

Morrow County Water Coordinator

Water Advisory Committee
Meeting

June 3, 2024



Morrow County Goals



Objectives for Water Coordinator

- Develop County policies and actions to help address the regional water issues within the County's purview

Today's Purpose

- Opportunity for WAC to provide input on *water policy and action* ideas for the County's consideration
- Afterwards...
 - Revise concept list
 - Draft concept write-ups for policies and actions
 - Draft implementation approach (to BOC)

WAC Informing Water Policies and Actions

Completed:

- Briefing papers
- NOWA Recharge projects (JR Cook)
- Union County PBP (Donna Beverage)
- Land Use-Water Nexus (Tamra Mabbott)
- OWRD Walla Walla Planning (Chris Kowitz)
- OWRD IWRS (Crystal Grinnell)

Upcoming:

- Water quality and data (Laura Gleim)
- Agriculture issues (Rob Hibbs)

Invited:

- Morrow Co. SWCD
- OWEB
- Municipal perspective
- Industry perspective

Morrow County Functions – the “Water Nexus”

1. Planning Department

- Promote orderly growth while protecting and enhancing our environment and conserving and stabilizing local property values.

2. Public Health Department

- Build healthier individuals, families, and communities through information, advocacy, and services.

3. Public Works Department

- Provide technical assistance, information, and maintenance for County Roads, solid waste disposal, and County parks.

Key Considerations for Policies/Actions

- Is the issue within County's purview, responsibilities?
- Can the issue be addressed by other departments/programs?
- Does the County have available resources?
- How does it align with other County priorities?
- *Other factors?...*

Morrow County Water Policy and Action Concepts - DRAFT

The following is a preliminary (working) list of policy or action concepts or categories that the Water Coordinator project will vet with the Water Advisory Committee in the coming months. Morrow County will continue to develop these concepts considering the County's purview/responsibilities, available resources (staffing and funding), and other concurrent priorities.

- I. Review and update of the Goals 5 and 6 (Natural Resources) section of the Morrow County Comprehensive Plan.
 - o The policies were most recently reviewed and updated in 2014. New information and conditions can be incorporated.
 - o https://www.co.morrow.or.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/991/6_of_19_-_mc_comp_plan_-_goals_5_6.pdf
 - o Policies and actions that are pursued may need to be incorporated formally in Goals 5/6 of the Comp Plan
 - Call out of any specific water projects being pursued/supported by the County
 - Page 28 – list of Water Resource Policies
 - o Specific policy references may be warranted for drinking water and water supply. In particular, additional or explicit considerations may be needed to address:
 - Nitrate impacts to groundwater and long-term management/remediation needs
 - Expansion/development of data centers
 - Water reuse/land application operations
 - Update status of Columbia River water supply development
 - New groundwater allocation rules (pending)
- II. Identify and develop “water programs” similar to those established by other Oregon counties that are relevant or provide benefits to Morrow County (residents and businesses). For example, other counties have:
 - o Contracting by State DHS Drinking Water Program to administer and enforce drinking water quality standards for PWS that use groundwater and serve a threshold population (3,300).
 - <https://www.co.marion.or.us/HLT/PH/EHS/water>
 - https://www.jacksoncountyor.gov/departments/health_human_services/programs_and_services/environmental_public_health/drinking_water_program.php
 - o Sensitive Overlay Zone (Marion Co)
 - Program to review land use applications to assess the risk that a proposed use will adversely affect the sustainability of aquifer production
 - <https://www.codepublishing.com/OR/MarionCounty/html/MarionCounty17/MarionCounty17181.html>
 - o Programs and/or Resources for Public Water Supply and Residential/Domestic Well Owners
 - <https://health.bentoncountyor.gov/water-and-waste-systems/>
 - <https://www.deschutes.org/health/page/drinking-water>
 - o Considerations:
 - Informational only?
 - How much overlap in the purview of planning and public health departments?
 - Overlap in responsibilities with OHA, OWRD, DEQ (or does it strengthen or reinforce)?

- III. Review development of County-level implementation/enforcement of regulatory requirements or provide assistance with state/federal requirements on water use, supply development, water quality management.
 - o Agricultural (best management practices, requirements)
 - o Domestic well users (limitations, requirements, technical support/resources)
 - o Industrial users (incentives, restrictions, partnerships, etc.)
- IV. Track legislative agenda or on-going rule-making at the state and resource agencies related to water to identify and develop County positions (if warranted) and advocacy approaches (if appropriate).
- V. Identify and facilitate funding opportunities for County water programs, community water systems and other water-related initiatives in the County.
 - o Community water systems
 - o Managed aquifer recharge projects
 - o Domestic well improvements/abandonment (e.g., facilitate OWRD WARRF applications)
 - <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/WARRF/Pages/default.aspx>
- VI. Conduct an internal County review and planning of budget and staffing that supports water-related initiatives. Examples include:
 - o Long-term management/participation in LUBGWMA; including coordinating with Umatilla County and OSU to advocate for long term funding for research and projects.
 - o Management and implementation of community water system connections for domestic well users.
 - o Coordination/collaboration on regional water supply projects.
 - o Other initiatives, e.g., water trading/market framework for the basin.
 - o Data collection in support of water initiatives, including collaboration with resource agencies.
 - o General technical resources/support for residents on water issues, including information sharing.
- VII. Provide support for municipal water and wastewater projects where needed to include technical planning, grant writing and funding.

