

Oregon's Place-based Water Planning Program: A Participatory Evaluation

Assessing water resources planning

During 2021, the Oregon Water Resources Department is working with diverse water partners to assess its various approaches to water resources planning. As part of this assessment, researchers at Portland State University's National Policy Consensus Center and Oregon State University-Cooperative Extension will conduct an independent participatory evaluation of Oregon's place-based water resources planning program.

What is a participatory program evaluation?

A participatory program evaluation is an opportunity for program participants to reflect on how well the program worked and how it could be improved. It aims to answer questions such as:

- What worked well and what did not in place-based planning?
- Did the program achieve or is it likely to achieve desired outcomes?
- What explains these differences, and what does this tell us about what is needed for place-based planning to be successful?
- What are the key lessons that can smooth plan implementation and inform future planning efforts?

What does the place-based water planning participatory evaluation involve?

The evaluation team will host two 2-hour workshops with each place-based collaborative between October 18 – November 19, 2021, and a separate state agency workshop in December. Due to the recent rise in COVID cases, PSU has informed us that we cannot do in-person meetings. Since we don't know when that prohibition will be lifted, we will hold the meetings via Zoom. We know this is not ideal and hold open the possibility of being able to do the second workshop in person should PSU's policy change.

- The collaborative workshops will include a balance of interests, including those representing instream and out-of-stream needs and surface water and groundwater resources.
- We will include a short anonymous survey for all collaborative participants to collect potentially sensitive information that participants would rather not share in a group setting.
- In addition, we will collect data through a short survey from a sample of groups that initially participated but did not stay the course and those that chose not to participate to find out what they saw as the barriers to participation in place-based planning.
- The evaluation questions will be based on input gathered from collaborative convenors, active collaborative members, and state agency staff during May-August 2021.

Validating and communicating the evaluation results

The evaluation team will host a follow-up validation session with each place-based collaborative and the state agencies between January 10-February 4th, 2022 to present the evaluation findings. This will be an opportunity for participants to give feedback on the evaluation results and discuss the implications for their work going forward. Depending on winter road conditions, the validation sessions may need to be held via Zoom. We will present the results to the Oregon Water Resources Commission in March 2022.

Questions? For additional information, contact Dr. Rebecca McLain at mclainrj@pdx.edu or 971-570-3294

