MC planning groups and was a co-convenor for the MC planning group. Given the importance of their role in the program, the planning group participants had surprisingly little to say during the workshops about their interactions with the coordinators or their effectiveness at assisting the groups to navigate their way through plan development. A review of the progress reports submitted by the planning groups, however, revealed that the planning group-coordinator relationship for the UGR and LJD was a bit tense at times. Initially the source of tension between the groups and the coordinator appeared to be over the question of whether the groups should open their membership

beyond residents to ensure that their groups had a sufficient balance of water interests. Once the group's governance documents were signed, relations between the coordinator and the LJD group improved. Several LJD workshop participants stated that the coordinator had been very supportive of their work, had provided them with good guidance, and worked hard to review the documents and got other agency staff involved in the reviews. One UGR participant expressed frustration with the communications between the planning group and the planning coordinator, which they characterized as unclear and inconsistent. They suggested that a periodic performance review of planning coordinators by the planning groups might resolve any tensions.

Participants in the HB and MC groups stated that they were pleased with the assistance they received from the coordinator who shepherded their groups through plan development. One HB participant commented that in general the members of their community had a deep distrust of OWRD, whose processes they perceived as being very complex and hard to understand. However, they had found the planning coordinator to be transparent and willing to explain what a lot of things meant. Likewise, the MC group had a positive view of the services provided by their planning coordinator, who was also their group's co-convenor. One participant commented, "It felt like OWRD filled many roles and was able to be objective and neutral. OWRD lived up the expectations established in the governance document".

7.2 STATE AGENCY PERSPECTIVES

Many of the shortcomings that the planning groups identified with state support were linked to the agencies' limited capacity to engage in place-based planning. In the state agency workshop, participants discussed various aspects of agency support, identified some of the consequences of limited capacity, and offered some suggestions for how those might be overcome.

7.2.1 Technical assistance

For most state agency participants, providing technical assistance to the planning groups was their primary role in place-based planning. Many participants described their agencies as unprepared for the number and types of requests they received (Box 3). Moreover, some state agency participants felt that the planning groups often did not take their workload limits into consideration and expected them to assist at a moment's notice. This was particularly the case for plan reviews, which agency staff were often asked to do in a very short time.

7.2.1.2 Training

As part of its technical assistance, the state supported a variety of trainings for the planning groups, ranging from training in how to do consensus-based decision-making to more technical water-related topics. One OWRD participant suggested that in future, it would be helpful to hold a boot camp for the planning groups when they are first starting up. Among other skills, the participants would receive training in how to acquire data from state agencies and what decision support tools are available for

them to use. Water rights was another topic that participants felt needed more emphasis in trainings. Box 4 lists some of the key lessons learned about assistance provision for place-based planning.

Box 3 – Challenges with Technical Assistance Delivery
● OWRD did not have a process established for receiving or responding to technical assistance requests. Initially staff responded to technical assistance requests on a piece-meal basis, but it soon became clear that that was not a viable approach. Eventually OWRD created a new coordinated process for receiving and prioritizing technical assistance requests. However, this didn't happen until most of the groups were working on Step 3.   ● OWRD had not developed information or data packages to facilitate the planning group's access to the data needed to complete Steps 2 and 3. In part this was because no one had thought through what data and information the agency should deliver to the groups or how it should deliver it. OWRD staff now have a much better idea of what those needs are and will be in a better position to provide basic data needs upfront if the program continues.   ● A challenge that some of the State agency participants had not expected when providing data to the planning groups was the belief within some groups that the agency data were incorrect or fundamentally flawed to the point where it was useless. For example, stakeholders learned that data collection frequency (e.g., quarterly) did not align with time increments needed (e.g., monthly). Participants had discussions over amounts of data available, its age, and whether it was from models or was observed data. In some cases, the stakeholders disregarded the data entirely. The participants suggested that there is a strong need for the state agencies to convey to the groups that they cannot ignore the data provided.

Box 4 – Key Lessons Learned About Technical Assistance for Place-Based Planning
● Developing and making available standard data sets appropriate for each planning context would greatly streamline the planning process.   ● Assigning a staff member as technical assistance lead for the place-based planning program greatly improved the state agencies' ability to respond to technical assistance requests and was an important step toward enabling them to make progress toward becoming pro-active, rather than reactive, in technical assistance provision.   ● State agencies need to create budgets structured so that a technical assistance person can be assigned to do the legwork to acquire the data needed by the groups. This would speed up the planning process and alleviate some of the financial stresses the planning groups encountered.   ● It is useful to hold targeted workshops to get feedback that agency staff can take back to their leadership and make a case for the need to elevate resolution of the issue.   ● State agencies need greater and more secure long-term financial support as well as training opportunities in a variety of skills if they are to develop the capacity to deliver the diverse types of technical assistance the planning groups require.   ● It is useful to think of the end goal of training as empowering stakeholders to be able to do the work themselves in the future or know the right questions to ask if they use consultants.

Several state agency participants noted that there are skill sets that the planning groups need but with which the state agency staff typically are themselves unfamiliar. They felt that when it comes to some subjects, state agency staff need training just as much as the planning groups do. Some areas they identified as critical for state agency staff working with place-based planning groups included:

- Community engagement and relationship building skills
- Trust building skills
- Climate change and how to model its likely impacts on water resources

Participants emphasized that community engagement and trust building skills are particularly essential for them to learn since they are not skills that most persons with technical backgrounds learn in school or use in their other work activities.

7.2.2 Financial Assistance: State Funding

OWRD was the primary provider of financial support for the four planning groups. Additionally, all the groups received additional funding from various sources. The UGR and LJD planning groups received the full amount of the grants they applied for during the place-based planning area selection process; the HB and MC planning groups received half of their requests.

State agency participants emphasized that state funding was critical to the success of the program, as it enabled the groups to bring on paid local coordinators, contract with outside facilitators, and pay for consultants to assist with some of the technical aspects of planning. However, they noted that the funding provided by OWRD was inadequate, particularly for the HB and MC planning groups, both of which had to divert their attention to raise additional funds part-way through the process.

The state agency participants noted that outside funding was also helpful, if not vital.

7.2.3 Leadership

The state agency participants acknowledged that OWRD's leadership role in place-based planning was valuable and key to making the program work well. One participant stated that other agencies need to take on more leadership if the process continues, "Because in the end we all review the plans."

State agency staff emphasized that the success of place-based planning depends greatly on whether the program has support from upper-level management. One challenge that some participants identified to getting strong support from upper-level management was the mindset that "this is just a pilot." An OWRD participant commented that "this is just a pilot" thinking hobbled place-based planning from its inception. They noted that while the department staff may think of the program as a pilot, to the communities it is more than a pilot, it is their future. By continuing to call it a pilot, they felt that OWRD

compromises its ability to provide support because if leadership views the program as a pilot, the resources needed to support are less likely to be forthcoming.

Participants from agencies other than OWRD described similar issues within their agencies. One participant noted that while their agency expressed a lot of support for the program, that support was not reflected in the behavior of agency leadership and management. In such situations, they felt, leadership needs to be held accountable, so that it is not just field and program staff that cover gaps.

An OWRD participant suggested that some of the trust issues that field staff have encountered could be alleviated if agency leadership took a more proactive role in building relationships of trust between the agency and communities statewide.

7.2.4 State Agency Priorities

Another challenge that OWRD staff members have encountered while implementing the place-based planning program is that the agency historically has been a regulatory agency and planning has not been a priority. This is the case for some staff with ODA, ODFW, and ODEQ as well. All four agencies also have some non-regulatory positions, and some planning expertise. However, many OWRD staff must allocate most of their time to their regulatory duties and can spend limited time engaging in place-based planning. Additionally, some participants commented that it was challenging at times to make the shift from wearing a regulatory hat to interacting effectively in a planning group. OWRD's regulatory approach is based on a model in which the agency tells communities what they will do, whereas place-based planning is much more collaborative and requires a very different set of skills.

One important impact of the misalignment of state priorities with place-based planning was the lack of consistent engagement in the planning groups on the part of the agencies, both field-level and headquarters staff. The degree to which the state provided this type of support depended largely on the individual's willingness or interest in being engaged. OWRD workshop participants attribute this to the fact that planning hasn't been institutionalized as a core function of the agency and its staff. They noted that addressing this requires that planning be made a part of agency staff's job descriptions, rather than being carried out as part of an employees' "other duties as assigned". And for that to happen, participants felt executive level support is essential.

7.2.5 Workloads and Turnover

A major barrier to more consistent engagement by state agency staff in the planning groups is the large workloads they already have. At first glance it appears that the water masters are the ideal staff for engaging in place-based planning, given their knowledge about water management and water rights. However, OWRD participants cautioned against putting the onus of engaging in place-based planning on the water masters. First, because dealing with water rights already takes up a good deal of their time, and second because they may not have expertise in other important aspects of water resource planning.

Another barrier to sustained engagement by state agencies that was mentioned during the workshop was that there was a lot of staff turnover. In some cases, the person filling the vacant position didn't have an interest or perhaps felt they didn't have enough time to participate in planning meetings. In other cases, positions vacated were simply not filled, leaving a gap in coverage for that agency. To overcome this barrier, state agency participants suggested that the agencies needed to develop a permanent funding source for place-based planners, so the positions can be more permanent. In the interim, one participant suggested that the agencies could form an interagency team to help fill gaps.

7.2.6 Coordination Within and Between Agencies

Coordination and communication within and between agencies are additional elements of state support for place-based planning. Several participants, including some working for OWRD, noted that communication about the program within their agencies was haphazard at best. Some agency staff characterized their agencies as having poor vertical and horizontal coordination, a characteristic that hampered their ability to participate effectively and consistently as technical assistance providers and as planning group members. The relationships between field staff and staff in Salem were described as challenging at times for all the agencies.

Participants described interagency coordination more positively. However, they noted that most of the coordination takes place at the staff level and is less well developed at the management and executive levels. One participant recounted how they first reached out to the administrators in other agencies to get buy-in from them, before reaching out to staff. This proved to be a very successful strategy and could potentially be used within agencies as well as between agencies. Participants were optimistic that they'll be better able to coordinate going forward, particularly across agencies, now that connections have been established.

Chapter 8 – Outcomes of Place-Based Planning

Listening to the experiences of the place-based planning groups, it is clear that place-based planning as exemplified in these pilots has been a long and arduous process. As outsiders looking in on the process, a question that comes to mind is, "Has it been worth the time and trouble?" This section seeks to answer that question by describing the outcomes of the planning process, and eliciting participant's perspectives on whether place-based planning is a good approach to water resources planning.

8.1 PLANNING GROUP PERSPECTIVES

The planning group evaluation workshops took place between October 19 and November 16, 2021. At that time, one of the plans, the Upper Grande Ronde's, had already gone through state review and was being revised for submission in spring 2022 to the Oregon Water Resources Commission. The LJD and the MC groups were nearing completion of their draft plans and anticipated submitting them for state

agency review in late 2021 or early 2022. The Harney Basin planning group, which had focused on developing the groundwater section of their plan, indicated that they likely would not have a complete draft plan ready for state review until late 2022. As of February 2022, when this evaluation report was written, the UGR was scheduled to present their plan to the OWRC in March 2022, and the LJD and MC plans were under state agency review. The Harney Basin group anticipated having the groundwater section of their plan ready for state review in June 2022.

8.1.1 Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership

Participants from the LJD planning group were optimistic that they would have a state-recognized plan completed by June 2022. One participant, however, voiced concerns that the plan might not be effective at addressing the planning area's water needs because most of the water coming into the Lower John Day sub-basin comes from further upstream.

Incremental wins

Aside from completion of their plan, the LJD participants identified several other important positive outcomes of their place-based planning process.

- Place-based planning provided a venue where diverse water interests in the planning area were able to have productive discussions.
- Participants representing instream water interests indicated their belief that the LJD had done a pretty good job of addressing the instream components of water resources planning, alleviating their fears that instream flows would not get enough attention.
- The group had successfully developed strategies that all participants could agree upon for making the area's water systems more resilient to climate change.
- Through the planning process, the collaborative had gained more local support and the group is now confident that it will be able to enroll more partners to implement the strategies identified in the LJD plan.
- Over the course of the planning process, the LJD partnership leveraged an additional $157,000 in funding to support the development of its Action Plan.

