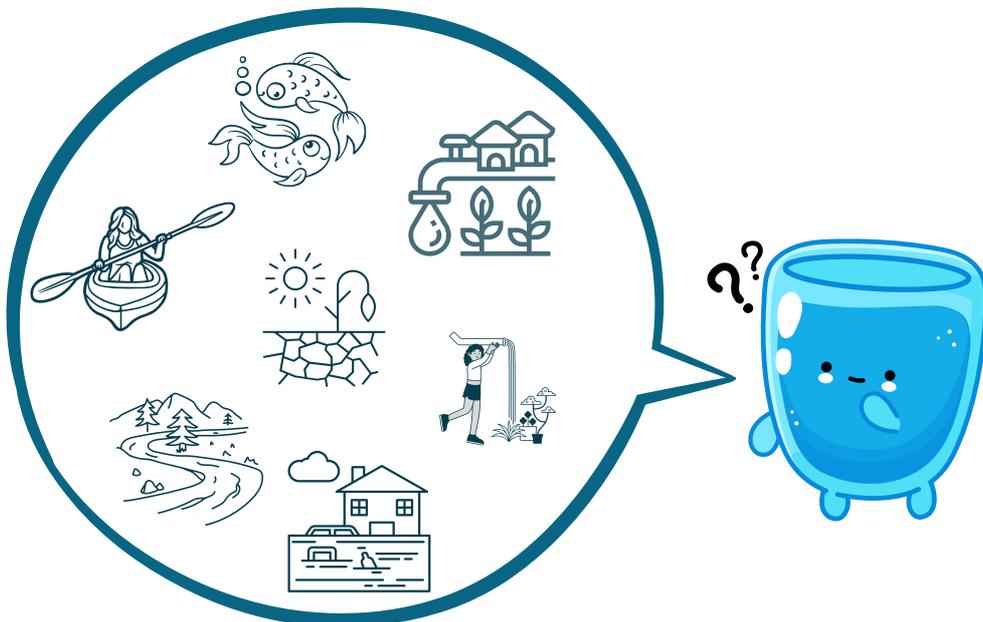
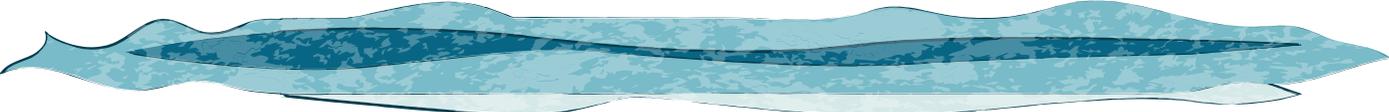




OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ON OREGON'S INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY





SUMMARY

Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (the Strategy) is a way for Oregon state agencies to better understand and meet Oregon's different water needs. The Strategy is updated every five years. There are 14 state agencies that use the Strategy to take action about Oregon's water.

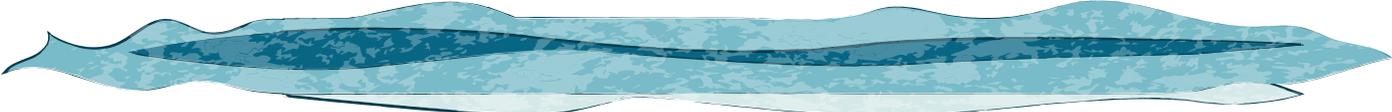
In the spring and summer of 2023, the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) worked with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT), to hear from people throughout Oregon about what they want to see in the next Strategy. We heard from around 1900 people around Oregon.

This report summarizes what OKT heard from a survey in 9 languages, community conversations, and other ways that people shared what they think. What people said is grouped into similar ideas.

ABOUT OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE

OKT is part of the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University. OKT works to give all people a voice in public decisions, especially people who usually aren't included in these decisions. OKT helps people discuss state, local, and regional issues that impact all of us. OKT uses many ways and in many languages to learn what people think and experience.





OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

There were different ways for people to share what they think. We held community conversations in different parts of the state in English, Spanish, and Chuukese. There were also Zoom community conversations in English and Spanish. OKT and OWRD hosted some of these. Community members organized and hosted others. Community organizers and partners helped people fill out surveys in different languages. We also went to two community events to talk with people.

OWRD, OKT, and many partners let people know about the conversations and survey through social media, emails, and group messaging platforms. Community organizers also let people know through phone calls, text messages, and talking to people in person. Community groups and community centers used flyers, too.

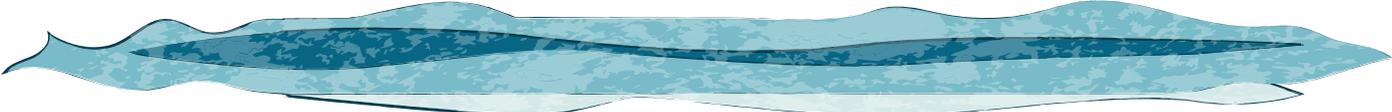
WHAT OKT HEARD

Things people agreed about

Many people said similar things in the conversations and survey. Below we describe those ideas that people had in common:

- Many people talked about **water as something we all share and connected to all aspects of life.**
 - People think that we **need to do more than make laws and rules alone** to solve our water issues.
 - Nearly everyone sees that we have **more water needs than water available.**
 - Many people talked about the **need for balance.** People want to make sure that we have water for **people and agriculture.** But they also want to make sure that there is water in rivers and streams to **protect fish, animals, forests, and nature.**
- People are very concerned about **water quality and safety.**
 - Many people are worried about their **drinking water.** They also don't believe that everyone gets enough safe water.
 - Many people are also worried about whether **rivers and streams have enough clean water for fish and other wildlife.**

