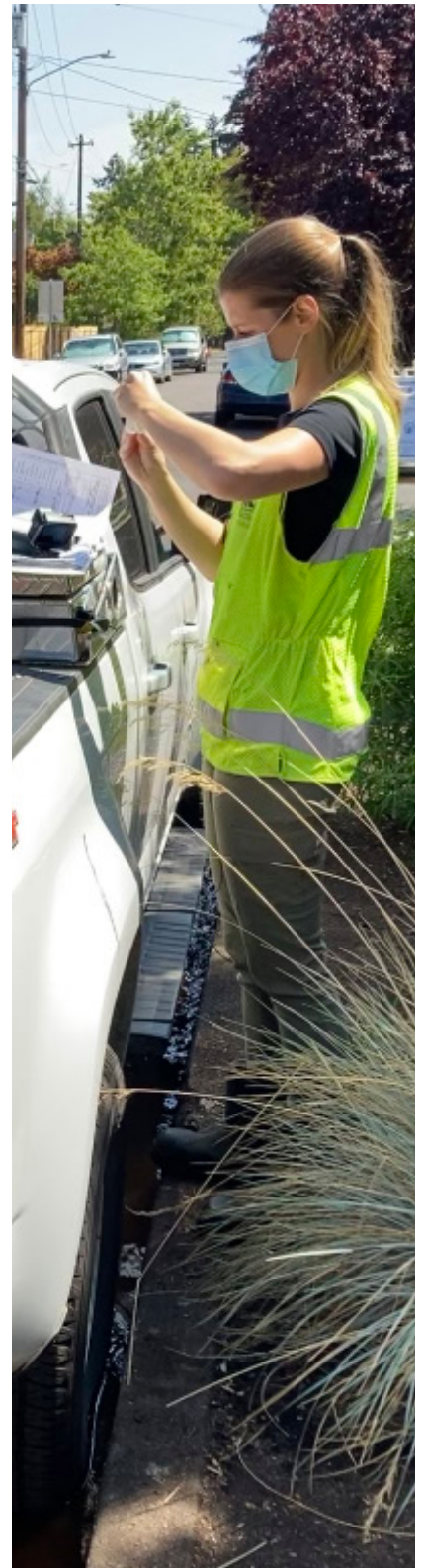


Annual Report

JULY 2020 - JUNE 2021



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
Wilsonville, City of

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

RegionalH2O
 ConserveH2Org
 RegionalH2O

November 2021

Our mission has never been more important than over this past year. Collectively, we have proven we are the organization that leads in the planning, management, stewardship, and resiliency of drinking water in the region.

All our members have demonstrated what it takes to ensure the continued delivery of safe and reliable drinking water despite the many challenges this year has brought. As your partner, the Consortium has strived to support you and amplify your excellent work to the community with creativity and flexibility. We are clearly stronger and more resilient when we work together.

Please take a moment to read our Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021 Annual Report and learn about the projects we completed and milestones we achieved. As always, we can't do this work without our members; from the Consortium staff - thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Geisen".

Rebecca Geisen, Managing Director



Rebecca Geisen, Managing Director



Patty Burk, Management Analyst



Bonny Cushman, Program Coordinator



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 2020 - 2021

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

City of Wilsonville

Introduction

The Regional Water Providers Consortium provides leadership in the planning, management, stewardship, and resiliency of drinking water in the greater Portland, OR metropolitan region.

Our three major focus areas are:

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

This past year, water providers worked together to meet the region's water needs through multiple, often overlapping, challenges including the ongoing pandemic, wildfires, severe winter storms, and supply chain issues. Throughout these challenging times, the Consortium served as a catalyst for members by helping them connect to resources and to one another. Our annual report highlights our accomplishments and the benefits of regional collaboration and coordination.

