

Annual Report

JULY 2019 - JUNE 2020



REGIONAL WATER PROVIDERS CONSORTIUM





Beaverton, City of
Clackamas River Water
Cornelius, City of
Forest Grove, City of
Gladstone, City of
Gresham, City of
Hillsboro, City of
Lake Oswego, City of
Milwaukie, City of
Newberg, City of
Oak Lodge Water Services
Portland, City of
Raleigh Water District
Rockwood Water PUD
Sandy, City of
Sherwood, City of
South Forth Water Board
Sunrise Water Authority
Tigard, City of
Troutdale, City of
Tualatin, City of
Tualatin Valley Water District
West Slope Water District

1120 SW 5th Avenue, Suite 405
Portland, OR 97204
503-823-7528
www.regionalh2o.org

RegionalWaterProvidersConsortium
 ConserveH2Org
 Conserveh20

November 2020

When our fiscal year began in July 2019, who could have imagined how different the year would end up? I want to thank Consortium staff and our members who have shown resilience and adaptability in the face of many challenges and who have served our community with grace and empathy. I am humbled to work with all of you.

Our annual report looks a little bit different this year. It has been reorganized and now aligns with our strategic initiatives and major focus areas. I hope you find this format more informative and in concert with our strategic plan as you read about the many projects and milestones we have completed together.

I remain optimistic about the year ahead and serving our members as we face the challenges and opportunities to come.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Geisen, Managing Director



Consortium Staff
(left to right)

Patty Burk - Management Analyst
Bonny Cushman - Program Coordinator
Rebecca Geisen - Managing Director
Riley Berger - Program Specialist

OUR MISSION:

To provide leadership in the planning, management, stewardship, and resiliency of drinking water in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan region.

www.regionalh2o.org

Regional Water Providers Consortium Members

Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020

City of Beaverton
Clackamas River Water
City of Cornelius
City of Forest Grove
City of Gladstone
City of Gresham
City of Hillsboro
City of Lake Oswego
City of Milwaukie
City of Newberg
Oak Lodge Water Services
City of Portland
Raleigh Water District
Rockwood Water PUD
City of Sandy
City of Sherwood
South Fork Water Board
Sunrise Water Authority
City of Tigard
City of Troutdale
City of Tualatin
Tualatin Valley Water District
West Slope Water District

Introduction

The Regional Water Providers Consortium (Consortium) is a collaborative and coordinating organization that works to improve the planning and management of municipal water supplies in the greater Portland, Oregon metropolitan region. Formed in 1997, the Consortium works with its members in emergency preparedness, water conservation, and regional coordination.

The work of the Consortium is driven by the three major focus areas included in its Strategic Plan:

- Meeting water needs
- Emergency preparedness and resiliency
- Strengthening regional partnerships

The work completed this year by the Consortium demonstrates the ability of the organization to adapt to new challenges and support members in the face of a global pandemic.

This year, the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Annual Report is organized by the three major focus areas outlined in the Strategic Plan, and the work that has been done to support each area's strategic initiatives.

Summary of Accomplishments

The primary accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 are highlighted below:

- Conducted emergency drinking water equipment drill with more than 100 participants
- Increased Spanish language and digital outreach to expand and improve access to Consortium messaging
- Acquired \$100,400 in grants to buy equipment and begin funding a regional emergency drinking water framework plan
- Rebuilt www.regionalh2o.org with improved ADA accessibility, navigability, and overall user experience
- Responded to COVID-19 pandemic by developing "Your Water is Safe to Drink" messaging in multiple languages and facilitating coordination and information sharing to assist members

El agua

es segura para tomar.



Strategic Initiatives for Meeting Water Needs

- Make best use of available water resources and partnerships to meet regional water needs as outlined in the Regional Water Supply Plan
- Provide programs and resources that help water providers meet water conservation requirements
- Provide public education and outreach materials that promote conservation, source water protection, and value of water
- Anticipate and respond to changes in demand, population, and customer and public expectations
- Increase accessibility of messaging and outreach materials to diverse audiences and stakeholders

Major Focus Area #1: Meeting Water Needs

For more than twenty years, much of the Consortium's work has been grounded in the Regional Water Supply Plan and the efficient use of our limited water supplies in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area. Helping the region meet water needs includes making the best use of our resources and partnerships and providing programs that help our members manage their individual water sources. This includes understanding changes in water demand, increasing accessibility of our messaging, and promoting the importance of protecting and conserving water.