Water Policy and Action Initiative Categories

1. Update Comp Plan for water resources (Goals 5 and 6)
 - Targeted vs. broad
2. Develop a County “Water Program”
 - Technical resource and education (active/passive)
 - Regulatory enforcement
3. Engage in “proactive” water management activities
 - Collaborate/facilitate regional planning (e.g., LUBGWMA)
 - Data collection (e.g., GW levels)
 - Lead/participate in technical studies (e.g., source water protection)
 - Advocacy (i.e., legislative, funding)



Marion County Integrated Water Resources Plan: Recommendations Summary

February 24, 2023

Strategy Initiative	Project/Action Steps	County Function: In-house, Administer Contract, or Combination ¹	Total Estimated County Resource Needs for Implementation			Duration ³	Potential Outside Funding Opportunities
			County Staff (FTE) ²	County Non-Staff Expenditures ≥\$500	Actions Contracted Out		
1. Facilitate collaboration among water providers and water management interests.							
1A. Form a collaborative County-coordinated group of water providers and other leaders to share information on water issues in the basin and enhance coordination among organizations.	1. Organize and facilitate a quarterly forum comprised of water providers, businesses, government, tribes, and agriculture to share ideas and address and resolve current issues facing participants. Contractor would facilitate formation of the forum and on-going meetings. 2. Continue to provide staff time to participate in the North Santiam Council of Water Leaders and efforts to implement and update the North Santiam Drought Contingency Plan.	Combination	<0.2	None Identified	\$20,000	Annually renewed	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSmart Program: Cooperative Watershed Management Grants
1B. Facilitate discussions for consolidating small systems, businesses and domestic well users where desired to modernize infrastructure and operate more efficient and reliable water systems or to provide supply reliability.	1. Seek and organize groups of interested providers in common regions of the County to discuss the potential to consolidate. Contractor would facilitate meetings and preliminary framework for consolidation. 2. Develop requests for proposals and provide contract administration for studies and projects. Additionally, provide legal support during the consolidation process.	Combination	0.25	None Identified	\$25,000	Activity annually pursued	None Identified
2. Facilitate information sharing and data collection related to water resource and supply issues.							
2A. Serve as a clearing house of information for small municipal or rural water providers.	<i>Funding:</i> Track funding opportunities for water-related projects (e.g. planning and infrastructure) and develop and publish a list.	In-house	<0.2	None Identified	NA	Semi-annually	None Identified
	<i>Technical training:</i> Promote and sponsor memberships to Oregon Association of Water Utilities or other organizations with a water resources focus that offer a range of training opportunities for water providers or irrigators. Additionally, the County could develop or sponsor training sessions in coordination with these types of organizations.	In-house	<0.2	\$500/membership	NA	On-going	None Identified
	<i>Wildfire recovery coordination:</i> Develop a framework for response to meet the needs of water providers during future events and perform outreach to these providers prior, during, and following events as needed. The process to develop the framework should identify ways to make water systems more resilient through "fire-hardening" measures.	Administer contract	0.5	None Identified	\$50,000	1 year	FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant or Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant; Oregon State Drinking Water State Revolving Fund via EPA

Discussion

- Priorities
- Project ideas
- Feedback
- Questions



Thank you!

Tamra Mabbott

Ronan Igloria, PE



Back-up slides to follow

Morrow County envisions a three-part approach to help address the nitrate challenge



DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

- Emergency deliveries
- Long-term supply*
- Source protection



CHARACTERIZATION

- Testing/monitoring
- Target area evaluation*
- Modeling/monitoring



RESOURCE RESTORATION

- Local Action Plans
- Regulatory coordination
- Remediation/treatment



PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

** Involves capital investments (e.g., new wells or water treatment) where federal congressional direct spending and DEQ supplemental environmental project funding may be applied.*

Water Resource Policies in Comp Plan

3. Water Resource Policies

- A. County government shall work with appropriate agencies (EPA, SCS, U.S.F., County Extension Agent) to promote maintenance or enhancement of water quality in streams and ground reserves, especially the 208 Water Quality Program. The County should encourage best land management practices which minimize agricultural chemical run-off and soil erosion.
- B. The County shall encourage and support the construction of multi-purpose impoundment reservoirs in the headwaters of stream systems to store water during periods of excessive run-off and help reduce the problems caused by high flows and at the same time provide stored water which can be used to supplement flows during low flow periods.
- C. It shall be the policy of the County to encourage and cooperate in programs for the application of stream corridor management systems which include mechanical, vegetative, and management practices such as rock rip rap and jetties. fencing, grass seedings, shrub plantings, and debris removal will help re-establish a suitable riparian zone.
- D. The County shall emphasize programs for improved irrigation management and efficiencies designed to reduce runoff and possible stream pollution, increase yields, make possible a wider selection of crops, reduce problems with roads, help reduce the increasing vector control problem, and make more water available for additional uses.
- E. The County shall support all programs directed at attaining additional water sources and allocations for prime users in the County.
- F. Where information is available, county shall take into consideration the quality and quantity of groundwater resources, prior to approving projects or developments that would impact those resources.
- G. The County will consult with the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Environmental Quality before taking any action that directly affects groundwater quality or quantity.

Water Program

Drinking Water Program

The Jackson County Drinking Water Program administers and enforces public drinking water quality standards for the 200+ public water systems that use groundwater and serve a population of 3,300 or less. Public water systems are assigned a classification based on number of connections, population, and how long that population resides at the system. The longer the population remains on a groundwater system, the greater the increase in required monitoring. The Drinking Water Program provides regulatory and technical services to public water systems in order to reduce health risks and increase compliance with drinking water standards. The primary objective of this program is to prevent water contamination and assure safe drinking water for Jackson County residents and guests.

The Drinking Water Program is a resource for drinking water system operators and the public when dealing with water quality alerts, public notices, water monitoring and testing, and sanitary hazard analysis.

OAR – 333-061-0220(1) Small water system classification applies when a water system serves 150 service connections or less and:

- a. Uses only groundwater as its source; or
- b. Purchases finished water from another public water system

[Public Water System Classifications](#)

Figuring Out Your Water System Type