Summary of Accomplishments

The primary accomplishments for Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021 are highlighted below:

- Launched the regional emergency drinking water supply framework project in partnership with the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization
- Created six messaging toolkits on a variety of water-focused topics with ready-made content for members to use in their websites, newsletters, and social media
- Collaborated with members and regional partners to create messaging in multiple languages about the safety of our regional water supply during the year's emergency events
- Worked with regional partners to develop a wildfire messaging roadmap outlining roles and responsibilities
- Developed outreach materials to help members educate customers about how to use water efficiently at home, detect leaks, and learn what it takes to deliver drinking water from its source to people's homes and businesses
- Created opportunities for Consortium members to share resources, learn from, and support one another throughout the ongoing pandemic and other concurrent emergencies
- Kicked off the summer media campaign during Drinking Water Week with four on-air television interviews

CALLING ALL JUNIOR LEAK DETECTIVES!



Get your first water-saving mission from headquarters by clicking here

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

The Consortium's Regional Water Supply Plan provides a roadmap to meet the region's long-term water supply needs. Over the past 24 years, Consortium members have worked together to be excellent stewards of regional water resources to ensure a long-term supply. This includes promoting the importance of protecting and conserving our water supply, understanding changes in water demand, and making our messages more accessible.

Dry conditions, an extreme heat event, and news of severe drought and water restrictions throughout the west underscored the importance of using water efficiently during the summer of 2021. Events of the year also highlighted the need to communicate about the resiliency and safety of our drinking water.

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

The Consortium conducts several multimedia campaigns throughout the year that focus on the value of water and increasing the public's understanding of ways they can use water more efficiently, protect local water sources, and make the region more resilient.

In Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021, the Consortium delivered three successful multimedia campaigns:

1. Water Conservation (May – September 2021)
2. Source Water Protection (July 2020 – June 2021)
3. Emergency Preparedness (September 2020)

The Consortium invested a total of \$167,716 in multimedia campaigns for the year. Our media partner's campaign contributions were valued at \$215,071. As a result, the combined total value of the campaigns was \$382,787.

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

Water Conservation

The Consortium kicked off its annual summer multimedia campaign during Drinking Water Week in early May and concluded the campaign in mid-September. Since outdoor water use typically increases during the summertime, the Consortium's campaign primarily focused on water-efficient gardening tips. The campaign also included messaging on other topics such as indoor water-saving tips, information about local water sources, and what it takes to deliver water from the source to your home's tap. The Consortium used television, radio, the web, social media, promotions, and newsletters to deliver its messaging during the summer campaign and a variety of online channels for the entire year. The Consortium invested a total of \$129,580 in its conservation campaign this year.

Source Water Protection

The Consortium participated in the year-long "Clean Water. It's Our Future" campaign by contributing staff time and \$3,000 towards the \$70,000 campaign. Sponsored by more than 20 regional partners, the campaign focused on educating the public on ways they can protect local waterways in their daily lives. The campaign included television ads, an on-air interview, and digital ads that ran on social media and the station's website. In addition to the campaign, the Consortium included source water protection-focused messaging throughout the year on its website, in newsletters, and via social media.

Spanish Resources and Messaging

The Consortium continued its commitment to providing messaging and resources in Spanish. The Consortium's summer multimedia campaign included ads in Spanish on television, radio, and social media. Staff worked with water providers and community partners throughout the year to create new content that supported the Consortium's Spanish language messaging goals.