Increase the public's understanding of water as a valuable regional resource through public outreach campaigns and other programming

The Consortium's conservation program is integral to this work. It involves conducting annual public outreach that includes several multimedia campaigns, printed materials, digital assets, school assembly shows, co-sponsorship of the annual Children's Clean Water Festival, events, and workshops.

The Consortium also conducts public outreach around other water-related issues of regional importance such as source water protection, the value of water, and emergency preparedness (see page 7 for information about the Consortium's emergency preparedness outreach campaign).

Increase accessibility of messaging and outreach materials

In addition to public outreach campaigns, much of the Consortium's work this past year focused on increasing access to information and resources to the public. Examples of this important work included translating newsletters, webpages, and social media into Spanish, advertising on more digital platforms, and rebuilding the Consortium's website. Find out more about these efforts on the following pages.

Multimedia Campaigns

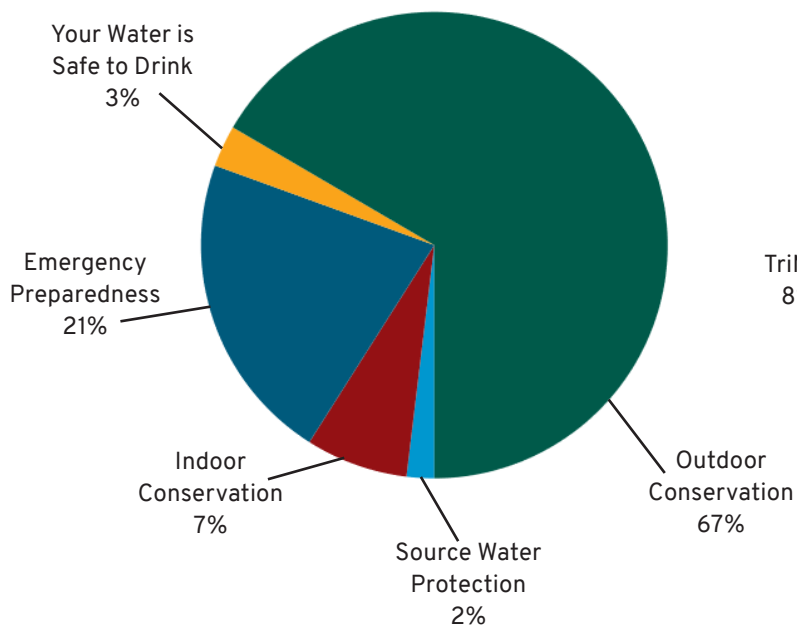
In Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020, the Consortium delivered five successful multimedia campaigns:

1. Source Water Protection (July 2019 - June 2020)
2. Emergency Preparedness (September 2019)
See page 7 for campaign summary.
3. Indoor Conservation (March - April 2020)
4. Your Water is Safe to Drink (May - June 2020)
5. Outdoor Conservation (May - September 2020)

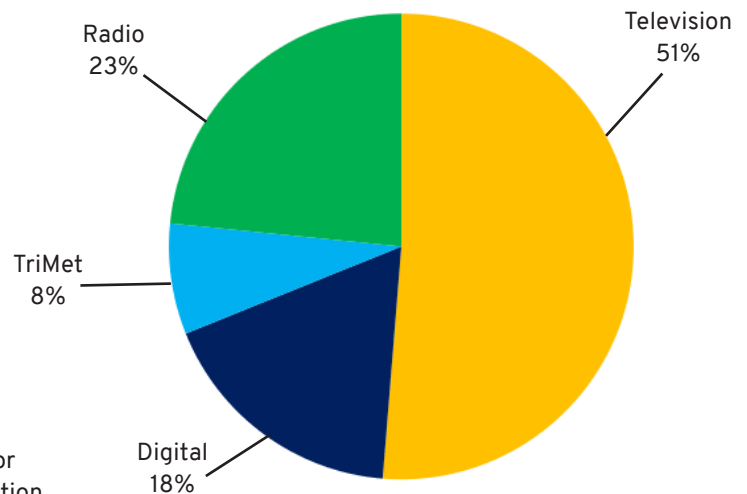
The Consortium spent a total of \$157,347 in multimedia campaigns. Media partners contributed added value elements of \$233,623. As a result, the total value of the campaigns was \$390,970.

The majority of the campaigns were delivered from March through September 2020 - right into the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, the Consortium opted to continue its existing partnerships with its television and radio partners at the beginning of 2020, making it easier to proceed despite the shut-down. In addition, the Consortium benefited from the soft economy in summer 2020 by receiving additional in-kind advertisements from its media partners.

