



Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed Partnership Place-Based Integrated Water Resources Planning Plan Implementation Update November 2023



To address concerns related to water quality and quantity for both surface water and groundwater within the Upper Grande Ronde River Watershed (UGRRW), Union County has convened a diverse partnership composed of farmers, ranchers, fish and wildlife advocates, tribes, municipal representatives, and federal and state agencies to develop and implement a place-based integrated water resources plan consistent with the State of Oregon’s Integrated Water Resources Strategy.

Since our plan was adopted and received formal recognition by the Oregon Water Resources Commission in April 2022, the Partnership has been working hard on implementing our plan. Following are items the Partnership has been working on over the last year and a half.



Aboveground Storage Feasibility Study - This study is nearing completion. More than 200 potential sites were analyzed and four are in the final stages of preliminary analysis for flow and other technical concerns. If desired, the Partnership will next pursue funding for a more detailed design of a selected site.

Catherine Creek Aquifer Storage Feasibility Phase II Investigation - The Partnership has initiated stakeholder and agency outreach and is developing a sampling and analysis plan to further understand whether aquifer storage is a viable option for supplementing late season surface water flows.

Instream Flow Study on the Grande Ronde River - This study is approximately halfway complete and will fill critical data gaps by generating important information about flow requirements for Endangered Species Act-listed fish species in a variety of life stages in this important river in the UGRRW.

Floodplain Restoration Fieldtrip - In April 2023, the Partnership visited three floodplain restoration sites, including McCoy Meadows, Longley Meadows, and Bird Track Springs, to learn how these restoration efforts have benefited the environment and how floodplains can provide groundwater storage benefits.

Strategic Action Plan - A working group has developed a draft Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board Strategic Action Plan to improve habitat in the lower valley through a voluntary, locally led levee setback/conservation easement program.

Hydraulic Model Support - The Partnership has supported the Union Soil and Water Conservation District and the Bureau of Reclamation on expanding an existing hydraulic model of the UGRRW to increase understanding of where catastrophic flooding risks are greatest, and what opportunities for improvement for flow and floodplain attenuation exist in the UGRRW.

Flow Gauge Reinstallation - The Partnership is working with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation to reinstate a flow gauge in Lookingglass Creek that will provide important monitoring support for restoration projects.

Well Testing Education - The Partnership is developing a flier to share with county residents to inform them of the City of La Grande’s water testing results and how county residents can gain assistance with testing their private well water.

Quarterly Implementation Meetings - The Partnership continues to meet quarterly to collaborate on our progress as we move our strategies forward to improve water quality and quantity in the UGRRW.

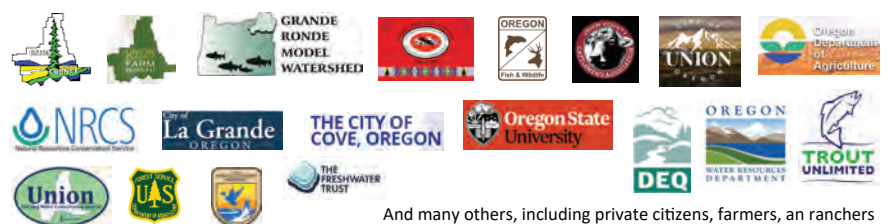


Interested? Join Us!

Email dkurtz@andersonperry.com or visit the Union County, Oregon, webpage to learn more: <https://union-county.org/planning/place-based-integrated-water-resources-planning/>



Partners



And many others, including private citizens, farmers, and ranchers