

Declaration of Cooperation

*Partners Participating in the Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning Pilot
in the Lower John Day River Subbasin (Grant #G-0601-LJD)*

February 7, 2017

I. Background

Water is important to all Oregonians. It is vital to community well-being, economic development, and a healthy environment. Across Oregon, every place has its unique water challenges that if left unaddressed, may become worse in the future, degrading the health of people, fish and wildlife. The most common problem is there is simply not enough clean water for all needs at all times of the year; and supplies continue to dwindle with the impacts of new water resource development, climate change, over-allocation, and resource management stressing already limited supplies. The 2012 Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) recommends that the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) enable Oregon's communities to collaboratively develop long-term solutions for the water quality and quantity challenges facing their surface and groundwater resources. Place-based planning provides a voluntary, locally-initiated and led framework for bringing together diverse water interests in a defined watershed or basin area to better understand local water resources issues and together build a localized plan for pursuing projects that balance instream and out-of-stream water needs moving forward. The Lower John Day Basin was selected by OWRD in 2016 as one of four groups to pilot this approach and develop such a plan. This Declaration describes the process and principles that will govern this pilot.

II. Project Name

Lower John Day River Subbasin Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning Pilot ("Lower John Day Pilot")

III. Conveners

Herb Winters

Gilliam County Soil and Water
Conservation District ("Gilliam SWCD")
234 S. Main St.
Condon, OR 97823-0106

Debra Bunch

Mid John Day-Bridge Creek Watershed Council
(MJDBCWC)
40535 Hwy 19
Fossil, OR 97830-8242

IV. Steering Committee

As the originator and driving force behind Place-Based Planning in our area, the Lower John Day Working Group will act as the Steering Committee of this process. The Steering Committee will be responsible for assisting the conveners and facilitator as needed and oversee the development of the Lower John Day River Subbasin Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning Pilot.

V. Scope

Activities covered by this Declaration of Cooperation will take place within the 3,712 square mile area that constitutes the Lower John Day River Subbasin of the John Day River Basin in Oregon (“planning area”). The majority of the Lower John Day falls within Gilliam, Wheeler, and Sherman Counties, with smaller portions in Morrow, Wasco, Jefferson, Crook, and Grant Counties.

VI. Lower John Day Pilot Description

The Lower John Day River Subbasin supports a robust agriculture-based economy, important fish and wildlife habitat, and outstanding recreational opportunities; all of which depend upon reliable water resources. The lower river and its tributaries rely heavily on the watershed's ability to capture, store, and slowly release 8-20 inches of precipitation in a given year. Several years of drought and the potential impacts of climate change further threaten limited supplies.

Through this place-based planning effort the Lower John Day Working Group in formal cooperation with other lower basin water interests will identify solutions to efficiently develop, conserve, store, and utilize water in the region to meet instream and out-of-stream needs for the future.

The ultimate objective of this pilot is to create an Integrated Water Resource Plan for the Lower John Day River basin. We will complete this process with deference to the *Draft Guidelines, a Tool for Conducting Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning in Oregon; Feb. 2015*. These guidelines were written to support implementation of Oregon's IWRS, specifically Recommended Action 9A: “Undertaking Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning.”

This process began with the Lower John Day Working Group submitting a proposal and being selected by Oregon Water Resources Department to implement a place-based planning process in the Lower John Day River Basin. Execution of this effort officially began on June 30, 2016 with signing of the grant agreement with OWRD. Subsequent to signing the agreement, OWRD suggested that Gilliam SWCD serve as the Convener of the process, rather than the John Day Basin Partnership, to more accurately recognize the leadership role Gilliam SWCD is providing. As of November 2016, the pilot became a project of the Lower John Day Working Group, with Sandy McKay, District Manager of Gilliam SWCD as official Convener. The convener changed again in June 2017 with Christina Kirwan, Gilliam SWCD and Debra Bunch, MJDBCWC named as co-conveners. It is expected that the planning process will be completed no later than December 31, 2018.

VII. Stakeholder Group

Diverse Water Interests active in the Lower John Day planning area are invited to participate in the planning process as members of the Stakeholder Group by becoming a party to this Declaration. Stakeholders that sign the Declaration and fulfill membership requirements will be voting members of the Lower John Day water resource planning group.

VIII. Definition of Basin Water Interests

For the purposes of implementing this planning process “Basin Water Interests” will be interpreted to mean 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.