Digital Advertising and Outreach

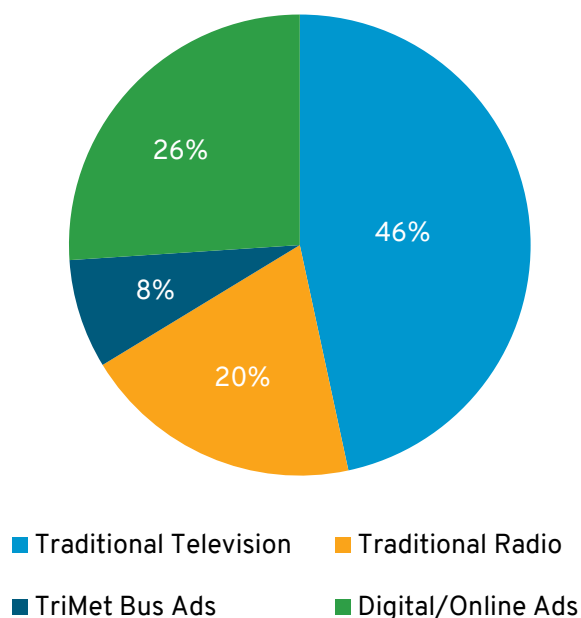
The Consortium added more digital advertising and messaging into its overall public outreach strategy again this year. This shift reflected the public's current media usage trends and diversified the types of media that the Consortium employed for its public outreach campaigns. This year's digital outreach focused on providing more information in Spanish, reaching audiences that don't access information through traditional media sources, and re-engaging people that previously visited the Consortium's website. The Consortium used Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and web display ads to drive traffic to its website.

In addition to the advertising highlighted above, the Consortium also published new content on its website, regularly posted messaging on its own social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube), and distributed five issues of its Regionalh2o newsletter.

Increase accessibility of messaging and outreach materials

The Consortium is committed to increasing access to its resources and messaging. In addition to public outreach campaigns, much of the Consortium's work focused on increasing the public's access to information and resources by adding messaging on a variety of water-related topics including *Legionella*, drinking water sources, WaterSense devices and fixtures, smart irrigation controllers, watering efficiently by hand, water quality, and emergency preparedness. Staff also worked with contractors and community partners on projects that focused on website accessibility and message translation.

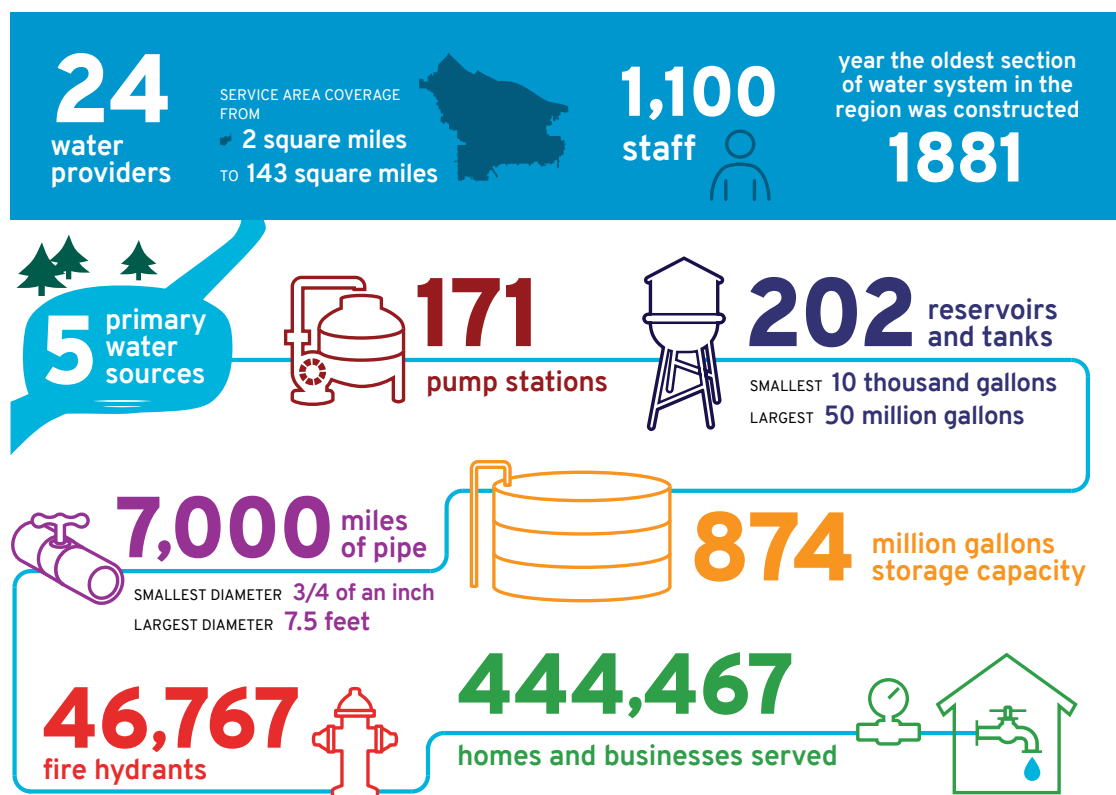
Outreach Campaign Spending
by Media Type