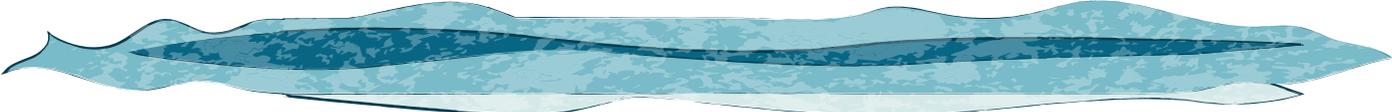




WHAT OKT HEARD

- Many people shared concerns about **having water if there is a natural disaster**. They are also worried about how natural disasters effect water.
 - **Drought** is still a top concern.
 - People are also thinking about **wildfire and very hot weather**. They are worried about having water during these times. They are also worried that wildfire and hot weather are making other water problems like drought worse.
- People want **more, clear information**.
 - They also want **more information about water**. But many people don't know where to get it. They want water information to be **easy to understand in different languages**.
 - Almost everyone shared that they want to **learn more** about the science of water, the uses of water, and ways to conserve water. They also want other people to learn this, too.
 - Many people want to **conserve water** in their own homes and communities. They want to learn more how to do that.
 - Many people want the state to use **different ways to share the Strategy and information about water**. We heard many different ideas about how state agencies could partner with schools, libraries and museums to share water information.
- Many people are interested in **different incentives to conserve water and use water better**.
 - Many people want to take part in **water storage**. They want to be able to store water more easily at their homes and in their communities.
 - They also want to have access to tools to help with making water safer. Many people are interested in getting **filters**.
 - Many people also want to see **tools to help use water better**. They want this for homes, businesses, industry, and farms.





WHAT OKT HEARD

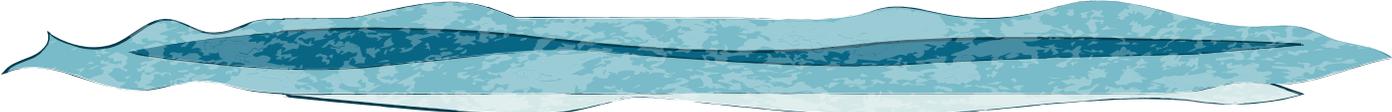
- People want to see **changes to how Oregon makes decisions about water**.
 - Many people think that having **so many different state agencies involved in water is confusing**. They want to see those state agencies **work together more**.
 - People want to see **action**. They want decisions and action to happen faster.
 - Many people want the state to **make sure community members are included** in different ways. They want decision-makers to develop **relationships** with community members in different places.

Things people disagreed about

Many people spoke of ideas that others did not share in common with them. Below we describe those ideas:

- People disagree about **water rights**.
 - Some people think we need to **think about changing how water rights work** for now and the future. Other people think that **water rights that currently exist should be respected**.
 - Some people support ideas for how to keep current water rights and make sure some of that water can be used in other ways.
- People disagree about **how to make decisions** about water.
 - What is most important for people about water can be really different. For some, people's water needs come first. For other people, nature's water needs are most important for now and the future.
 - People also disagree about **who should get to choose how to balance all the different needs**. Some people want the state to decide. Other people want to see local government and individuals to decide. And some people want to see both the state and local government decide.





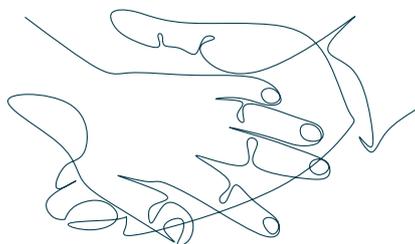
FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

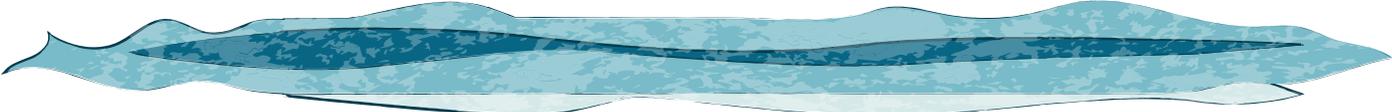
Follow Up on the Strategy

The state will continue working on updating the Strategy this fall. People will want to see how their input was used. We recommend that OWRD and other state agencies widely share the draft update to the Strategy. We also recommend that they explain in as plain language as possible why they decided to make those changes. Many people are still learning about the Strategy and its parts. Following up with help continue to build trust with communities.

Invite people to share what they think about parts of the Strategy

After Oregon completes the next version of the Strategy, the 14 state agencies will each make decisions about actions and projects in the Strategy. This will be another time that state agencies can invite community members to be part of Oregon's water strategy. For example, many people have concerns about water quality. They want to know about and do something about pollution or contamination in water. Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will be making decisions about water quality. DEQ could invite people to share what they think about ways to improve water quality. People also were interested in decisions about water and development in their communities. Oregon's Department of Land Conservation could invite people to focus on that issue in future engagement activities.





CONCLUSION

Oregonians think about water in many different ways:

- As individuals and households;
- As small groups;
- As communities that plan, live, and work together;
- As part of a natural world;
- As larger formal organizations with power; and
- As communities working across places, people, and industries.

What we heard most of all is that community members want to do their part individually and together.

State agencies can use this input to think about people's values around water. They can also use it to focus on specific ideas for the updated Strategy. And they can each use it to have deeper conversations on water concerns.