Spending Allocation by Campaign



Spending Allocation by Media Type

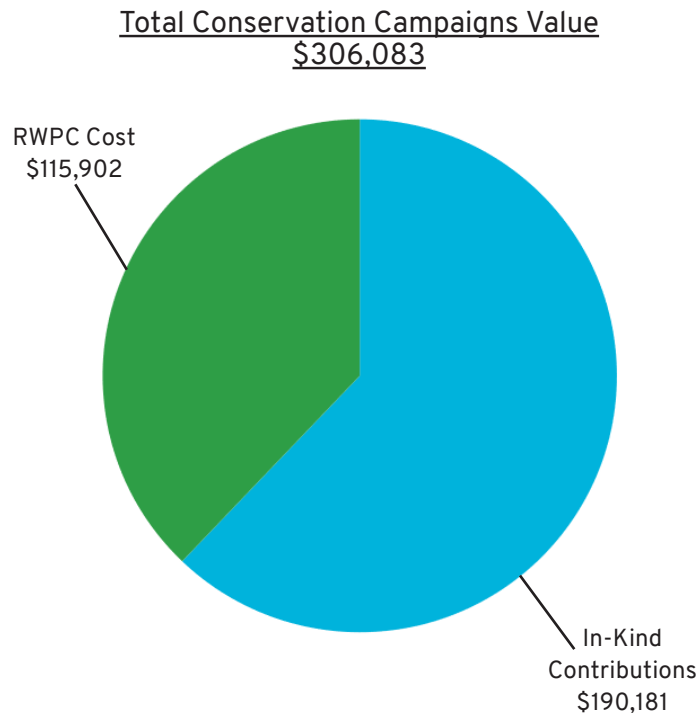


Spanish Language Outreach

The Consortium's Spanish language messaging continued to grow in Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 and included additional translated webpages on www.regionalh2o.org, television ads and interviews, radio ads, three KUNP e-newsletters, and ad campaigns on multiple social media platforms. In addition, the Consortium engaged member staff and hired Community Engagement Liaisons to review and provide feedback on the Spanish language content to ensure it was culturally competent. A total of 15% of the Consortium's conservation and emergency preparedness media budgets were allocated to Spanish language outreach in Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020.

Digital Outreach

In 2018, the Consortium conducted a formal evaluation of its outreach program which identified the need to more broadly incorporate digital advertising into its overall public outreach strategy. In response to these findings, the Consortium significantly expanded its digital advertising in Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 resulting in more traffic being driven to the Consortium's website and YouTube channel. The Consortium also increased its digital accessibility this year by completely rebuilding www.regionalh2o.org. The new site is ADA compliant, has more user-friendly navigation, and can be easily viewed on a variety of screen sizes. All of these factors are crucial to the success of the Consortium's digital public outreach efforts.



Water Conservation Campaigns

The Consortium conducted its indoor water conservation campaign from March 1 through April 3, 2020. The campaign was comprised of television ads and on-air interviews, a Spanish language newsletter, and several other online outreach elements. The messaging centered on the importance of checking your toilet for leaks and was delivered in English and Spanish.

The Consortium's outdoor water conservation campaign ran from May - August 2020. The campaign ran in English and Spanish and included ad buys and on-air interviews with three television partners, five radio partners, and several digital advertising platforms. The campaign's messaging focused on tips to help use water wisely in summer and included: giving your plants a deep soak a couple times a week rather than watering daily, how to make sure your watering system is working efficiently, mow your lawn less often and skip the fertilizer until fall, and the Weekly Watering Number.

Other Media Campaigns

The Consortium's public outreach also included two smaller campaigns in Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020. The first was a year-long campaign called "Clean Water. It's Our Future." which the Consortium contributed staff time and \$3,000 towards the total campaign cost of \$70,000. The main goal of this campaign is to increase the public's awareness of actions they can take to protect source water.

The second campaign ran in May and June 2020 and was called "Your Water is Safe to Drink". The multilingual campaign included two television interviews, Facebook ads delivered in eleven languages, and radio ads that aired in three languages. The main goal of the messaging, companion webpages, and informational documents was to reduce water quality fears due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A more detailed public outreach campaign report is available by request.