New Public Outreach Messaging and Resources

The Consortium created several new print and digital resources this year. These included monthly messaging toolkits for Consortium members, new print pieces for kids, and online content that focused on increasing the public's knowledge of their water sources, the value of water, and how to use water efficiently at home.

- **Member Toolkits:** The messaging toolkits provided members with ready-made content to use in their websites, newsletters, and social media. The toolkits focused on a variety of regionally important topics such as leak detection and repair, Drinking Water Week, and pet preparedness.
- **Junior Leak Detective:** The Consortium created a “Junior Leak Detective” activity to engage kids in water conservation at home. Two print pieces were developed. The first print piece asked kids to check their home for water leaks, including the toilet, and then report their findings to headquarters (a.k.a. the Consortium). The second print piece included a five-minute shower timer to help kids save water when bathing.
- **Watering by Hand:** The Consortium created new web and social media content for people who water their landscape by hand. This included a new hang tag that can be attached to water-efficient hose nozzles when they are distributed at events, via customer service counters, or through promotions.
- **Your Water is Safe to Drink:** The Consortium responded to the September 2020 wildfires by creating a webpage titled “2020 Wildfires and Your Drinking Water” which emphasized that tap water was safe to drink and not impacted by the fires. A similar webpage and social media content were created during the summer 2021 chlorine shortage.
- **Drinking Water by the Numbers:** The Consortium collected information about regional water systems and used that data to create a new graphic that depicts what it takes to bring drinking water from its source to your home or business. The new graphic and related assets were used to kick off the Consortium's summer campaign during Drinking Water Week (May 2 – 8, 2021) and will continue to be used by the Consortium and members to highlight the value of water in the future.



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

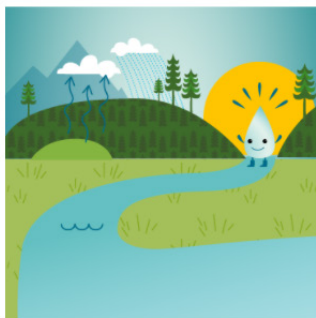
The Portland State University Population Research Center delivered annual population and household estimate data reports to Consortium members in June. The information in these reports helps members develop more accurate and consistent water demand forecasts. The Consortium completed a new five-year Intergovernmental Agreement with the Portland State University Population Research Center to continue this work.

Consortium staff participated in a focus group with the Climate Impacts Group from the University of Washington. Information from the focus group was used to help them develop webinars that will support water utilities wanting to address climate change.

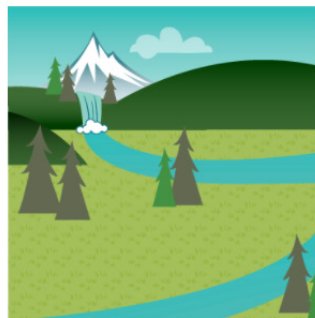
Youth Education

The Consortium refocused its youth education efforts this year so that they were online, recognizing that most kids were learning at home due to the pandemic. Consortium staff helped create a virtual Children's Clean Water Festival website (virtual.cleanwaterfestival.org) which included six learning modules for schools and families to use in lieu of the annual in-person event. In addition, the Consortium ran an online promotion for schools and families that featured its new Junior Leak Detective print pieces. The promotion ran from March through June and a total of 145 kits were distributed.