IX. Place-Base Planning Guidelines

Place-based planning provides a framework for communities to better understand and meet their water needs now and into the future. In accordance with the state's IWRS and *Draft Guidelines, a Tool for Conducting Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning in Oregon; February 2015* ("Place-Based Planning Guidelines") communities will accomplish this by completing the five planning steps:

Step 1 - Building a collaborative and inclusive process

Step 2 - Gathering information to understand current water resources and identify gaps in knowledge

Step 3 - Examining current and future water needs for people, the economy, and the environment

Step 4 - Developing and prioritizing strategic and integrated solutions to meet water needs

Step 5 - Creating a local integrated water resources plan

X. Planning Principles

Planning principles are adapted from the Draft Guidelines to fit the unique circumstances of the Lower John Day Basin and our local planning process and were developed based on planning group discussions.

- Maintain a locally-initiated and led collaborative process.
- Employ a voluntary, non-regulatory approach in the planning process.
- Use an inclusive process that strives for a balanced representation of basin water interests.
- Utilize an outside facilitator and facilitated processes.
- Conduct in close partnership with OWRD.
- Include the most current water resource data and scientific concepts.
- Address both instream and out-of-stream needs.
- Cover water quantity, quality, and ecosystem health.
- Builds on and integrates existing studies and plans.
- Strive for consensus in decision-making.
- Utilize an open and transparent process that fosters public participation.
- Adhere to IWRS principles, Place-Based Planning Guidelines, and federal, state, and local laws.

XI. Decision Making Process

Signers of this declaration agree to seek consensus for all decision making processes. Decisions may be made at any properly noticed meeting by consensus of those in attendance with no quorum requirement. Each organization will be allowed one vote, regardless of the number of representatives in attendance.

- Consensus minus 10% will be sufficient to carry an action.

- Not all decisions will require a formal vote. In order to maximize progress, meeting facilitators may call for a “Thumbs-up, Thumbs-Down, Thumbs-Sideways” show of hands to determine if further discussion is necessary or if an action may move forward as proposed.
- Groups who do not regularly participate in planning meetings may be asked to abstain from decision making actions.

XII. Agreements

This Declaration of Cooperation establishes the guidelines for participation in the Lower John Day River Subbasin Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Planning Pilot. Parties to this declaration agree that:

- This pilot is a project of the John Day Basin Partnership’s Lower John Day Working Group.
- The Conveners are Christina Kirwan of the Gilliam County SWCD and Debra Bunch of the Mid John Day-Bridge Creek WC as described in Section III of this Declaration.
- The fiscal agent for this grant funded project is Gilliam SWCD.
- The participating parties will follow the definitions, guidelines, and principles called out in Sections VI through VIII of this Declaration.
- Upon signing this Declaration parties are entitled to the following:
 - Ability to officially vote on pilot matters
 - Eligibility to respond to request for proposals (RFP) to receive monies raised by the Lower John Day Working Group for this pilot
 - Represent the Working Group in public forum
- They shall actively participate in the planning process through participation in meetings, draft or review of written materials, and achievement of specific tasks, deliverables, and deadlines formally defined in funding agreements with the Convener.
- They will not miss two consecutive regular meetings without providing prior notice to the Convener. Failure to meet the minimum attendance standard may result in loss of voting privileges or removal from the planning group.
- They agree to act according to these rules of conduct: Maintain a high level of participation in planning activities and meetings, behave in a civil and respectful manner at all times.
- Stakeholders who do not fulfill the requirements of membership may be involuntarily removed by consensus -10% of the group.
- Stakeholders may voluntary remove themselves from this Declaration by providing written notice to the Convener.
- They shall participate in outreach to their constituencies and the public about the planning process and its intent.
- The planning process will be open and inclusive, allowing all interested individuals or groups the opportunity to stay informed and provide input related to the planning process. It will be the Convener’s responsibility to ensure that public outreach and participation is realized.
- The ultimate goal is to complete a Place-Based Integrated Water Resource Plan for the Lower John Day Basin that can be supported by all parties to this Declaration.
- This Declaration of Cooperation will remain in place until such time as the Integrated Water Resource Plan for the Lower John Day River Basin has been completed, approved by local interests, and presented to OWRD.
- This agreement may be amended by consensus -10% of the group.