Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative

Planning Team Meeting Notes
Friday, December 5, 2025 | 10:30-12:30 PM | Hybrid

Tri-Chairs: Phil Chang, Deschutes County; Craig Horrell, COID

Members: Owen McMurtrey, COCO; Tod Heisler and Jeremy Austin, COLW; Carolyn Sufit, OWRD; Erek Fuchs, NUID; Jon Skidmore and Jessi Talbott, COID; Scott Aycock, Regional Solutions; Kimberley Priestley, Water Watch of Oregon; Lori Faha, City of Bend

Other Attendees: Jim Powell, Citizen; Becky Powell, League of Women Voters of Deschutes County; Yancy Lind, Citizen

Staff: Jenn Greco, COIC; Alex Ehrens, Kate Fitzpatrick, DRC; Andrew Purkey, Fluent Freshwater Insights; Angella Rinehold, OWRD

NOTES

1. **Welcome, Last Meeting Recap, Brief Updates** *Andrew Purkey, Fluent Freshwater Insights*
   - Review and Accept Last Meeting Notes ***Attach. A November Meeting Notes***

Andrew opened the meeting with discussion of the minutes from the previous Planning Team meeting. Andrew also reviewed the discussion from the last meeting about categorizing tools for further review. There were no edits to the notes.

The group discussed the online survey going out to the Working Group on December 15 regarding the potential tools to consider for Chapter Five. The goal is to get more than 10 responses, which was what we got before when surveying Working Group members using a spreadsheet.

Finally, the Working Group will receive the updated groundwater data gaps section draft and will be asked to provide feedback.

2. **Workshop Remaining Tools** *DRC Staff and Group*

Instream Tools
The group reviewed the definition of each tool, gauged an initial gut check, and considered the action/outcome timeline.

- New Instream Water Rights
  The group discussed this as it is included in almost all place-based plans. The addition of junior water rights bolsters existing protections against potential future demand. It was acknowledged that the group may not reach agreement on specific amounts or reaches for new instream water rights applications and that the Plan would not attempt to do that. The group agreed that the tool might need some sideboards and conditions to make it into the plan.
- Resolve Protested Instream Water Right
  The group discussed the protested instream water right on the Middle Deschutes River. There was generally support for resolving this protested water right, though it was acknowledged that doing so is ultimately an OWRD process that is beyond the scope of this group. OWRD staff noted that

they currently have a backlog of many other contested cases to address, and the group suggested that the Plan could encourage prioritization of this particular contested case.

- Set Milestone Flows
  The group discussed that this would be difficult as we're not a technical group. Milestones or a data gap tool could be the task for a post-plan subgroup. The group did discuss using milestones as a way to frame the plan, rather than as a tool. The idea is to have status quo, realistic, and ambitious scenarios for flows, which could also potentially be done with other goals. This led to discussion of forecasting and creating timelines to gain buy-in, especially from stakeholder boards. The group also discussed bringing Tumalo Creek flow milestones and actions back into the conversation.
- Establish Minimum Flows
  This is a regulatory tool, so the group agreed this was not the place for it. Aspirational goals are okay, but regulatory minimums are not.
- Required Survival Flows for Fish and Wildlife
  This tool is more of a discussion for drought years, and the group agreed not to include it as it is a regulatory tool. There was discussion of adding a larger drought plan as a subset of this Plan.
- Optimization of Existing Storage
  This tool plays into the flow discussion and the group agreed that more clarity on the potential impact or benefit of optimized storage on stream flows is needed. It would be helpful to dive in with NUID, the State, and others and discuss how this could potentially help with shoulder season flow issues.
- Relocated Storage
  Conversation around this tool has mostly been moved to the Lake Billy Chinook pumps project with the other types of relocated storage projects proposed becoming long shots. The group agreed that they want to keep this tool in consideration though.
- Incentive Pricing for Irrigation Water
  There is support for NUID to continue using this in the way that they have been. COID runs differently and notes that this approach applies differently to all districts but has previously used an incentive like cities do to conserve water and have had success. The group specified that this tool would be written as a voluntary, district-led approach and not a regulatory approach.

3. **Roundtable Updates and Sharing** *All*

On April 22 there is a Bend City Council Presentation on the plan.

The cut list for OLIST is the 18th.