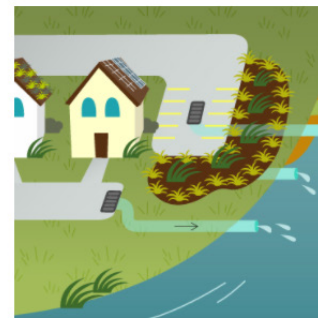
VIRTUAL CLEAN WATER FESTIVAL



1. THE WATER CYCLE



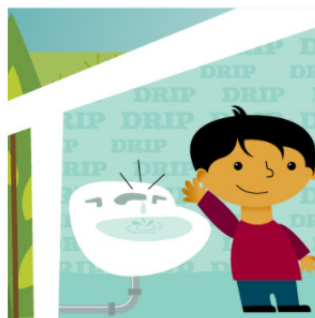
2. WATERSHEDS



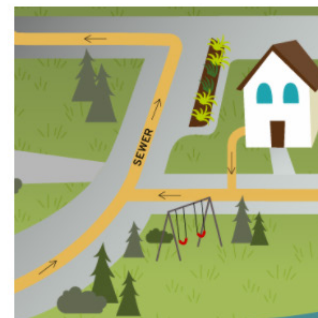
3. STORMWATER



4. DRINKING WATER



**5. WATER
CONSERVATION**



6. WASTEWATER

INCLUYA AGUA



en su kit de emergencia

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 #2: Emergency Preparedness and Resiliency

The Consortium's emergency preparedness program supports its members by providing opportunities to learn and train together, cultivate partnerships, and share experiences, resources, and knowledge with each other. This year brought the benefits of collaboration into sharp focus as members responded to multiple and concurrent emergencies with no disruption to water service. The Consortium continues to help 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 work.

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

The Consortium hosted a virtual brown bag in September 2020 on America's Water Infrastructure Act. Clackamas River Water, Portland Water Bureau, and Tualatin Valley Water District shared their experience putting together their risk assessments and emergency response plans. Participants shared resources and lessons learned.

The Consortium, along with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other regional partners from the emergency management, electric, water, and wastewater sectors, co-hosted the Oregon Water Sector Black Sky Exercise on November 12, 2020. More than 100 people attended the six-hour event that included presentations and a virtual tabletop that explored the effects of power outages on regional water and wastewater utilities. This event was well-timed as power outages impacted the region later in the winter.

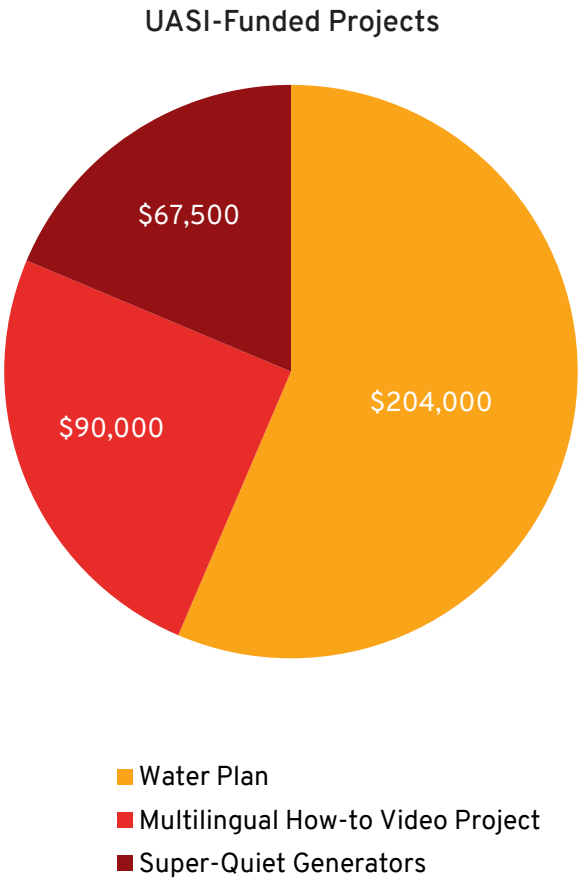
COVID-19 response continued throughout the year and Consortium staff collected and shared information on continuity of operations plans and other resources. As commercial buildings began to be re-occupied, members shared information on mitigating the risks of stagnant water and *Legionella*. The Consortium developed a *Legionella* webpage with information for building managers and the public to raise awareness.