Youth Education

Each year, the Consortium delivers a strong regional youth education program which consists of school assembly shows, distributing print materials to kids, and co-sponsoring the annual Children’s Clean Water Festival. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic cut short each of these efforts. However, prior to the pandemic, the “Where’s the Water, Watson?” show by Mad Science was delivered to approximately 1,000 children in kindergarten through second grade. Consortium staff also began development of a new school assembly show with Rick Huddle Productions.

Plan for and anticipate change in water demand, population, and public expectations

Population Data

Through an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Consortium, the Portland State University Population Research Center (PRC) produced and compiled data for 2019 and yearly forecasts for 2019 - 2050. The data includes population, housing units, and household estimates that members utilize to develop more accurate and consistent water demand forecasts.

Climate Change

The Consortium Technical Committee formed a sub-committee to help staff identify what role the Consortium should play to support members in addressing climate change. The committee developed a survey to identify what climate change risks providers are most concerned about, what topics are of primary interest, and the role the Consortium should play to help members address these risks.

Facilitate information and resource sharing

Consortium committees provided a venue for information sharing, learning from each other, and introducing new ideas and concepts. In the past year, the Conservation Committee hosted a presentation on an emerging residential flow sensing technology. Another meeting was spent discussing Water Management and Conservation Plans (WMCP) and curtailment strategies. The Water Communicators Network shared resources and best management practices focused on public outreach work. The Consortium Technical Committee met several additional times during the summer of 2020 to discuss summer supply and regional COVID-19 response. Information about the accomplishments of the Emergency Planning Committee is in the next section.





Major Focus Area #2: Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency

The Consortium's emergency preparedness program supports members in their own efforts by providing opportunities to learn and train together, cultivate partnerships, and share experiences, resources, and knowledge with each other. The Consortium helps water providers meet their resiliency goals by developing tools, acquiring grants, representing water providers in regional forums, and planning drills, exercises, and trainings. Educating the public about the importance of personal preparedness is also a critical component of the Consortium's mission.

Strengthen the water provider's ability to plan for, respond to, and recover from extreme events

Every two to five years, the Consortium conducts drills or tabletop exercises that help members plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies. This fiscal year the Consortium conducted a large-scale regional emergency equipment demonstration and drill on September 26, 2019 at Riverside Park in Clackamas, Oregon. The event drew 104 participants from twenty-five different agencies. The drill consisted of a series of demonstrations followed by an equipment drill that used treatment trailers, overland pipe, and distribution systems to deliver water. The event utilized the Incident Command System (ICS) principles and incorporated interagency cooperation and interoperability in communications.

Collaborate with regional stakeholders and represent water provider interests regionally

Consortium staff represents water providers on three Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) committees. Staff solicited support for and wrote two 2020 Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) grant proposals. One is for an additional \$150,000 to complete the Provision of Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan and the other is for \$90,000 for recreating the Consortium's three emergency preparedness how-to videos in more than ten safe harbor languages.

Consortium staff assembled a committee of water providers and RDPO staff to draft a scope of work for the Provision of Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan. Rebecca Geisen as Project Manager has secured buy-in and support from other RDPO work groups. \$54,000 has already been awarded for the project which will start in late 2020.

Provide resources to help members and the region support preparedness goals and requirements; support each other through resource sharing and mutual aid

COVID-19

The Consortium used Emergency Planning Committee meetings, emails, and its member page to help members respond to COVID-19. These forums helped members from across the region to share and discuss best practices, lessons learned, continuity of operations plans, pandemic plans, employee safety guidelines, personal protective equipment needs, and other issues to support water utility operations.

Emergency Equipment Procurement

The Consortium secured a \$50,000 UASI grant to purchase hose ramps and water tanks to be used with regional emergency drinking water equipment. This need was identified by members following the September 2019 equipment drill. The Consortium prepared the bid documents and completed the procurement.

Other Resources

The Consortium completed the annual update to the water provider emergency contact list and developed tracking forms to support the Oregon Water / Wastewater Agency Response Network (ORWARN) Shared Worker Addendum.

Educate public about emergency preparedness

The Consortium conducted its emergency preparedness campaign during National Preparedness Month in September 2019. The multimedia campaign included messaging in English and Spanish and was comprised of television ads and on-air interviews, TriMet bus ads, Oregonian advertorial ads, and other online messaging. The campaign focused on the Consortium's primary personal preparedness message: "Get ready. Get water." and "You need enough water to last you fourteen days or one gallon of water per person per day."

The Consortium continued its public outreach messaging throughout the program year by highlighting the topic in its bimonthly Regionalh2o newsletter, social media content and ads, and by tabling at the Portland Home and Garden Show (see page 10).