8.1.2 Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative

The Harney Basin planning group was experiencing a groundwater deficit crisis when the HB planning group began place-based water planning. As a result, the group focused much of its effort on developing the groundwater portion of its plan and coming up with strategies to address the groundwater shortage. The HB group is working on completing the groundwater section of its plan. Although the group has had on-going discussions about surface water, it likely will not complete an integrated plan until 2023. Because of the group's focus on groundwater, the state's objectives that the plans address multiple

water needs, including in-stream and out-of-stream needs, as well as water quality, water quantity, and ecosystem needs, have not yet been met in Harney Basin.

Incremental wins

- Participants indicated that the planning process has provided a safe venue where community members can have conversations about water resources.
- The group has obtained funding from The Nature Conservancy and the Bureau of Reclamation to conduct a water market feasibility study.
- The Harney Basin's technical work group has worked with an interagency team convened by OWEB to create a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program for the basin with the objective of reducing groundwater use.
- The group obtained funding for and implemented a survey of domestic well users to fill in data gaps about domestic well use in the basin.

- In 2020, the Harney Basin group launched the website, Harneyswaterfuture.com, aimed at providing information to irrigators in the basin who are not engaged in the planning process.
- The group has raised more than $336,000 in supplemental funding from a variety of sources to support plan development.

8.1.3 Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership

The UGR group was the first to produce a draft plan for state review. It has since completed its plan, which is being presented to the Oregon Water Resources Commission for recognition in March 2022. The initial draft was critiqued for insufficient attention to in-stream water interests, but the group has sought to remedy that in its final plan.

Incremental wins

- Upper Grande Ronde participants indicated that place-based planning had had a positive impact on social capital development in the sub-basin in that it provided a venue where representatives of diverse water interests, some of whom did not previously interact with each other, were able work toward mutually agreeable solutions to the sub-basin's water needs.
- Based on their place-based planning work, the UGR group was able to obtain a grant from OWEB, along with matching funds from ODFW and tribes to do a feasibility study for water storage.
- Over the course of the planning process, the UGR group has raised more than $110,000 in supplemental funding from various organizations to support plan development.

8.1.4 Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership

The Mid-Coast group was optimistic that they would have a completed plan by June 2022. Environmental groups were well-represented in the Mid-Coast group and participants felt that the needs for water quality and quantity in terms of instream and ecosystem needs were adequately covered in the plan. However, they noted that the municipalities and other large water user were not well-represented in the group, and out-of-stream water needs, particularly water quantity for water suppliers, were less well addressed.

Incremental wins

Aside from their plan, the Mid-Coast planning group identified the following incremental wins associated with their place-based planning process:

- Through developing the plan, the group has created a broad and deep network of individuals and groups living and working in the Mid-Coast region who are actively engaged in and knowledgeable about water planning.
- The group has identified important data gaps, some of which have been filled through studies aimed at supporting plan development. Among the studies completed include a report on climate change projections for the Mid-Coast area by the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute and a hydro-climate vulnerability assessment by the US Army Corps of Engineers.
- The Mid-Coast planning group also worked with Oregon's Kitchen Table, a non-profit organization specializing in community engagement, to implement two extensive community outreach efforts including:
  - A survey in 2018 of persons living in, working in, owning a business in, or frequently visiting the Mid-Coast region about their knowledge, values, and beliefs about water and the region's water future, and
  - A mix of online and paper surveys, interviews, and group discussions in fall and winter of 2021-2022 to obtain input on the planning group's Water Action Plan, with an emphasis on engaging tribal and Latinx community members and persons involved in tourism, hospitality services, and business and industry.
- Through the relationships build during the early years of the planning process, the Mid-Coast Water Conservation Consortium, a regional network of water suppliers, was formed to increase awareness of water conservation measures and enable the Mid-Coast residents, municipalities, and businesses to more resilient during droughts and other water-related emergencies.
- During the planning process, the Mid-Coast planning group raised more than $430,000 in supplemental funding from 13 organizations.

8.2 STATE AGENCY PERSPECTIVES

The state agency participants agreed that place-based planning for the UGR, LDJ, MC could be considered successful in the sense that all three had completed locally approved action plans. As one participant put it, "The plans were produced! This is huge!"

In addition to the Action Plans, State agency participants described several other positive outcomes of place-based planning:

- The state agency participants noted that the planning groups' understanding of their area's water resource systems has greatly increased through the plan development process. As one participant noted, "We've had the basins go from knowing little to implementing strategies that will make change through this process."
- State agency participants described the process as helpful for building trust and mutual understanding between the state agency staff and planning group members. They noted that the learning partnership events were particularly important for increasing mutual understanding of the concerns of state agency managers and planning groups.
- Other positive outcomes of place-based planning mentioned by state agency participants included: increased access to water resources data, identification of critical data gaps as well as on-going and new efforts to fill those gaps, and greater coordination between the state agencies, and between state agencies and local governments.

Some of the state agency participants voiced disappointment about the quality of the plans. One participant described the plans as vague in terms of how the goals would be accomplished. However, they acknowledged that to some extent this outcome was attributable to the vagueness of the draft guidelines regarding what the plans should look like, and the fact that more detailed guidance was not provided until 2019.

Although all the plans have included instream and out-of-stream needs, some state participants expressed concern that there is a difference between what the local groups perceive as achieving balancing multiple water needs, and what the state agencies perceive as a balanced approach. Specifically, these participants felt that the Action Plans still tended to favor out-of-stream needs.

One participant noted that it is important to keep in mind that expectations about what should go in the step reports and plans changed over time. Additionally, they pointed out that the lack of data for instream water demand was a huge barrier to producing strong instream needs sections. They emphasized that all the groups had difficulties getting such data and the state did not have vetted in-stream data to fill the gap.

Several state participants indicated that they would like to have seen a greater effort on the part of the groups to assign weightings to the priority actions, as well as more emphasis on what implementation will look like.

Suggestions that participants had for strengthening future place-based integrated water plans included:

- Provide more state assistance with Step 4 (identifying and prioritizing solution strategies) and clarify expectations as to what the plans should look like early in the planning process.
- Provide the state agencies with the resources needed to engage in more frequent and proactive check-ins to ensure that appropriate information and balance are present in the plans.
- Assist the planning groups with developing scenarios of different solutions to identify those with the most public benefit.
- Include instructions in the state guidance on place-based planning on how to do the analyses needed to identify actions likely to have major synergistic outcomes.

Chapter 9 - Implementation Challenges

As three of the four planning groups near the end of the first round of place-based planning, the question on everyone's minds is how they can keep their hard-won Action Plans from becoming shelf art. As we wrapped up the planning group evaluation workshops, we asked participants to brainstorm some of the challenges that the groups are likely to face as they begin implementing their plans. In this section, we first describe the major implementation challenges identified by the planning groups. We follow this with a discussion of the state agency participants' suggestions of how the state can best support Action Plan implementation. We then describe recommendations from both the planning groups and state agency staff for tracking the success of place-based planning and implementation.

9.1 PLANNING GROUP PERSPECTIVES ON IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Identifying who will do the work: All the planning groups emphasized that one of the key implementation challenges is identifying who will do the work. This was less of a problem for the LJD and UGR, as they had already begun to identify implementing organizations at the time the evaluation workshops took place.

Defining a role for the place-based planning groups: A theme common to all the groups was the need to figure out what role place-based planning groups should play in implementation.

- There was generally agreement that implementation needs to be done by smaller groups organized to carry out actions rather than by a large collaborative set up to do planning.
- Both the UGR and LJD groups envisioned carrying out activities such as feasibility studies as one possible future role during implementation.
- The Harney Basin participants agreed that the collaborative was not the right organization for implementation, but they did not have a clear idea of which organizations would be suitable.

- The Mid-Coast participants envisioned that their Partnership would take on the roles of information broker, convenor, coordinator, connecting implementing organizations with state and federal agencies, assisting implementing agencies in obtaining grants, providing education about state and federal regulations, and network development.

Concern that the issues with state support in planning will carry over into implementation: The Mid-Coast and Harney Basin groups expressed concern that the same gaps in state support that existed during the planning phase (i.e., insufficient and inconsistent funding, lack of guidance on implementation) would continue on into the implementation phase. Both groups called for greater clarity from the state as to the expectations for plan implementation.

Clarifying expectations for local-state partnership during implementation: The Harney Basin group felt that differences in local community and state expectations regarding the nature of local-state partnerships that were observed during place-based planning were likely to emerge during plan implementation. One participant described what might serve as a model for an ideal local-state partnership. A minimum benchmark could be that the state's role is monitoring and providing the resources needed to measure effectiveness towards the desired goals. The local community's role is to use the information, incorporate it, and adjust their strategies to make sure they are meeting their intended goals.

Insufficient capacity at the local level to implement the plans: All the groups voiced the need for continued state support during implementation. The groups brainstormed the following types of support needs.

- Help with filling data gaps
- Support with developing feasibility studies
- Funding for the "care and feeding" of the planning groups to enable them to continue meeting and monitor progress toward Action Plan goals
- Funding for outreach and coordination
- Funding for implementing action plan activities
- Regulation enforcement
- Adequate funding for state agency staff

Lack of clarity around how voluntary agreements and regulations governing groundwater will work: The Harney Basin group called for greater clarity from the state around implementation involving voluntary agreements, which is presently the priority strategy in the group's draft groundwater action plan. Some group participants expressed discomfort with heavy reliance on a voluntary program, and wanted clarity regarding how such agreements work, what the sideboards are for applying them, and what will happen if the big water users choose not to reduce their water use. A related concern is the lack of clarity around what the revised groundwater regulations will look like, since that will likely affect how the voluntary agreements play out.

Getting local buy-in for plan implementation: Some participants in the UGR group are concerned that there is still insufficient buy-in in the planning area for plan implementation to succeed. The underlying challenge is the valley's history of distrust for state supported or outsider-initiated programs.

9.2 STATE SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Toward the end of the state agency workshop, we asked participants to reflect on how the state can best support plan implementation. The key themes emerging from that discussion are summarized in this section.

Provide resources to implementing organizations and state agencies: Participants overwhelmingly identified financial assistance from the state and/or state assistance with fundraising as essential if the Action Plans are to be implemented.

- Implementing organizations will require funding and paid staff.
- State agencies will require dedicated funding and staff to support plan implementation; more support for the state will enable agency staff to take on tasks that local implementing organizations lack the expertise to do.

Clarify the state's role in implementation: The tensions that arose over the local-state partnership in planning are likely to surface in implementation as well. Some projects will need substantial support from the state while local champions may be able to implement other projects with limited state involvement. It will be important to distinguish between these two scenarios to have a better understanding of what a state-local partnership should look like.

Establish guidance to ensure that implementation remains balanced and integrated: Plans need to be implemented so that balance and integration of all sectors and water interests are assured. Guidance from the state can help local organizations have a better understanding of how to do this. One option is to have the state build in a requirement for state-recognized plans that they meet periodic benchmarks related to balance and integration.

Develop approaches to implementation that account for whether a basin is overallocated or not: In many areas, water has already been or will soon be fully allocated or overallocated. In areas that are overallocated, plan implementation activities (or accompanying regulatory measures) need to focus on how to address overallocation. In areas that are not yet overallocated, implementation activities need to focus on helping basins forestall overallocation.

Build in a requirement for outside facilitation in plan implementation: For state-supported implementation activities, there needs to be a requirement that the implementing organizations use an outside facilitator. This will increase the likelihood that inclusivity and transparency are incorporated into the process.

Provide more education or support for education on the impacts of climate change: The organizations implementing the Action Plans will need to have a better understanding of climate change impacts on water resources. Support for education, trainings, outreach, and workshops will increase local capacity to factor climate change into their implementation activities.