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

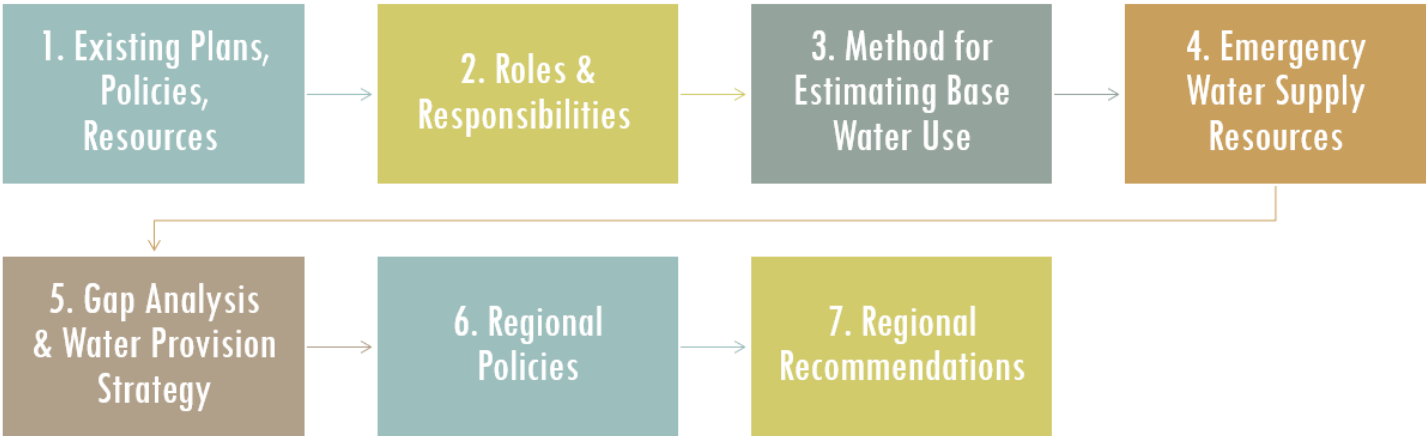
Urban Area Security Initiative Projects and Grants
The Consortium has been very successful in working with Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) partners on projects that benefit members and the greater region. Over \$360,000 in grants have been secured to fund the Provision of Emergency Drinking Water Framework, our multilingual video project, and to purchase 14 super-quiet generators to house with regional emergency drinking water equipment.

Resource Sharing
Oregon water providers statewide were impacted by many emergencies over the year. During the wildfires and summer drought, Consortium staff communicated with emergency water treatment and distribution equipment owners to be on stand-by if water providers around Oregon requested assistance. The Consortium’s emergency equipment list was shared with the Oregon Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network (ORWARN) to help them field resource requests.

Provision of Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan
Work started on this grant-funded project, in partnership with the RDPO, to advance regionally coordinated planning efforts for the effective and equitable delivery of drinking water following a disaster. The goal of the project is to equip water providers, emergency managers, and others with a framework that will help assess current systems, identify gaps between current capabilities, develop solutions, and incorporate needed improvements into long-term planning. The first workshop with project partners was held in May 2021 and focused on roles and responsibilities. A project webpage was developed and is housed on the RDPO website at rdpo.net/emergencydrinkingwaterproject.



FRAMEWORK APPROACH



Collaborate with regional stakeholders and represent water provider interests

Consortium staff represented water providers on several Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization committees to raise awareness of the water sector's role in emergency response and to partner on regional messaging and other projects. For example, the Consortium collaborated with regional and state partners to create a wildfire messaging roadmap that identifies each entity's role and key messages that could be deployed in the event of a wildfire.