Strategic Initiatives for Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency

- Educate the public about emergency preparedness and the importance of water
- Obtain and develop resources that will help members and the region support preparedness goals and requirements
- Facilitate planning, projects, and training opportunities that strengthen members' ability to plan for, respond to, and recover from extreme events
- Collaborate with state and regional stakeholders to improve regional communication, emergency preparedness, response, and recovery
- Support each other through data and resource sharing and mutual aid



Major Focus Area #3: Strengthening Regional Partnerships

The Consortium has worked together for more than two decades to speak with one voice on issues affecting drinking water supplies, to pool resources to complete projects in a cost-effective manner that benefit water providers and the community, and to foster strong regional partnerships. Continuing to cultivate strong relationships with one another and other community partners is foundational to the Consortium and its continued success. This year presented some interesting obstacles, but the Consortium was able to draw on its existing relationships to effectively support its members and the larger community.

Expand awareness of Consortium and benefits of membership

The Consortium began this year by welcoming the City of Newberg and ended the year with news that the City of Wilsonville planned to rejoin in Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021. Consortium staff also provided ongoing support and resources to current members. For example, staff utilized email, meetings, tri-annual reports, and the internal newsletter to communicate about program news, resources, and accomplishments with members. These efforts included:

- Updating the Consortium Member Page so that internal and sensitive member documents are more accessible
- Publishing four issues of the internal newsletter “The Source” which highlights resources and upcoming events and meetings to members
- Identifying opportunities for members to showcase Consortium programs and resources more effectively on their website and in internal and external communications
- Developing member toolkits with images and messaging for promoting Consortium resources and information to their customers
- Completing the annual update for the Drinking Water Advisory Tool to reflect current water provider boundaries

Consortium staff also worked with the Consortium Technical Committee and Executive Committee throughout the year to support the work of the Board. This involved retooling the Consortium’s budget and reporting metrics so that they were more aligned with the five-year strategic plan. This also included organizing engaging presentations focused on Beaverton’s Purple Pipe Project, the Consortium’s new website, and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA).

Build strong regional partnerships

In addition to fostering strong relationships among members, Consortium staff also partnered with regional organizations. The Consortium works with the following organizations to represent water providers, support annual work tasks, and foster regional collaboration:

Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE)

Cascades Region American Red Cross

Irrigation Association (IA)

Oregon Emergency Management Association (OEMA)

Oregon Landscape Contractors Association (OLCA)

Oregon Water Utilities Council (OWUC)

Oregon Water / Wastewater Agency Response Network (ORWARN)

Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO)

Addressing issues through legislative advocacy

The Consortium provided written comments to the Environmental Protection Agency opposing the incorporation of customer satisfaction criteria into WaterSense product specifications.



Strategic Initiatives for Strengthening Regional Partnerships

- Expand awareness of the Consortium's value, mission, programs, and the benefits of membership to water providers
- Build strong community relationships and be the trusted source for drinking water related information
- Maintain Board and staff continuity and effectiveness through succession planning, effective on-boarding, and member engagement
- Address issues of importance through legislative advocacy
- Facilitate a network of peers that members can rely on for information, expertise, resources, and sub-regional partnerships