9.3 TRACKING PROGRAM SUCCESS

After having invested so much time and energy into developing their Action Plans, the planning group participants are understandably concerned with making sure they have a way to measure their progress towards the goals they've identified. The state agencies, too, have put a lot of their skin in place-based water planning. We asked the planning group and state agency workshop participants to brainstorm what they would consider to be measures of success of place-based planning and implementation. In this section, we first summarize the ideas put forth in the planning group workshops and then summarize the results of the "measures of success" brainstorming in the state agency workshop.

9.3.1 Planning Group Reflections on Elements of Success

Elements of success: Five general categories of success emerged from the planning group discussions regarding what success looks like for place-based planning and implementation.

1. Plan approval, recognition, institutionalization: For some participants, success was having the group's Action Plan completed, approved locally, and recognized by the state. For others, state recognition was the indicator of success. One participant had a broader vision of place-based planning success, in which they considered the integration of the plan into local land use plans as the measure of success.

2. Plan implementation: For other participants, success was associated with the highest priority items in the plan being implemented. Others went even further and described total implementation or achieving the metrics laid out in the Action Plan strategies as their measure of success.

3. Desired outcomes achieved: Some participants were more focused on the achievement of desired outcomes as the measure of success. Some of these outcomes were hydrological (have the levels of water needed, groundwater pumping back to sustainable levels), some were ecological (Groundwater dependent ecosystems are protected, biodiverse aquatic habitats are protected), some were social (the community is better off; all water users benefit, none are harmed; general feeling that difference has been made) and still others were socio-ecological (clean water to drink and thriving economy; return to sustainability).

4. Enhanced awareness of water systems: For some participants, improved awareness among the general public of water issues and programs was an indication that the program has been successful.

5. On-going planning and collaboration: Other participants focused more on the social connections and capital developed through the place-based planning program. For these individuals, success is linked to whether those connections and capital are leveraged to accomplish new objectives, whether that be within the framework of the existing group or expanded to initiatives outside the partnership.

5. Too soon to tell: For the HB participants, until they get further along, it is too soon to know what the measures of success should be for implementing their plan.

Challenges to measuring success: The planning group participants identified the following challenges to measuring the success of place-based planning and implementation:

- *Defining success is difficult:* one person's success may be another's failure. It is important to understand who the winners are, and who are the losers.
- *Some things are important but are difficult to track*. Some would argue that developing a culture of conservation is a desired outcome of place-based planning. But measuring progress toward that outcome is not an easy task.
- *Success is unlikely to occur quickly*, and it may take a while before it is measurable.
- *It is difficult to tell whether impacts are related to the plan or other factors.*

Suggestions for maintaining forward momentum: The participants also provided suggestions for how to get started on measuring success and steps to take for keeping momentum going.

- Clearly defined goals and objectives are needed for each project and strategies but define lofty goals and strategies as a first step.
- Success is incremental; and therefore, incremental benchmarks are also needed.
- It is important to have both process indicators and implementation outcome indicators.
- It is important to keep people informed about successes and milestones

9.3.2 State Agency Reflections on Elements of Success

Elements of success: State agency participants' brainstorming of measures of success yielded results that closely mirror those of the planning group participants.

1. ***Plans in the works or being implemented***: For some state participants, forward momentum on a plan in progress is a measure of success in planning if the group is still working on their plan. If it's completed, then at one level, success is achieved if it meets the criteria for state recognition. However, the gold standard for success is plan implementation.

2. ***Desired outcomes achieved***: Some participants equated success with the achievement of desired outcomes. Examples that participants cited included: significant changes in how water is allocated, water allocation meets state requirements, and legal reforms that have enabled Oregon to move from prior water rights appropriation to a strategy of the commons.

3. ***Learning has occurred***: For other participants, success was linked to whether learning had occurred (e.g., community has a better understanding of water rights and the role of the state in water management) or mutual understanding of multiple water needs and demands had increased.

4. ***Capacity building has occurred***: Some participants focused on enhanced capacity to manage water resources sustainably as the measure of planning success. Some indicators of this happening were identified: the process has had consistency in participation, transparency, and inclusivity; there is continuity of participants in planning, especially be state agency staff, and relationships have been built.

5. ***The means for moving forward are at hand***: Some participants thought that having the tools one needs to move forward with planning or implementation are another measure of success. For example, has the group reached consensus on interim or early actions? Have clear yet flexible definitions of success been identified? Is the necessary data being collected and made accessible?

Monitoring progress toward desired outcomes: Some discussion also took place in the state agency workshop about what the state should pay particular attention to as the Action Plans get implemented. Ideas that emerged from this discussion included:

- It will be important to pay attention to whether a balance of interests is conserved as plans are implemented, and sectors integrated
- State agencies need to put a mechanism in place for ensuring that the planning groups and the state agencies are held accountable for achieving, or at least making progress toward, the desired outcomes identified in the Action Plans. One suggestion was that the planning groups make annual progress reports to the Oregon Water Resources Commission. However, the participant noted that accountability mechanisms would need to be paired with resources to increase the likelihood that they would work.

Chapter 10 - Final Reflections

During the evaluation design workshops and scoping interviews, several people suggested that the evaluation needed to include some space for participants to reflect on whether place-based planning is an approach that the state should be promoting in other communities or if there might not be other

approaches that would do better at achieving the IWRS' goals. Honoring this suggestion, we ended the planning group and state agency workshops by asking participants to respond to the questions,

> "Is place-based planning a good approach for integrated water resources planning in Oregon? What does it have to offer? What are its main drawbacks?"

The responses ran the gamut from enthusiastic support to qualified support to full-blown skepticism about place-based planning as a suitable approach to water resources planning in Oregon.

The comments in Box 5 give a sense for some of the reasons participants support place-based planning. First, as one participant notes, top-down approaches to water planning haven't worked well in Oregon. Supporters of place-based planning feel it offers an opportunity to build the sense of ownership at the local level that will increase the likelihood of implementation. However, to work well, enthusiastic supporters thought the process requires additional investments by the state, such as making sure that planning groups have the data they need and that the planning groups and state agencies have the resources needed to develop and implement locally led plans.

Box 5 – Reflections on Place-Based Planning: Enthusiastic Support

"Place-based planning is the way to go. State-down plans aren't working in terms of implementation. There are still issues of not enough data and capacity so there'll need to be long term care and feeding of the plans. State-down plans tend to sit on the shelf. Place based plans tend to be implemented."

"Place-based planning is a great start. This is the first step to making a collaborative, cooperative community approach to a pretty serious issue. Everyone has different opinions and viewpoints. Not everyone will agree. The first part is getting to the table. It's a great first step in the right direction."

"Place-based planning on the whole is a good approach. It's good to have communities come together and talk about issues. No matter the outcome or what comes to fruition, this was a good trust building process with the state for the community."

Second, place-based planning supporters emphasized that part of what makes place-based planning an appropriate approach is that it encourages dialogue and provides an opportunity for people to voice their views about water while also listening to the views of others. Third, the enthusiastic supporters noted that place-based planning helps build trust, particularly between communities and the state agencies, by bringing people with diverse views about water together in a constructive environment to systematically work out a pathway forward.

Other participants expressed qualified support for place-based water planning (Box 6). A the DEQ staff member noted that place-based planning is not an approach that will work equally well everywhere and the state needs to consider carefully where it is likely to be effective and where it is not, with complexity of water issues and scale of the planning area being two factors that likely will impact the outcomes.

"DEQ concluded that place-based planning is an effective approach or "tool" to implement the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. However, the state and planning partnerships must recognize early on the potential complexity and scale-dependency of the approach."

"It doesn't do any good to write a plan without any clear understanding of how it will be implemented. If this program is to be applied to other basins, what happens if the basin doesn't have a LJD Basin working group or partnership group? How does this plan get implemented? What keeps the plans from just going on the shelf and not being implemented?"

"I thought information collected would guide us to the end in the Upper Grande Ronde. But we had some people who had an agenda irrespective of the information that was brought in. Finally, some withdrew because they felt they had no voice. We need to figure out how to deal with that. People need to feel heard, so they do not disengage."

A participant in the Lower John Day Partnership voiced another caveat. Specifically, they pointed out that whether place-based planning will work over the long run depends in part on what capacity exists to carry through with plan implementation *before* place-based planning starts. The third qualified support example in Box 6 speaks to the need for the planning groups to have tools in their planning toolbox that allow them to navigate situations where disagreements exist about facts and the scientific evidence.

And finally, there are the skeptics. The first commentator in Box 7 voices the concerns of many water interests, that water is a state resource and, therefore, place-based planning's emphasis on local decision-making fits uneasily with a resource in which stakeholders around the state have a legitimate interest. Other skeptics, such as those who made the second and third comments in Box 7, have a very different concern. In their view, the issue that needs to be addressed is not who has a voice in decision-making. Rather, they see the water resource problem as being a regulatory framework that is ineffective and that needs to be fixed before place-based planning can make a difference.

"There has been tension about whether or not someone should have to live in or work in the area to be a part of the collaborative. We all have an interest in water resources, so place-based planning should not be local-only planning."

"Place-based planning can help address some of the shortages in instream and out-of-stream use. But this work won't have much impact on them due to regulatory processes needing reform."

"There have been plenty of efforts of collaborative non-regulatory group hugs. It's time to look at why existing laws are not protecting water resources."

The existence of such a wide range of views from individuals who have invested several years of their lives engaging in place-based planning suggests that place-based planning is by no means a silver bullet or the right approach to water planning everywhere in Oregon. At the same time, our evaluation shows that place-based planning can be a useful tool in some locations and some circumstances for bringing multiple water interests together to increase their collective understanding of local water systems and needs and to map out water futures that are mutually beneficial. Oregonians have the opportunity to leverage what has been learned through the pilot place-based planning program to improve not only place-based planning but also other collaborative approaches to integrated water resources management.

Chapter 11 – Key Lessons Learned

The preceding chapters make visible the perspectives and voices of the individuals who participated in Oregon's state place-based integrated water program, whether as members of the planning groups, state agency employees, or both. As noted in Chapter 2, discussions in the workshops tended to take the form of constructive criticism, and Chapters 4 through 10 offer a variety of suggestions for how different aspects of the program could be improved, as well as suggestions for measuring and tracking planning and implementation success. Program aspects examined in-depth included: planning process design, state guidance, the nature of the local-state partnership, and planning group and state agency capacity to engage in place-based water planning. In this chapter, we summarize the key lessons learned from the pilot program, drawing on what we learned during the evaluation as well as our own knowledge of collaborative planning processes. There are numerous lessons that can be learned from a program as complex and lengthy as the pilot place-based planning program, and it would be impossible to discuss them all in one report. We focus on nine key lessons that touch on issues that were raised repeatedly during the evaluation.

1) *The state's place-based integrated water planning model can be a useful tool for water resources management in some places, but the state's guiding framework requires adjustment.*

> The participants' critiques of the five-step guidance framework indicate that it needs to be adjusted to result in more efficient, effective, collaborative, and equitable planning processes. Chapter 5 provides a detailed description of suggestions for improving the state's framework that guides its place-based planning process. We highlight three critical modifications: 1) a preliminary trust-building component to build more positive relationships between the state agencies and the communities in prospective planning areas, as well as to build trust among the stakeholders whose participation is necessary for developing implementable and inclusive water resources plans; 2) a component aimed at improving input from and coordination between OWRD and the other supporting agencies; and 3) a component focused on compiling foundational data and analyses into packages that the groups will need to develop their plans. Suggestions for the data and information packages include: 1) involve all relevant state agencies in compiling the information and data, and 2) provide explanations of the data and models, including assumptions underlying them. Including explanations and assumptions about pre-

packaged data and analyses is critical so that the planning groups have a better understanding of how the results were reached and their limitations. However, it is also useful for the state agencies to work with the planning groups to develop the municipal, agricultural, and ecosystem water demand estimates during later phases of planning so that the stakeholders became familiar with how demand estimates are made, and the data and models involved in developing them.