The Consortium gave a presentation to the RDPO emergency managers group on federal requirements under America's Water Infrastructure Act to prepare risk assessments and emergency response plans. The presentation provided a great opportunity for emergency managers to learn more about water providers' level of preparedness and how they address resiliency. Consortium staff also co-presented information to the RDPO Policy Committee on work that the disaster messaging workgroup is doing to create disaster messaging and resources that are accessible and culturally relevant.

Educate the public about emergency preparedness

The Consortium conducted its annual emergency preparedness campaign during National Preparedness Month (September 2020). The multimedia campaign included messaging in English and Spanish and was comprised of television ads, on-air interviews, TriMet bus ads, online Oregonian ads, a targeted email campaign titled "Four for Four", and other online messaging. The Oregonian ad campaign and the "Four for Four" email campaign were repeated after the historic winter storms in February 2021. Throughout the rest of the year the Consortium maintained an online presence by updating preparedness content on its website and distributing messaging via various other online platforms. The Consortium invested a total of \$35,136 in its preparedness campaign this year.

Staff began work on recruiting a project manager and videographer for the multilingual how-to video project which will create 30 videos that cover water preparedness information in 10 languages.



Your water is safe to drink.



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

Major Focus Area #3: Strengthening Regional Partnerships

All our meetings were virtual this year which made it difficult to strengthen our connection to each other, but it also allowed for greater participation and intentional communication. The Consortium Board, Consortium committees, and regional partners rose to the challenge of connecting and providing meaningful engagement around the important work of the Consortium and the trials we faced together.

Expand awareness of Consortium and benefits of membership

The Consortium began this year by welcoming the City of Wilsonville as a member.

Consortium staff also created a presentation that was distributed with the Annual Report for members to share with their colleagues. New Board members were welcomed with an introductory presentation at the February 2021 meeting. Tualatin City Council requested and received a presentation on the Consortium from staff. New Board members and staff were provided on-boarding to welcome them and ensure they were aware of Consortium programs and benefits.

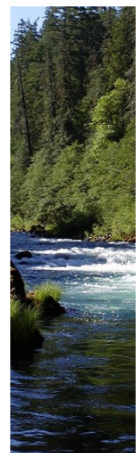
Regional Water Providers Consortium

New Board Members – Introduction to the Consortium

Presented by Rebecca Geisen, Managing Director



REGIONAL WATER PROVIDERS CONSORTIUM



Build strong regional partnerships

Consortium staff partnered with regional organizations to expand the work of the Consortium. The Consortium works with the following organizations to represent water providers, support annual work tasks, and foster regional collaboration:

Alliance for Water Efficiency	Oregon Landscape Contractors Association
Cascades Region American Red Cross	Oregon Water Utilities Council
Community Engagement Liaisons	Oregon Water / Wastewater Agency Response Network
Irrigation Association	Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization
Oregon Emergency Management	WaterSense

Facilitate information and resource sharing

Over the course of the year, the Consortium provided a forum to discuss regionally important issues such as summer supply, workforce development, the 2021 chlorine shortage, severe weather events, *Legionella*, and wildfire messaging. For example:

- **Summer Supply:** The Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) met over the summer to share summer supply information and coordinate messaging. This was especially important given the record-setting hot summer. In June the CTC also heard a weather and stream level outlook from the local National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration office.
- **Workforce Development:** Water providers have been impacted by a lack of trained candidates for a growing number of positions in the water sector. To address this, Consortium staff participated in an ongoing statewide workforce planning group focused on increasing educational and on-the-job training opportunities to bring more people into the water sector. Staff facilitated a discussion with the CTC on workforce needs and members shared information about their own workforce development programs.
- **Severe Weather Events:** The Consortium Board heard presentations from member staff about their wildfire and winter storm response and the importance of regional collaboration and communication in minimizing the disruption of water service. In committee meetings, members shared how they used best management practices and identified gaps in their operations and emergency response plans.