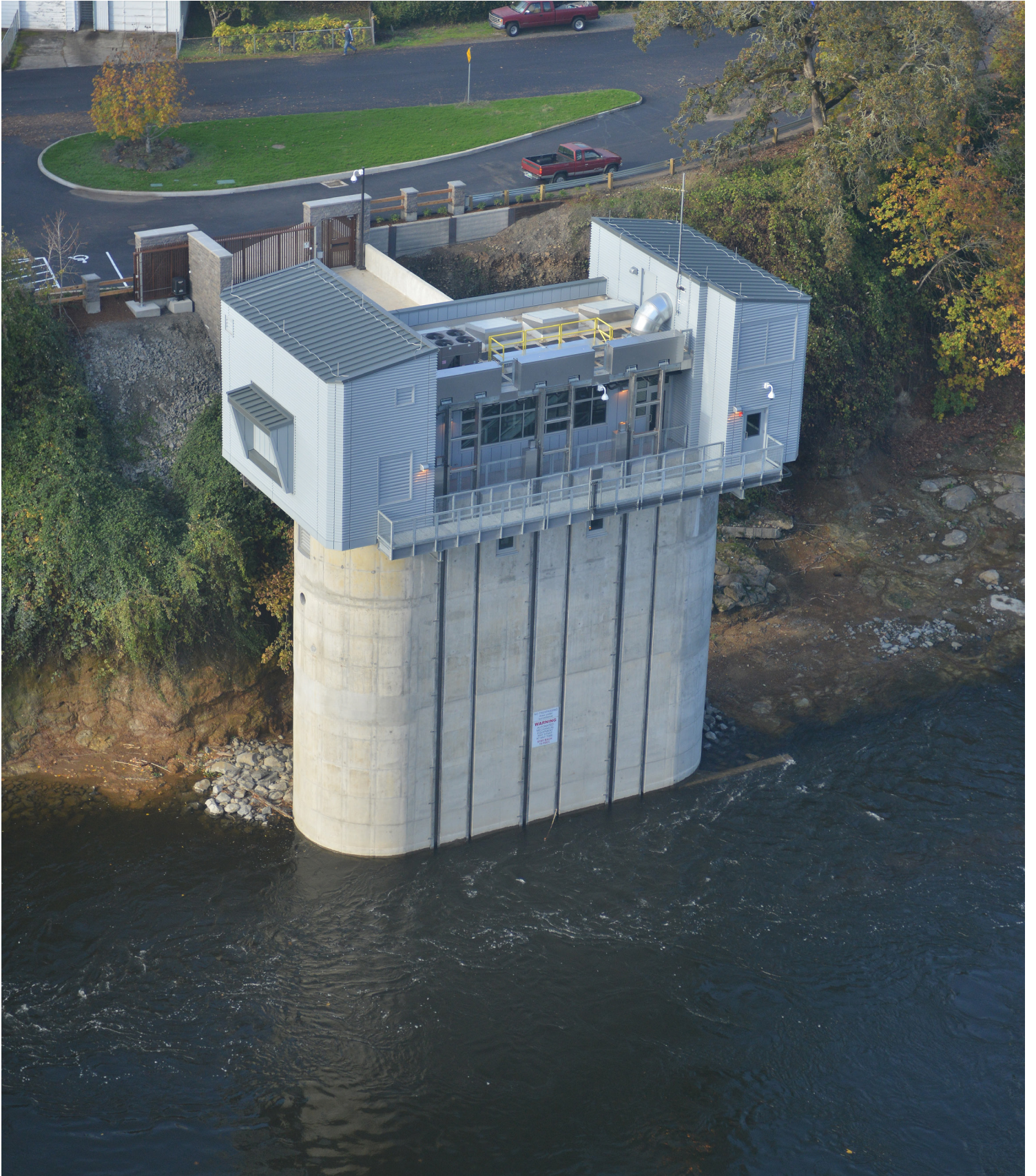


Community Events and Workshops

Typically, the Consortium distributes its conservation and emergency preparedness-focused print materials and conservation devices at several regional community events and workshops throughout the year. This year, the Consortium participated in the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association (OLCA) EXPO and the Portland Home and Garden Show but was unable to participate in the 2020 Children's Clean Water Festival or the Association of Northwest Landscape Designers' garden tour due to the pandemic.

In December 2019, the Consortium delivered four presentations to approximately 200 landscape professionals at the annual OLCA EXPO. The presentations were delivered in English and Spanish and focused on smart irrigation technologies and backflow prevention. These presentations were a continuation of more than twenty years of work that the Consortium has done to provide landscape professionals with training opportunities that satisfy continuing education requirements for licensure and increase their knowledge on best management practices in water conservation and emerging technologies.

The Consortium participates in a large-scale regional community event annually as part of its public outreach strategy. This year, the Consortium tabled at the Portland Home and Garden Show on February 20-23, 2020. Thousands of people attended the show and Consortium and member staff spent the weekend distributing Consortium print materials and talking to attendees about storing water for emergencies, signing up for the Weekly Watering Number, and other water-focused emergency preparedness and conservation topics.