2) In some places and situations, the state's model of place-based integrated water planning may not be appropriate, and consideration needs to be given to providing state support for other place-based planning models.

The Harney Basin case suggests that the state's place-based integrated water planning model may not fit some water resource situations, notably those areas that are already experiencing serious water resources challenges. It is important to recognize that other place-based and community-based planning models exist in Oregon and other states and have been documented as being successful approaches for resolving water and other resource issues. A comparison of lessons from the OWRD place-based planning model with those learned from other models would provide a strong foundation for future state-supported place-based planning in Oregon. Both OWRD and the local planning groups need to reflect upfront on and discuss with each other what they want water planning in a prospective project area to accomplish. Once the water planning objectives are identified, then a suite of place-based approaches can be explored, so that the planning group can select an approach that is appropriate for achieving the desired objectives.

3) When a planning group is established, participants need to be selected or recruited to include not just a balance of interests, but also individuals with the types of skills and capacities needed to accomplish the work.

Oregon's pilot place-based integrated water planning proved to require a wide range of collaboration and partnership skills on the part of local planning groups, as well as considerable technical knowledge and skills. The pilot program evaluation suggests that the state overestimated the capacity of the local groups to carry out the variety of tasks associated with place-based planning. At the same time, the planning groups overestimated the state's capacity to assist with key planning tasks. If place-based planning is to be both efficient and effective, the skills and capacities within the local planning group need to align with place-based integrated water planning needs. At a minimum, the skills and knowledge required to do this type of planning include project management, community engagement, facilitation, water science, ecology or biology, water law, and technical plan writing. Given the likely significant impacts of climate change on Oregon's water resources systems, someone with skills in running and/or interpreting climate change scenarios would also be an asset. Where core technical skills are absent, groups may need to seek outside partners to fill the gaps. For example, the Mid-Coast group worked with the US Army Corps of Engineers to obtain a hydro-climate vulnerability

assessment and with the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute to get projections of the impacts of climate change on the Mid-Coast's water supply.

4) *A situational assessment of prospective place-based planning areas needs to be done to scope out the prospective planning area's water situation as well as its collaborative and technical capacity.*

The results of a situational assessment in prospective planning areas would enable OWRD to lay a solid foundation for place-based planning **before** the planning begins. The foundational work would include, at a minimum:

a) building or strengthening of trust relationships between the state agencies and communities in the planning area,
b) identifying strategies for filling gaps in local and state agency core competencies,
c) developing data and associated analyses tailored to the planning area's needs,
d) developing context-appropriate planning guidance, and
e) creating training materials tailored to fill gaps in local capacity or knowledge/skill sets.

Aside from having a basic introduction to water sciences and data, a foundational training program for planning group members should include introductory background information on agency missions and support and background on water rights, prior appropriation, and how errors occur in estimating quantities of water available for appropriation.

5) *Steady and adequate levels of state funding for both local planning groups and the core state agencies are critical for place-based planning*.

Inconsistent and insufficient funding caused the Mid-Coast and Harney Basin groups to divert their attention away from planning to raise additional funds. And all the groups except the UGR group suffered from lack of funding to hire dedicated staff or consultants to carry out core activities such as project management, planning group coordination, facilitation, and technical report writing. OWRD had sufficient funding to support two program coordinators, but lacked the resources needed to deliver technical assistance at the level required or support consistent field staff engagement in the planning groups. The three other core supporting agencies likewise lacked the resources needed to meet the planning groups' technical assistance needs and support field staff engagement in the planning groups throughout the planning process. Higher levels of funding during the pilot program for ODA, ODEQ, and ODFW would have enabled them to respond more quickly to requests for technical assistance and would have allowed them to be more engaged as members of the planning groups.

6) *State capacity to engage in place-based planning needs to be institutionalized.*

The pilot program evaluation identified several areas where OWRD's and its sister agencies' capacity to provide adequate support for place-based planning fell short. The agencies have

already taken steps to address some of these deficiencies, such as timely data provision and adequate field-level staffing. However, the structure and operation of some state agencies renders them less effective as partners in locally led planning processes. To improve their effectiveness in local-state planning partnerships, the organizational cultures and knowledge and skill sets of the supporting agencies will need to change. Such change will require support from mid and upper-level leadership in the core state agencies, greater vertical integration within agencies, and alignment of work plan priorities across the agencies. Agency staff will need to acquire new skill sets, such as how to engage with communities in place-based planning and how to build trust between state agencies and community members.

7) *Ensuring that place-based Action Plans adequately address the concerns of a balance of water interests, including instream and out of stream needs, requires paying careful attention to process design upfront and providing multiple ways for stakeholders to engage in planning.*

Incorporating multiple water interests in a way that balances instream and out of stream needs, and water quality as well as water quantity proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the state's pilot place-based planning program. Planning processes that are structured in ways that encourage participants to provide input, offer multiple ways for participants to engage, and incorporate strong and on-going community engagement are more likely to achieve the goal of incorporating the water needs of a broad range of interests. Our evaluation highlights the importance of skilled facilitation and the presence of paid staff with community engagement skills in bringing in a broad and balanced set of water interests. To address the issue of data skepticism, which can lead to planning groups ignoring relevant data and thus the concerns of some water interests, the state agencies and planning groups should consider integrating co-production of knowledge about locale-specific water systems.

8) *The respective roles of the state and planning groups in the local-state planning partnership and the state's expectations for what the groups should include in the Action Plans need to be clearly defined.*

When the pilot program began, OWRD staff had not had time to develop a clear sense for what the agency's roles in the planning process should be, nor had they had time to develop detailed guidelines for what the step reports leading up to the Action Plans, and the Action Plans themselves should include. The lack of clear sideboards for where OWRD should have an overriding say regarding Action Plan content, together with differences between the planning groups and OWRD (and other state agencies) expectations as to the agency's data provision and planning group engagement roles, was a source of much frustration and tension. In the workshop discussions, this tension manifested itself in the planning groups' seemingly contradictory desire for both greater flexibility and more structure. Over the course of the pilot program, OWRD's expectations for the plans have become clearer, as have its roles and authority in the local-state partnerships. To reduce frustration in future efforts, the supporting state agencies and planning groups need to devote time upfront to a) defining what is meant by consultation with the state, b) defining what the planning group members mean when they say

they need flexibility, and c) identifying and clearly articulating the expectations and roles of all parties in the partnership.

9) *Outside of the place-based planning venue, investigate the need and possibilities for water rights and regulatory reforms.*

In all the pilot planning groups, some participants voiced concerns that Oregon's legal framework, which enables water overallocation, does not support the state's goals of meeting

current and future instream and out of stream water needs while also addressing water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs. Consequently, they believe that implementing the place-based Action Plans is unlikely to achieve more resilient water resource systems. Indeed, the evidence suggests that overallocation of water resources is already happening or about to happen in many parts of the state. In such circumstances, it is prudent for the state to explore in venues other than place-based water planning, whether, where, and under what circumstances regulatory or water rights reforms might be necessary for achieving sustainable and resilient water systems.

In 2015, the Oregon Legislature revived the state's water planning efforts by authorizing OWRD to implement the pilot place-based integrated water planning program. Over the course of the past six years, the four pilot planning groups and the four core state agencies providing them with support, have invested considerable time, thought, and energy in putting the Legislature's vision for place-based planning into action. The journey to completed Action Plans has been neither easy nor short, but much learning, skill-building, and social network building has taken place on the part of the planning groups and state agencies along the way. Although many of the benefits of the planning process are intangible, some of the groups have leveraged additional funding to begin implementing their Action Plans. Gains to the state are also visible, as illustrated in the following statement from a state agency participant:

"I really appreciate the four groups for struggling and powering through the difficult conversations and decisions that needed to be made. Today we're in a much better place for the state to follow suit. And it's because of these groups. [My agency] was unprepared in 2015. We didn't know what to expect or how to support the groups. Today they have a good sense of what's needed…The groups have helped the state see data gaps and get to a better place for providing support." (State agency participant)

By establishing a solid foundation that the state and communities can build on, the pilot place-based integrated water planning program improves the likelihood that Oregon can achieve the IWRS' goal of meeting instream and out of stream water needs while also addressing water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs.

Acknowledgements and Funding

Appendices

APPENDIX A: THE LEGAL BASIS FOR PLACE-BASED INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES PLANNING

The legal basis for place-based integrated water resources planning
Note: Sections 2 and 3, chapter 780, Oregon Laws 2015, provide: **Sec. 2.** (1) As used in this section, "place-based integrated water resources" means waters that are from sources within a single drainage basin or within an area that is a subset of a single drainage basin. (2) The Water Resources Department may issue grants from available moneys to facilitate the preparation of place-based integrated water resources strategies that are consistent with state laws concerning the water resources of this state, state water resources policy and department requirements. The department may issue grants under this subsection to: (a) A person; (b) A public body as defined in ORS 174.109; or (c) An Indian tribe. (3) The department may enter into contracts or agreements with, and provide technical assistance and information to, a person, a public body as defined in ORS 174.109 or an Indian tribe for the development of place-based integrated water resources strategies. (4) Place-based integrated water resources strategies described in subsections (2) and (3) of this section must: (a) Be developed in collaboration with a balanced representation of interests; (b) Balance current and future in-stream and out-of-stream needs; (c) Include the development of actions that are consistent with the existing state laws concerning the water resources of this state and state water resources policy; (d) Facilitate implementation of local solutions; (e) Be developed utilizing an open and transparent process that fosters public participation; and (f) Be developed in consultation with the department. (5) The Water Resources Commission may adopt rules for the administration of this section. [2015 c.780 §2] **Sec. 3.** (1) Section 2 of this 2015 Act is repealed July 1, 2019. (2) The repeal of section 2 of this 2015 Act does not affect any rights or responsibilities established in a grant, contract or agreement made under section 2 of this 2015 Act prior to July 1, 2019. [2015 c.780 §3]

Citation: Sections 2 and 3, chapter 780, Oregon Laws 2015.

The National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC) place-based planning (PBP) evaluation team held a series of scoping calls and zoom workshops to give planning group convenors and members and state agency staff an opportunity to weigh in on what aspects of place-based integrated water resources planning they felt that the evaluation should cover. For the scoping calls, our team spoke with the conveners from each collaborative and representatives from the Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Oregon Department of Agriculture. In the design workshops, we gathered input from a diverse representation of water users ranging from tribal representatives to farmers, municipalities, and environmental groups, among others, as well as from additional state agency staff. In all, 25 individuals contributed to the design phase.

We asked individuals in the scoping calls and workshop participants the following questions:

1. What are your hopes and expectations for the evaluation?
2. What aspects or components of the program should we evaluate?
3. What questions should we be asking during the evaluation?
4. What is success for place-based planning? What indicators should we use to measure how well the program is working?
5. Who should have input into the evaluation?
6. How should we collect evaluation data?
7. What audiences should we communicate our results to? What types of final products would be most useful for different audiences?

A summary of the results of the scoping calls and workshop discussions follows.

1. What are your hopes and expectations for the evaluation?

Participants expressed a desire for a thorough investigation and feedback, both positive and negative, on the successes and failures of their individual collaboratives, their final project proposals, as well as the roles of individuals within the collaboratives (conveners), state agencies, federal agencies, and beyond. Attendees specifically hoped that the evaluation would examine the degree of collaboration and the tensions within each collaborative.

Additionally, participants hoped to make the place-based planning process more streamlined should the program continue. Participants felt that a streamlined process would better achieve the goals of PBP, provide tools for moving through the steps in a timely manner, increase PBP efficiency, and would be feasible to accomplish at the local level. Furthermore, through the evaluation process, participants hoped to learn from other collaboratives and glean suggestions for implementing their plans.

2. What aspects or components of the program should we evaluate?

Participants indicated that each component of PBP should be evaluated. They suggested starting from the application process, moving through the PBP steps, and ending at the final plan proposals and implementation. When the participants teased apart components of the program to evaluate, they came up with the following recommendations:

- Evaluate Oregon Water Resource Department (OWRD) guidance materials, as well as the degree to which groups followed said guidance, and the technical assistance provided by the state and other agencies. Some participants noted that divergence from guidance was not necessarily negative.
- Evaluate the various roles within PBP, including at the Federal, State, and collaborative level.
- Evaluate participation and the composition of stakeholders within each collaborative.
- Evaluate resources available to the planning groups, particularly funding.
- Evaluate the time frame, the format of the planning process, and the number of steps.