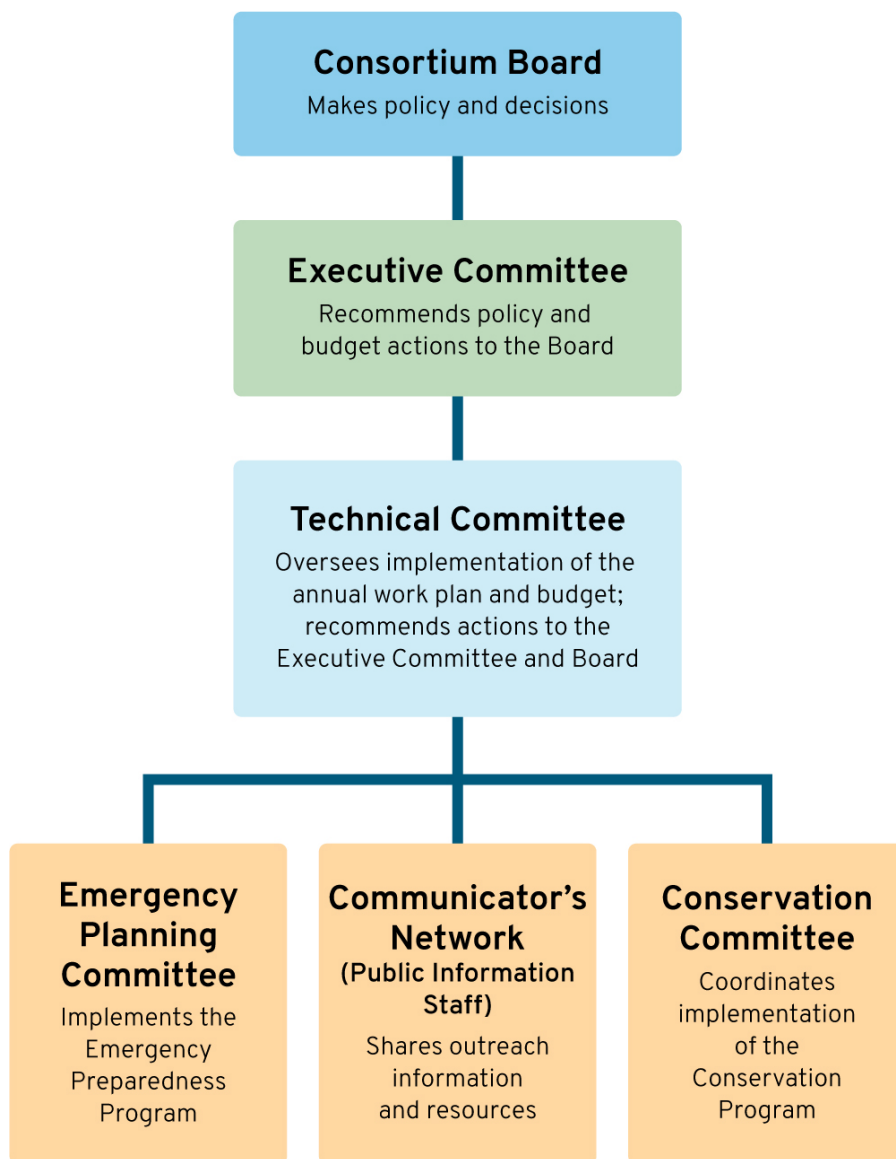


Intake on the Clackamas River

Administration

Consortium staff provided program management, administrative, technical, and financial services to the Consortium through an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Portland Water Bureau, which was renewed through 2025. Staff provided financial management and accounting services, coordinated meeting logistics, hired new staff, and prepared meeting summaries for the Board and Executive and Technical committees. Staff also managed programs, supported committee work, and implemented the annual work plan.

Financial management and accounting services for the Consortium included the calculation and collection of yearly participant dues, issuance of invoices, and payment of Consortium financial obligations. Consortium staff also prepared tri-annual fiscal reports on Consortium expenditures for personnel, professional services, materials, and other services. *Image below is the organizational structure of the Consortium Board and committees.*