3. What questions should we ask during the evaluation?

Workshop participants suggested that we gather information pertaining to the collaboratives as a whole and to the individual collaboratives. We grouped the questions identified by participants into the following categories: collaborative specific, participant and participation related, technical assistance, support, and data acquisition related, as well as broader scale place-based planning oriented questions.

Collaborative specific questions:
- What is the scale of the issues being addressed in each collaborative area?
- What is the public perception of water in each collaborative area?
- What is the public value of water in each collaborative area?
- Do the groups feel as though they created an integrated plan? If so, how balanced is the integrated plan?
- Does the plan feel feasible to collaborative members? To the community?
- What was the degree of state involvement in each collaborative?

Participant related questions:
- What are participants' perceptions of the process of PBP and of the product created through PBP?
- Were specific water user groups, including in-stream and out-of-stream, needs and concerns addressed in the plans?
- How were the needs of each stakeholder balanced?
- Examine participants who dropped out of the process or weren't a part of the PBP process at all. What were the barriers to participation?
- What helped maintain long-term participation?

Technical assistance and data related questions:
- Did the collaboratives have adequate technical assistance?
- Did groups have adequate data to answer the asks made by the state?
- What did the collaboratives need from agencies?
- What did you need that you didn't get?

Broader scale questions:
- Is PBP of good value to communities in Oregon?
- Should PBP continue in Oregon?
- What changes should be made moving forward?

4. What is success for Place Based Planning? What indicators should we use to measure how well the program is working?

To participants, success meant more available water, and less conflict amongst stakeholders. Success meant implementing a balanced and integrated plan within the community. Success is related to the level of satisfaction that collaborative members have with the process and final product. Participants want to determine if PBP is of good value to community members and the state of Oregon; in addition to ways to make the process more effective and efficient.

5. Who should have input into the evaluation?

Workshop participants highlighted various local, state, federal, and sovereign tribal representatives that participated in various levels within the individual collaboratives. Specific organizations of interest that were mentioned included: Oregon Health Authority (OHA), Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), National Marine Fisheries Service or NOAA Fisheries, sovereign tribal nations who are co-managers of fisheries, and affected tribes, Federal agents and Federal land holders, participants that dropped out of the PBP process, and groups that chose not to participate in the collaborative process but have an interest in water.

6. How should we collect the evaluation data?

Representatives from the Harney Basin, the Upper Grande Ronde, and the Lower John Day highly recommended hosting an in-person workshop. Representatives from the Mid-Coast collaborative recommended hosting a zoom workshop. All participants supported the use of a short follow up survey and highlighted the need for anonymous comments on the collaborative process from participants.

7. What audiences should we communicate our results to? What types of final products would be most useful for different audiences?

Workshop participants desired communicating evaluation results to government agencies on multiple levels, including local, state, tribal, and federal. Additionally, participants felt that legislators, especially the House Water Committee, and the Water Resource Commission should receive the results. Within the state level, participants suggested that state program staff, state agency leadership, and directors' offices staff would benefit from viewing the results of this survey.

Participants saw a real benefit in making overarching information about the PBP process in addition to specific collaborative-level available to groups. Workshop participants suggested creating a short executive summary for legislators to read. Additionally, individual collaboratives desired specific feedback on the successes and means for improvement within their individual collaboratives.

Welcome and introduction

Part 1 – Collaborative: Structure, Function, and Process

Step 1 - Build a collaborative & integrated process that is open and transparent
"Create a structure and process that fosters collaboration, bringing together various sectors and interests to work toward the common purpose of maintaining healthy water resources to meet the needs of the community and the environment. Ensure a balanced representation of interests and a meaningful process for public involvement."
The planning guidelines mention the following potential interests:

- Local governments
- Tribal governments
- Municipal water and wastewater utilities
- Major industries or employers
- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Self-supplied water users
- Conservation/environmental groups
- Power companies
- Small business
- Private landowners

- Special districts (e.g., irrigation, public utilities, flood control, parks/recreation, drainage, ports, etc.).
- State and federal agencies (natural resources, land management, business development)
- Environmental justice communities
- Those potentially impacted by a plan
- Others as determined by the planning group to represent the diverse interests in their basin in a balanced way

Source: Oregon Water Resources Department. February 2015. Draft guidelines: A tool for conducting place-based integrated water resources planning in Oregon.

Membership, working together, and transparency

> *Incorporating multiple water needs*:
> - What challenges did your group have with incorporating a balance of sectors and water interests (e.g., in-stream/out-of-stream; surface/groundwater; water quantity and quality, ecosystem services, needs for people and communities, nature, and economy)?
>   - How did your group address those challenges?
>   - What suggestions do you have for future groups doing place-based planning for reaching a balance among different sectors and water interests?

> *Working together*
> - How did your group define and use consensus-based decision making?
>   - What worked well about that?
>   - What did not work so well, and why?
>   - What suggestions do you have for future groups using a consensus-based approach to decision making?

> *Transparency*
> - Oregon Senate Bill 266 specifies that plans must "be developed utilizing an open and transparent process that fosters public participation."
>   - What steps did your planning group take to meet this requirement?

  o What challenges did you encounter and how did you address those?

 Capacity to do place-based water planning
  ● Did your group have the right set of skills to do place-based water planning?
   o What was lacking?
   o What steps did your group take to address those gaps, and how successful were they?

Part 2 – Plan Development Process

The Five-Step Process for Plan Development
Step 1 - Building a collaborative and inclusive process
Step 2 - Gathering information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge (instream and out-of-stream)
Step 3 - Examining current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream)
Step 4 - Developing and prioritizing strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs
Step 5 – Adopting and implementing a local integrated water resources plan.
Source: Oregon Water Resources Department. February 2015. Draft guidelines: A tool for conducting place-based integrated water resources planning in Oregon.

Reflect on the five steps in the planning process listed above:

 ● How did the 5-step process work for your community?
  o Were the step products useful?
  o Were any steps missing?
 ● What could/should have happened before Step 1 to make the process easier?
 ● How could this process be made more efficient and effective?

Part 3 - State support

The role of state agencies in place-based planning
"The role of state agencies in development of a place-based plan is to provide data and information, and generally, offer support, advice and direction throughout development of the plan. The Water Resources Department and its sister agencies can help planning groups incorporate the goals and objectives of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy at the local level, and understand the regulatory structures in place today.

If resources allow, the Water Resources Department could serve as a planning member or act as a liaison for other natural resources agencies not able to commit staff resources to participate in planning-related activities, such as face-to-face meetings…A state agency could serve as a facilitator or play a co-convening role, if requested by local communities and if resources allow." (OWRD 2015:8) |
| Source: Oregon Water Resources Department. February 2015. Draft guidelines: A tool for conducting place-based integrated water resources planning in Oregon. |

Place-based planning was designed to be locally initiated and led in partnership with the state.

- What were your desires and expectations for the state's involvement at the start? Were those met?
- How did your Partnership with the state and your expectations for State support evolve and change over time?
- What would your ideal state-local partnership look like during implementation and what should the state and future places consider as they build a partnership?

Consider the following elements of state support:

Elements of state support
● Guidance
● Financial assistance
● Coordination between agencies
● Technical assistance
○ Data provision
○ Data interpretation
○ Training
○ Review of planning documents
● Learning events
● Communication and outreach
● Leadership

What worked well and what didn't work well about each of these elements?

What changes would you recommend for future planning efforts?

Where should the state provide structure, where should it allow for flexibility?

Part 4 – Reflections on progress and looking ahead

Adoption and implementation of a local integrated water resources plan
"Planning group members should formally approve their plan. Individual planning members should seek an affirmative vote from their respective governing boards or commissions to confirm any funding or political commitments made by the planning group."   "The Water Resources Commission will ultimately make the final decision about whether to formally accept a place-based plan as a component of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy. More specifically, the Commission will decide whether the plan adheres to these guidelines and the statewide goals and objectives of meeting instream and out-of-stream water needs, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs."   "Implementation of a place-based plan will likely involve various partners and result in a suite of projects and/or long-term programs. Some projects may need additional analyses (e.g., feasibility studies) that are beyond the scope of a place-based plan. It is very likely that permits or some type of state or federal approval will be needed for certain projects, as well as funding, likely from multiple sources. Planning groups may need to develop a more detailed implementation strategy, agreement, or workplan to ensure that all of the hard work of creating the integrated water resources plan is carried out by various public and private partners."
Source: Oregon Water Resources Department. February 2015. Draft guidelines: A tool for conducting place-based integrated water resources planning in Oregon. Page 16. (bolding and italics added)

Outcomes of place-based planning
- To what extent has your group's plan met the expectations that it should address "instream and out-of-stream water needs, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs?"
- What were/are the main challenges to meeting those expectations, and how can they be addressed for future efforts?
- What are the prospects for implementing your group's integrated water resources plan?

Tracking program success
- What does success for place-based planning and implementation look like?
- What indicators should your group use to measure whether plan implementation is successful?

Final reflections: Reflecting on the work that your group has done over the past five years:
- Is place-based planning a good approach for integrated water resources planning?
  - What does it have to offer?
  - What are its main drawbacks?
- What are the most important outcomes to-date of place-based planning for your community? For the state?

Next steps

Welcome and introduction

Part 1. Evaluating State Guidance and Support for Place-Based Planning

The State provided the planning groups with a "road map" in the form of a five-step process for developing their plans (see Box 1). The five-step process was set up to allow for local flexibility in how the steps were carried out, and for adaptation along the way.

Guidance for Place-Based Planning – The Five Step Process
Step 1 - Building a collaborative and inclusive process
Step 2 - Gathering information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge (instream and out-of-stream)
Step 3 - Examining current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream)
Step 4 - Developing and prioritizing strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs
Step 5 - Adopt and Implement a place-based integrated water resources plan.

1A. *Reflecting on the five steps in the planning process* [breakout]

- What aspects of the five-step planning process worked well?
- What were the major stumbling blocks?
  - What steps did your agency take to address those stumbling blocks, and with what results?
- How could the five-step process be reconfigured to be more efficient, equitable, and collaborative while still resulting in plans that meet the requirements laid out by the state?
- In future water planning, where within these steps should the state provide structure; and where should it allow for flexibility?

1B. *Agency support for the place-based planning groups* [breakout]

State support was a key aspect of place-based planning. Box 3 lists some of the roles that were envisioned for agencies to assist the planning groups with plan development.

Box 3 - Role of State Agencies in Place-Based Plan Development
● Provide data and information, and generally, offer support, advice, and direction throughout development of the plan;
● Help planning groups incorporate the goals and objectives of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy at the local level;
● Help planning groups understand the regulatory structures in place today;
● A state agency could serve as a facilitator or play a co-convening role, if requested by local communities and if resources allow;
● If resources allow, WRD could serve as a planning member and act as a liaison for other natural resources agencies not able to commit staff resources to participate in planning-related activities, such as face-to-face meetings.

Adapted from OWRD. 2015. Draft guidelines: A tool for conducting place-based integrated water resources planning in Oregon.

Consider the following elements of state support

Elements of state support
● Leadership
● Coordination:
○ Within agencies
○ Between agencies
● Technical assistance to planning groups
○ Formulating questions
○ Technical data provision
○ Data interpretation
○ Training/learning opportunities
○ Information on regulations and laws
○ Review of planning documents
● Communication with the planning groups
● Outreach beyond the planning groups
● Financial assistance

Focusing on the elements that jump out to you as most important:

What worked well with those elements?

What worked less well?

What changes are needed in those elements that jump out to you as most important?

Part 2. Agency Capacity for Place-Based Planning [breakout]

- What resource and capacity gaps within your agency have limited its ability to provide support to the place-based planning groups?
- What actions or steps has your agency taken to address those gaps, and with what results?
- Given the budget constraints that state agencies work within, what suggestions do you have for strengthening your agency's capacity to support future water planning groups?

BREAK

Part 3. Evaluating the Local-State Partnership [full group]

Place-based planning was designed to be locally led in partnership with the state.

- What were your expectations for what the state-local partnership for place-based planning should look like when you initially became involved in the program?
- How did your idea of what the state-local partnership should look like change over the course of time?
- What would your ideal of a state-local partnership look like in future water planning?
  - What should be the role(s) of the local planning group?
  - What should be the role(s) of the state?

Looking ahead

    4A. Outcomes of place-based planning [breakout]

- To what extent have the plans you've seen or reviewed met the expectations that they should address "instream and out-of-stream water needs, including water quantity, water quality, and ecosystem needs?"
- What changes in the place-based water planning process could help address gaps between what you expected and what the plans actually look like?

4B. Measuring success of place-based integrated water resources <u>planning</u> [breakout]
- How has your view of what constitutes successful place-based integrated water resources <u>planning</u> changed over time?
- Given what you know now, what indicators (broadly speaking) do you recommend for measuring the success of place-based integrated water resources planning?

4C. Measuring success of place-based integrated water resources <u>plan implementation</u> [breakout]
- Looking ahead, what are the key ingredients for successful place-based plan <u>implementation</u>?
- What indicators (broadly speaking) do you recommend for measuring the success of place-based plan <u>implementation</u>?

Part 5. Final reflections and wrap up [full group]

What comments or observations do you have about place-based planning or plan implementation that we haven't touched upon yet?

Next steps

We invite you to participate in a survey about your experience participating in the Oregon Water Resources Department's pilot Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning Program. The survey is part of Water Resources Department's evaluation of the program. The survey is an opportunity for you to provide input on what program aspects worked well and which ones did not, and to provide suggestions on how the program could be improved. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

The place-based planning process is meant to follow the conditions specified in Oregon Senate Bill 266, and to follow guidance laid out in the 2017 Integrated Water Resources Strategy and the 2015 Draft Guidelines for Place-based Integrated Water Resources Planning. The conditions and guidance laid out in these documents are the touchstones against which placed-based planning should be evaluated. At the same time, the evaluation provides an opportunity to identify whether the conditions and guidance are appropriate for the contexts in which place-based planning occurs.

According to Oregon Senate Bill 266, place-based plans must:
● Be developed in collaboration with a balanced representation of interests;   ● Balance current and future in-stream and out-of-stream needs;   ● Include the development of actions that are consistent with the existing state laws concerning the water resources of this state and state water resources policy;   ● Facilitate implementation of local solutions;   ● Be developed utilizing an open and transparent process that fosters public participation; and   ● Be developed in consultation with the [Oregon Water Resources] department.
Source: Senate Bill 266. 78th Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2015 Regular Session.

Before we dive into the evaluation, we'd like to get a little information about whether you participated in the evaluation workshops in fall 2021, what place-based planning group you participated in, your interest in water issues, and which of the planning steps you participated in. Estimated time to complete Part 1: 2 minutes.

Part 1 - Respondent background

1. Did you participate in any of the participatory evaluation workshops during fall 2021?
[If no, go to question 2.]

1a) If yes, please check all that apply:
_____ Upper Grande Ronde Workshop 1
_____ Upper Grande Ronde Workshop 2
_____ Lower John Day Workshop 1
_____ Lower John Day Workshop 2
_____ Mid Coast Workshop 1
_____ Mid Coast Workshop 2
_____ Harney Basin Workshop 1
_____ Harney Basin Workshop 2

2. Which place-based planning group, or groups, did you participate in? (check all that apply)

Upper Grande Ronde   _____
Lower John Day   _____
Mid-Coast   _____
Harney County   _____

    2a. If you participated in more than one group, please indicate the name of the group that you were most active in:

Note: For subsequent questions, please answer questions with respect to the group you were most active in.

3. During which stages of the water planning process were you active in the planning group? (check all that apply).

___ Application phase
___ Step 1 - Build a Collaborative and Integrated Process
___ Step 2 - Characterize Water Resources, Water Quality, & Ecological Issues
___ Step 3 - Quantify Existing and Future Needs/Demands
___ Step 4 - Develop Integrated Solutions for Meeting Long-Term Water Needs
___ Step 5 - Plan Adoption & Implementation

4. How did you participate in the planning group (check the answer that best applies)

_____ As a private individual [continue to question 7]
_____ As a representative or member of a sovereign tribal nation (including both federally recognized tribes and tribes that are not federally recognized) [continue to question 5]
_____ As a representative of an organization/agency [continue to question 6]

5. If you represented or were a member of a sovereign tribal nation, what tribe were you representing and/or a member of? [Continue to question 7 when done with your answer]

6. If you represented an organization or agency, which one was it? [Continue to question 7 when done with your answer.

For Questions 6 and 7, if you participated in the planning process on behalf of a group or tribal nation, please answer from the standpoint of the group or tribal nation you represented.

7. Please describe in a few words or a sentence your main interest in or concerns about water issues.

8. Please describe in a few words or a sentence what motivated you to participate in the place-based planning group?

Part 2 - Membership, working together, transparency

In this section, you will evaluate the planning group's membership, leadership, and the way in which the group operated. In your evaluation, remember that the intended goal was to:

> "Create a structure and process that fosters collaboration, bringing together various sectors and interests to work toward the common purpose of maintaining healthy water resources to meet the needs of the community and the environment. Ensure a balanced representation of interests and a meaningful process for public involvement."

Estimated time to complete Part 2: 4 minutes

9. In your view, were all the relevant and necessary in-stream and out-of-stream water users/groups a part of your planning group?
___ Yes
___ No

> 9a. If you feel that not all the relevant and necessary water users/groups were present, please list those that were missing?

10. How comfortable were you with sharing your ideas and concerns openly within your planning group?
_____Very comfortable
_____ Somewhat comfortable
_____ Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable (neutral)
_____ Somewhat uncomfortable
_____ Very uncomfortable
_____ Don't know

> 10a. (optional) Please describe what it was that made you comfortable or uncomfortable about sharing your ideas or concerns openly:

11. Did the way in which your planning group organize decision-making result in decisions that were fair for all water interests and sectors?
_____ Always
_____ Frequently
_____ Neither frequently nor infrequently (neutral)
_____ Infrequently
_____ Never
_____ Don't know

> 11a. (optional) Please describe how the way your planning group organized its decision-making process affected the fairness or unfairness of decisions for all water interests/sectors:

12. How effective was communication within your planning group?
_____ Very effective
_____ Somewhat effective
_____ Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)
_____ Somewhat ineffective

_____ Very ineffective
_____ Don't know

13. 12a. (optional): Please expand on the ways in which communication within your planning group was effective or ineffective:

13. How effective was your planning group at obtaining and integrating public input into its decisions?
_____ Very effective
_____ Somewhat effective
_____ Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)
_____ Somewhat effective
_____ Very ineffective
_____ Don't know

13. 13a. (optional): Please describe what made your planning group effective or ineffective at obtaining and integrating public input into its decisions:

14. Did your group have the right set of skills to do place-based water planning?
_____ Yes, we had all the skills needed
_____ No, we lacked some of the skills needed
_____ Don't know

14. 14a. If you answered no, what skills did your group lack?

15. How effective were your planning group's convenors at bringing a diverse group of people together to work collaboratively?
_____ Very effective
_____ Somewhat effective
_____ Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)
_____ Somewhat ineffective
_____ Very ineffective
_____ Don't know

15. 15a. (optional) Please describe what made your planning group's convenors effective or ineffective at bringing together a diverse group of people together to work collaboratively:

16. How effective was the facilitation for your planning group?
_____ Very effective
_____ Somewhat effective
_____ Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)
_____ Somewhat ineffective
_____ Very ineffective
_____ Don't know

16. 16a. (optional) Please describe what it was about the facilitation that was effective or ineffective.

17. How well does the plan that your planning group created (or is in the process of creating) achieve the legislative direction that the plans reflect a balance of water needs?
_____ Very well
_____ Somewhat well
_____ Neither well nor poorly (neutral)
_____ Somewhat poorly
_____ Very poorly
_____ Don't know

> 17a. (optional) If you answered, "somewhat well", "somewhat poorly", or "very poorly", please describe the ways in which the plan is unbalanced.

18. How well did the place-based planning process address your water needs/concerns?
___ Very well
___ Somewhat well
___ Neither well nor poorly (neutral)
___ Somewhat poorly
___ Poorly
___ Don't know

> 18a. (optional): Please expand on how the process did or did not address your water needs or concerns, and describe what changes, if any, would need to be made in the plan for it to adequately address your water needs/concerns?

19. If you have additional comments regarding your planning group's composition, the way in which decisions were made, leadership and facilitation, transparency, public outreach or other aspects related to how the group was structured and functioned, please add them here.

Part 3 - Plan Development Process

Take a moment to reflect on how your planning group navigated the five-step planning process for plan development that was laid out in the state's guidelines. Based on your experience, please rate how helpful the guidance for each step was for enabling your group to accomplish each step.

Estimated time to complete Part 3: 3 minutes.

> 1=very helpful
> 2 = somewhat useful
> 3 = neither helpful nor unhelpful(neutral)
> 4 = somewhat unhelpful
> 5 = not at all helpful
> 6 = don't know

20. Step in Planning Guidance	Rating
Step 1 - Building a collaborative and inclusive process	
Step 2 - Gathering information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge (instream and out-of-stream)	

Step 3 - Examining current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment (instream and out-of-stream)	
Step 4 - Developing and prioritizing strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs	
Step 5 – Adopting and implementing a local integrated water resources plan	

21. If you have comments or suggestions on how the plan guidelines or the guidance process in general could be improved, please write them here.

Part 4 - State support

Place-based planning was designed to be locally initiated and led in partnership with the state. Take a moment to reflect on the ways in which the state agencies provided support for your planning group. Estimated time to complete Part 4: 3 minutes

22. Based on your experience, please rate each of the following elements of state support using the following scale:

       1=Very good, few improvements needed
       2=Adequate but needs some improvement
       3=Neutral
       4=Poor, needs a lot of improvement
       5=Don't know

Type of support	Rating
Guidance	
Financial assistance	
Coordination between agencies	
Learning events	
Communication and outreach	
Leadership	
Technical assistance	
Data provision	
Data interpretation	
Training	
Planning document review	

23. If you have additional comments or suggestions you would like to make regarding any elements of state support, please add them here. This may include, but is not limited to, providing specific examples of what worked or what needed improvement, as well as offering ideas for how to address what you feel should be improved.

Part 5 - Reflections on progress and looking ahead

In this last section, we ask you to reflect on the plan that your group has created, or is in the process of creating, and the usefulness of the pilot program as a whole. Estimated time to complete Part 5: 3 minutes.

24. What are the prospects that your group's plan will be implemented?
_____ Very likely
_____ Somewhat likely
_____ Neither likely nor unlikely (neutral)
_____ Somewhat unlikely
_____ Very unlikely
_____ Don't know

    24a. (optional) Please expand on why the prospects for implementation are likely or unlikely.

25. Reflecting on your experience with place-based planning, do you believe that it is a useful approach for integrated water resources planning?
_____ Yes
_____ Yes, but some changes are needed
_____ No

    25a. (optional) Please provide a brief explanation for your response to Question 25.

26. Please describe a specific aspect or step of your group's process that worked very well, and why.

27. Please describe a specific aspect or step of your group's process that did not work very well, and why.

28. If you have any additional comments or observations related to your experience with your place-based planning group, please include them here:

1.0 Introduction

As part of the participatory evaluation, our team created an online survey in Qualtrics and distributed it to the four planning groups. The purpose was twofold: 1) to capture information from people who could not make it to the workshops and 2) to obtain information about topics that workshop participants might have considered too sensitive to answer in a group setting. The survey included questions about which planning group(s) the respondent participated in, the planning process phases they were involved in, views about whether the relevant stakeholders were present, the respondent's comfort level with sharing ideas and concerns within their group, how effective their group was at balancing a range of water needs, helpfulness of the step guidance, and an assessment of various elements of state support. The full list of survey questions is provided in Appendix A. On January 27, 2022, we emailed the survey link and explanation of the survey's purpose to the planning group convenors and asked them to distribute the information to persons on their planning group mailing lists. We sent a follow up reminder on February 7th and closed the survey on February 14, 2022.