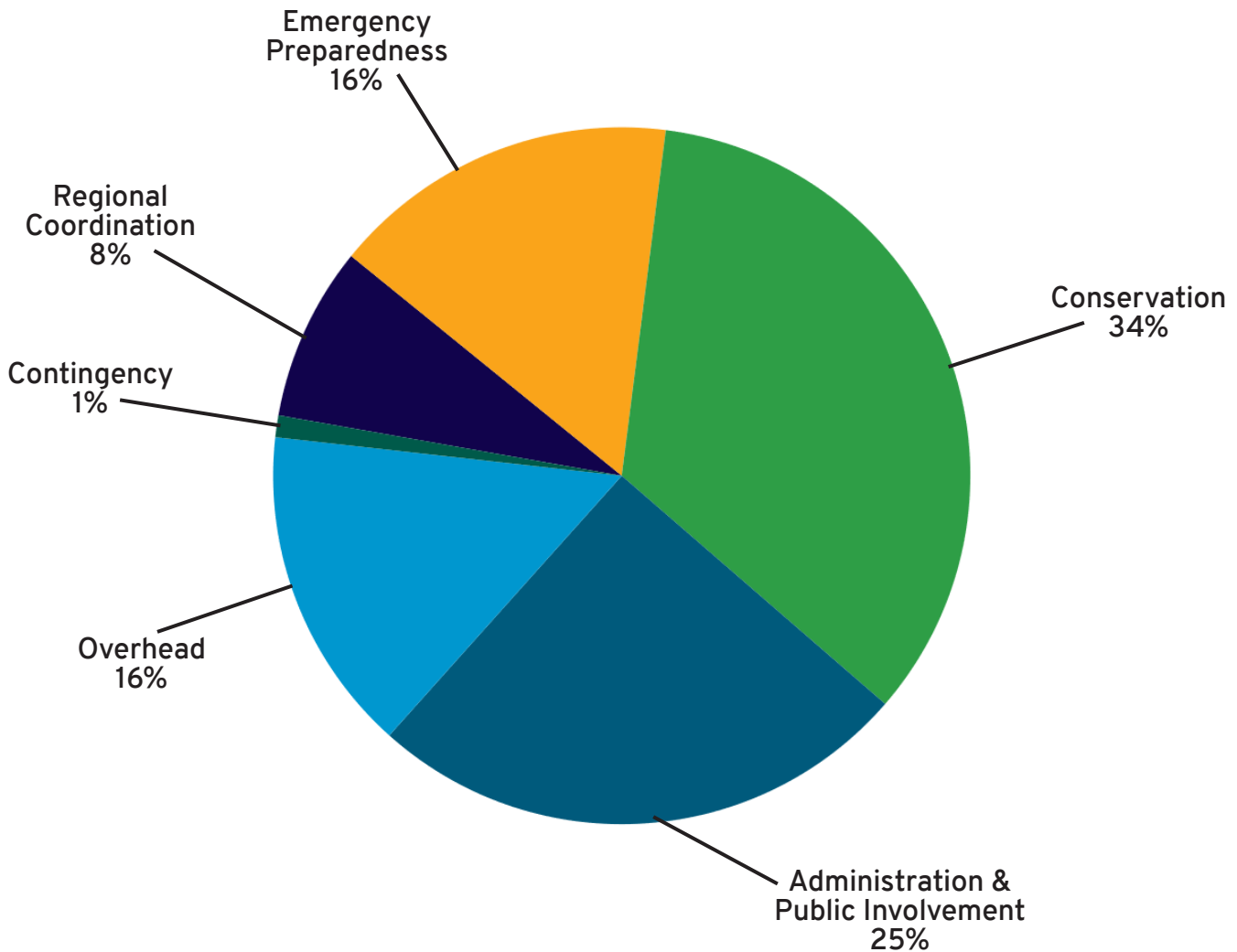


Adopted Budget and Expense

Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 Work Plan and Budget

The Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 work plan continued to support the Consortium's role in implementing regional programming in conservation, emergency preparedness, and regional coordination.

The adopted budget for each year is a record of anticipated costs for the fiscal year. The budget for Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 was \$993,515 which included carryover funds of \$14,000 from Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019 and \$41,700 from Fiscal Year 2017 - 2018. This resulted in the dues-collected amount of \$937,815. Thirty-four percent of the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 budget, \$337,642, was allocated to implementing a regional conservation program which included the associated materials, services, and personnel costs. Approximately 66 percent of the budget, \$655,873, was allocated for regional coordination, emergency preparedness and planning, public outreach, and administrative support.



Expense reports were completed bi-monthly and showed line-item expenditures and percentages. In Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020, approximately 87%, \$867,000, of the budget was expended. The remaining 13%, \$127,000, of the budget will carry over and is traditionally used to offset future dues. The larger carryover resulted from furloughs, reduced work schedules, unspent contingency, savings from reduced travel, and other savings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Consortium members can find the Fiscal Year 2019 - 2020 work plan and final expense report on the Consortium website at www.regionalh2o.org/member-page.

OUR VALUES:

Consensus

We strive for one voice on matters that impact water providers and our customers.

Collaboration

We explore regional options, partnerships, and mutually beneficial solutions while retaining individual decision-making and accountability to our customers.

Respect

We acknowledge our differences and engage in open, honest, and constructive dialogue.

Stewardship

We advocate for wise management of existing and potential sources of drinking water.

Transparency

We share information openly and are available to our members and the communities we serve.

Resiliency

We support each other and collectively prepare to mitigate for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.



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