2.0 Who Participated in the Survey

Thirty-six people provided full responses to the survey. Of those, six came from individuals associated with the Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative, seven from the Lower John Day Place-Based Partnership, twelve from the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership, and ten from the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership. One participant did not identify which planning group they participated in. Twenty-one (58%) of the respondents had attended at least one evaluation workshop hosted by the Place-Based Planning (PBP) Evaluation team. Of the 36 respondents, 26 (72%) participated in their planning group as representatives of an organization or an agency; 8 (22%) participated as private individuals; 1 (3%) represented a sovereign tribal nation, and 1 (3%) did not include themselves within any of the three categories.

3.0 Participation and Planning Group Skills

Survey respondents were generally comfortable with sharing their ideas and concerns in their planning groups (Figure 1), with just under half (16 or 45.7%) indicating they were very comfortable and 15 or 42.5% stating they were somewhat comfortable. Only three respondents were uncomfortable, and none were very uncomfortable sharing their ideas in their planning groups. For some, comfort levels shifted in a positive direction when meetings became virtual; for others, they shifted in a negative direction.
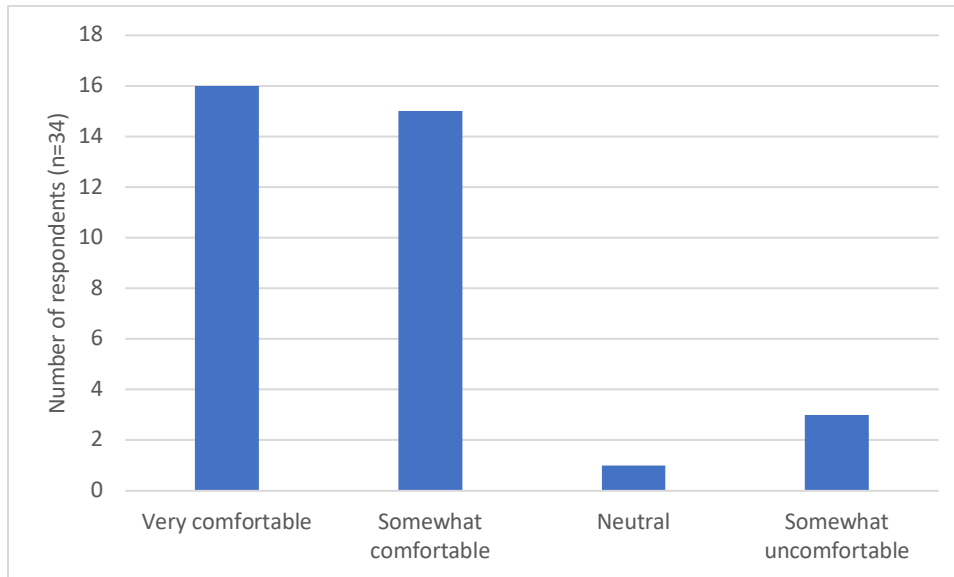
Figure 1 – Respondents' comfort level with sharing ideas and concerns in their planning group

Respondents attributed their comfort with sharing ideas to having long standing relationships within their planning group, the establishment of guidelines for respectful discourse within the governance agreements, and facilitators aiding with difficult conversations. One participant noted the importance of having previously worked with others as a contributing factor to feeling comfortable sharing ideas:

> "Most of us had been working together for a long time and we understood where the other stands. There was an understanding that we were all there to make progress and that could only happen with communication."

One respondent emphasized the challenges of fostering comfortable and open communication at all times within a diverse group of interests:

> "With such a broad range of interests and expertise within the stakeholder group, a common understanding for discussion without conflict can be difficult. People can be emotionally tied to their opinions and perceptions of conditions and not allow others to share equally."

Some reasons for discomfort around sharing ideas and concerns openly are illustrated in Box 1.

When asked if the planning group had the right set of skills to do place-based water planning, 22 (61%) of the respondents said yes; 14 (33%) said no; and 2 (6%) indicated that they didn't know. Examples of the skills that survey respondents mentioned as lacking included:

- Dedicated technical expertise
- Dedicated report writers
- Technical analysts

- Trained hydrologists
- Local planner or person with planning experience related to water
- Facilitation skills around collaborative processes, neutrality, and water resource issues
- Trust building and public engagement

Box 1 – Reasons for Discomfort in Sharing Ideas and Concerns
"The process was bogged down by a heavy workload of report drafting and editing, often without adequate expertise. As a result, there was significant pressure to not raise issues that might slow the process down."   "I was usually comfortable because I did not have anything to lose, unlike some other participants. There were times when I was uncomfortable because of being discounted."   "There were very knowledgeable folks in every group that had very good skills in articulating and taking command. I personally felt less educated and not trained to operate in this kind of arrangement."

As illustrated by the comments in Box 2, a common theme was that the highly technical and complex nature of water planning inhibited widespread participation:

Box 2 – Challenges of Implementing A Highly Technical Planning Process
"This process involved a huge learning curve for the average citizen. While OWRD and USGS presented amazing programs and science based "tutorials", it is obviously a very complicated situation, as is evidenced by the fact that the actual published report [the groundwater study for Harney Basin] is late to be released by the experts and scientists themselves."   "The group tried really hard to invite participation from a broad group and worked hard to keep people at the table. The reality is that the process itself was probably too time intensive for many members of the community to engage."   "You can't expect an interested citizen/member of the public to have the technical knowledge for some of these topics. Guesses on costs seemed, in many cases to be just that, guesses."   "I'd say that we had to rely really heavily on partners to provide technical support and we needed someone with that expertise dedicated to the project."   "There are a ton of skills needed to do this right and it really does require a well coordinated team of people with different skill sets to pull it off. I would not recommend relying on volunteers to undertake these very important roles."

Participants were asked to expand upon their views on communication within the planning group and the effectiveness of their facilitator(s). Participants generally found communication to be "somewhat

effective" or "very effective" (Figure 2). Somewhat more than half (20 or 57.1%) found communication to be "somewhat effective" within their planning group and another 11 respondents (31.4%) found communication to be "very effective".
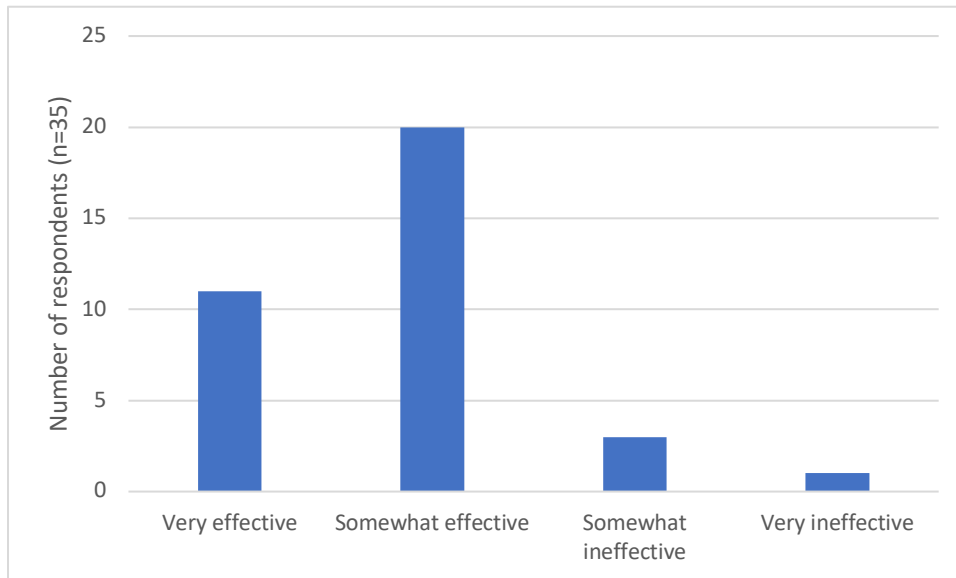

Figure 2 – Effectiveness of communication within the planning group

One respondent spoke to the complexity of the PBP project and its impact on communication:

> "Because it was such a process heavy process, sometimes it was easy to lose track of what was happening and why. At times there were also several concurrent processes happening simultaneously and it was difficult, if not impossible, to track or be involved in all of them. The group struggled to bring back the information and learning from small group work into the larger group, which posed communication challenges. Given the number of people and complexity of the issues though, I think they generally did a good job trying to keep everyone on the same page."

An additional respondent spoke to the constraints of time on communication:

> "Communication can always be improved. As with any large group, it is difficult to get everyone to be understood within the limited amount of time the two-hour meetings provided."

Respondents also had generally favorable views about the facilitation that was done for their groups (Figure 3). Nearly 80% of the respondents rated the facilitation for their group as either very or somewhat effective, with 13 (37.2%) considering that facilitation had been "very effective" and 14 (40%) "somewhat effective". No one considered the facilitation for their group to be very ineffective. Many of the respondents commented that the facilitators for their groups had made a good effort, and highly recommended that planning groups use an outside

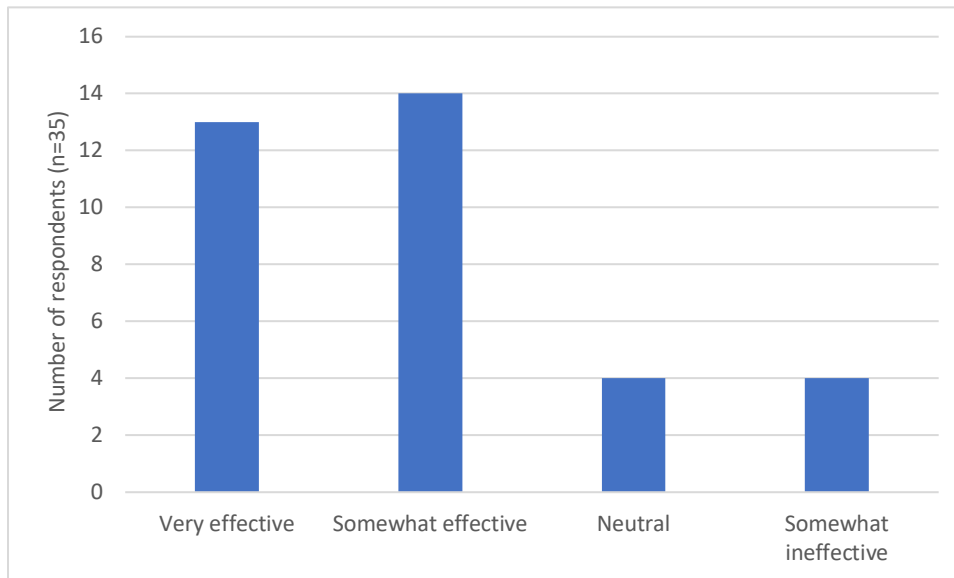facilitator to maintain as much neutrality as possible.

Figure 3 – Respondents rating of the effectiveness of facilitation for their group

4.0 Representation of Water Interests

Respondents chose to engage in the PBP process for a myriad of reasons. Common themes brought up in the survey included a desire to address declining water availability and overallocation, collaborating to support community health and viability via water, supporting non-commercial water users, protecting and conserving water, contributing to strategies to effectively and efficiently manage water, and increasing in-stream protections for fish populations.

The majority (27 or 61%) of the respondents felt that their planning group included all the relevant water users, 12 (33%) indicated that their planning group did not include all the relevant water users, and 2 (6%) did not respond to the question. Missing water users highlighted across the planning groups included:

- Local community members, such as landowners, domestic well users, farmers, and ranchers
- Tribal members
- Recreational rafting
- Large-scale irrigators and other major water users
- Cities and municipalities
- Land use sector
- Federal agencies
- Instream water users
- Oregon Water Resources Department (specifically watermasters in some areas)

Most survey respondents felt that their planning group's plan did very well or somewhat well at meeting the requirement that the plans reflect a balance of water needs (Figure 4). More than three-quarters of the respondents felt their plan did "very well" or "somewhat well" at meeting a balance of water needs, while only 12% felt that it did so "somewhat poorly" or "very poorly".
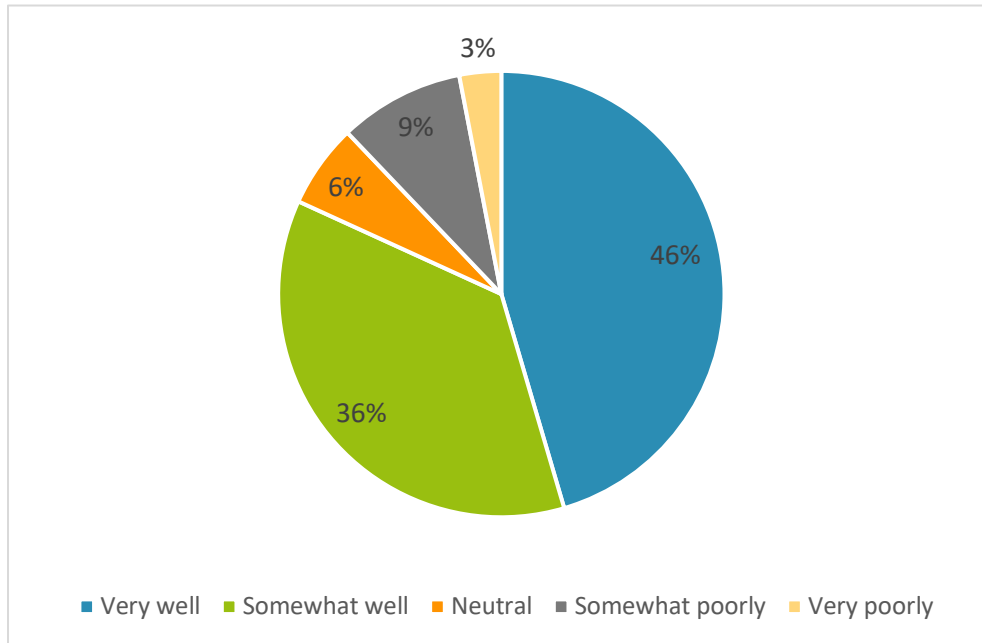

Figure 4 - Respondents' views on how well their plan reflects a balance of water needs. The percentage of respondents (n=35) that selected each answer is depicted in the chart.

One respondent noted that because the plans were consensus-based products, they were inevitably sub-optimal in the eyes of some water interests:

> "Working for consensus the plan will never be optimal in the eyes of a diverse group. I believe somewhat well is a good outcome."

Another participant emphasized that achieving balance is an ongoing process. Speaking of the Harney Basin's work, they stated,

> "I think they did a really remarkable job working towards balance between social, economic, and environmental benefits and burdens, but trying to achieve that balance is never-ending."

Overall, most respondents felt that PBP addressed their water needs and concerns to some extent However, slightly more than half (55.9% of respondents) indicated that their water needs were only "somewhat well" met and only 22.6% of respondents felt that their needs were "very well" met. Roughly 15% of the respondents felt their water needs were "somewhat poorly" or "very poorly" met.
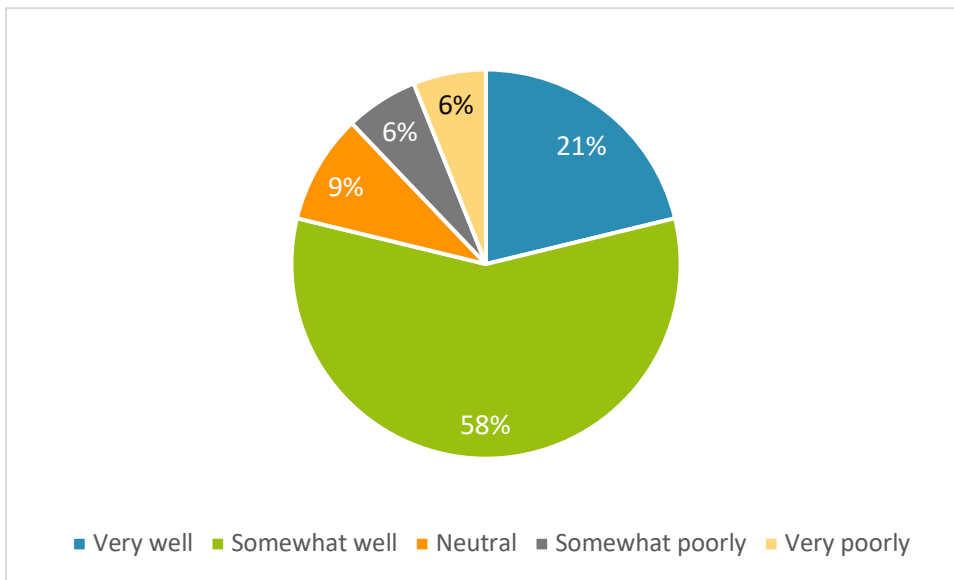
Figure 5 – Respondents' views about how well their water needs were met (n=33).

Examples of the comments participants made regarding how well their group's plan did or did not meet their water needs are provided in Box 3.

Box 3 – Views on Whether Place-Based Planning Met the Participant's Water Needs

"The process touched on all major issues that participants raised. The needs of my agency were addressed, though only in concept. At some point the plan has to contain specifics and the means to actualize those specifics to adequately address needs/concerns. However, there was not enough money and time to do so."

"I am satisfied with our plan! Although I believe we lacked discussion on industrial land use and its effects on watershed ecological health and source water protection. Our hands are tied when we are working for consensus and not able to address any existing land use regulations."

"It is a great plan to collaboratively move forward on meaningful improvement to the watershed and will need to be adaptive and continue lessons learned for future steps."

"The technical assessment of water supply and need has provided a more thorough summary of existing conditions than has been done in the past. This assessment was able to identify where and when water is available, or supply is short of the need. This information can help to inform future conservation work to achieve a better balance between availability and need."

One participant questioned whether it would ever be possible to develop a plan that addresses the water needs and concerns of all stakeholders, noting, "The conflicting opinions between the landowners and pure environmentalists will forever take education and compromise."

5.0 Views on State Support

We asked respondents to comment on how helpful they had found the guidance provided by OWRD for the five planning steps. Respondents were asked to rate each step on a scale of 1 to 5. Averages for each of the steps are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Average Ratings for Steps 1 through 5

Step Number	Average Rating
Step 1	3.0
Step 2	2.4
Step 3	2.8
Step 4	3.4
Step 5	3.1

Key to table:
1= very helpful, 2= somewhat helpful,
3= neither helpful nor unhelpful (neutral),
4= somewhat unhelpful, 5= not at all helpful
(Note: Items marked 6, or "don't know" were excluded from the calculations).

Step 2 was, on average, viewed as being more helpful than the other steps, despite the criticism it received during the workshops. One possible explanation for this is that the critiques of Step 2 had more to do with the lack of data, the challenges with acquiring data, and difficulties with data analysis than with the guidance itself. Step 4 was, on average, viewed as being the least helpful, a result which meshes with observations by the state agency participants that the planning group members struggled with prioritizing their strategies for addressing water needs.

We also asked respondents to comment on how helpful they had found different elements of state support. Table 2 (located on next page) lists the average ratings that respondents assigned to ten key elements of state support. Elements with lower average ratings were ones that respondents felt were more helpful.

6.0 Overall Perceptions of Place-Based Planning

Overall, respondents found PBP to be a useful approach for integrated water planning (Figure X). When asked, "Reflecting on your experience with place-based planning, do you believe that it is a useful approach for integrated water resources planning?", the vast majority answered either "yes" (34.3%) or

"yes, but some changes are needed" (48.6%). Just under one-fifth (17.1%) answered "no". Examples of reasons that respondents gave for why they thought place-based planning was a useful approach are provided in Box 4.

Table 2. Average ratings for state support elements

Element of state support	Average rating
Guidance	2.7
Financial assistance	2.4
Interagency coordination	2.9
Learning events	2.1
Communication and outreach	2.5
Leadership	2.5
Data provision	2.7
Data interpretation	2.6
Training	2.7
Planning document review	2.3

Key
1=Very good, few improvements needed
2=Adequate but needs some improvement
3=Neutral
4=Poor, needs a lot of improvement
(Note: responses marked 5, or "don't know" were excluded from the calculations)

Referring to the Mid-Coast planning process, one participant provided a detailed list of the positive outcomes associated with place-based planning.

> "Despite all the challenges and setbacks and the fact that everything took so long and the plan doesn't look the way I wanted it to look, this was a valuable process.
> - As a result of this process more people are aware of water issues on the coast.
> - As a result of this process we received input from people who have never been consulted on this topic before.
> - As a result of this process there is better coordination around high priority issues like drought and conservation.
> - As a result of this process new partnerships have been formed.
>
> I sincerely believe that the Mid-Coast is in a better position to have a more secure and sustainable water future as a result of this process."

Box 4 – Views on Why Place-Based Planning Is Useful for Water Planning
"We need more collaboration between the state and local communities to break down the silos that have formed between the two over time."
"Always good for a diverse collection of stakeholders to get together and share concerns on such an important topic as balancing water needs."
"Place based solutions to place based problems is always the best way to get positive things done."

Additional positive takeaways that respondents described as resulting from the place-based planning process included the dedication and care of community members to the process and water resources,

increased education on the community level, the identification of data gaps, and the creation of connections between community members, the place-based planning groups, and the state.

For respondents who did not feel that place-based planning was a useful approach, examples of their comments included that the process was immense in scale and placed a heavy workload on unpaid participants, there was a lack of clarity around implementation and outcomes, and a lack of trust in the state. One respondent summed up this view as follows:

> "Water resources planning for a water basin is extremely complex with numerous stakeholders. Incorporating all necessary input, data and information, and processing all of that with adequate technical expertise, is too complex and difficult for a selective group of stakeholders who volunteer for the process and have numerous other demands on their time (and excludes interests that cannot make the extensive time commitment). Moreover, it is unclear how the process will change outcomes and what, if anything, it adds to other regional planning work."

The theme of trust was touched upon by many respondents. Respondents valued the place-based planning process because communities were "building trust at every gathering", a process that they described as taking time and practice. One respondent recommended "taking time periodically to train participants how to build trust." Survey respondents also highlighted the presence of a trust deficit between communities and the state. One respondent commented that developing the trust needed for place-based planning to succeed would require "better organization at the state level [and] increased compassion for local level decision making."

A state agency respondent provided a detailed description of how the presence of a trust deficit in Harney Basin had affected the planning process in that planning area:

> "The [Water Resources] Department needs to recognize that there is a trust deficit in most communities and there is a need to rebuild trust between communities and the state. In the Harney Basin this was made more challenging by the fact that the Department overallocated groundwater in the basin and was very slow to take any corrective measures...in fact the problem became worse in the Basin during the groundwater study and planning process. This was very disheartening for all involved and continues to be a source of tension. The Department was not very transparent about its operations across the basin and was siloed in its approaches to various functions. This made it increasingly difficult to plan effectively and build trust with the planning group."

Respondents recommended continually engaging community members in planning and implementation activities to build momentum. This, they felt, would help build trust and confidence in the process and allow communities to face current and future water challenges.

7.0 Summary

Overall, the survey results mesh with what we heard during the workshops. Most respondents felt that despite having some flaws, place-based planning was a useful approach for water planning. Most respondents described place-based planning as critically important for Oregon's water future and felt that a continued effort across the state should be supported. However, the lengthy process requires streamlining and more intentional trust building between the state and communities and within planning groups.

Acknowledgements

We thank the planning group members who took the time to complete the survey. We greatly appreciate your willingness to share your insights about your experiences with place-based water planning and your thoughts on how the program could be improved.