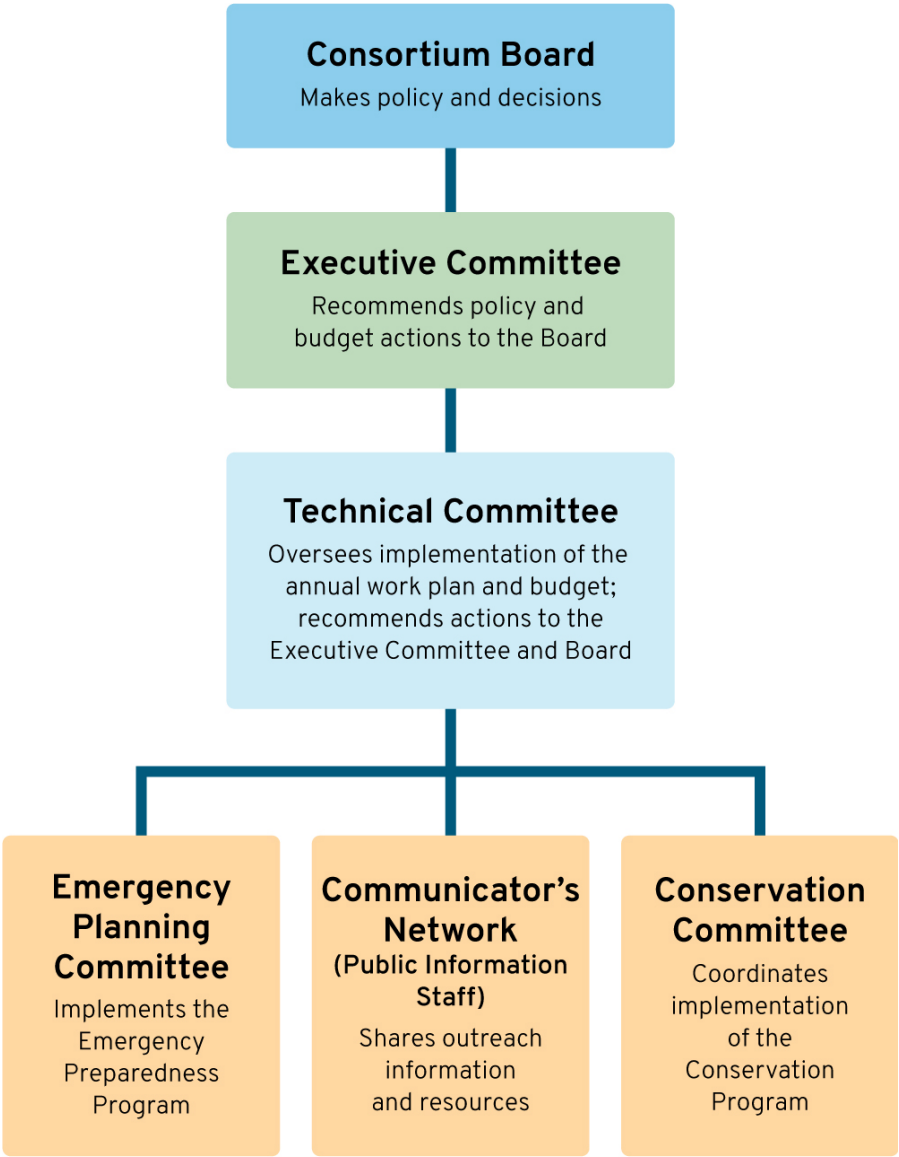
Snow in the Bull Run Watershed

Administration

Consortium staff provided program management, administrative, technical, and financial services to the Consortium through an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Portland Water Bureau. Staff provided financial management and accounting services, coordinated meeting logistics, 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 triannual fiscal reports on Consortium expenditures for personnel, professional services, materials, and other services.

Organizational Structure of the Consortium Board and Committees



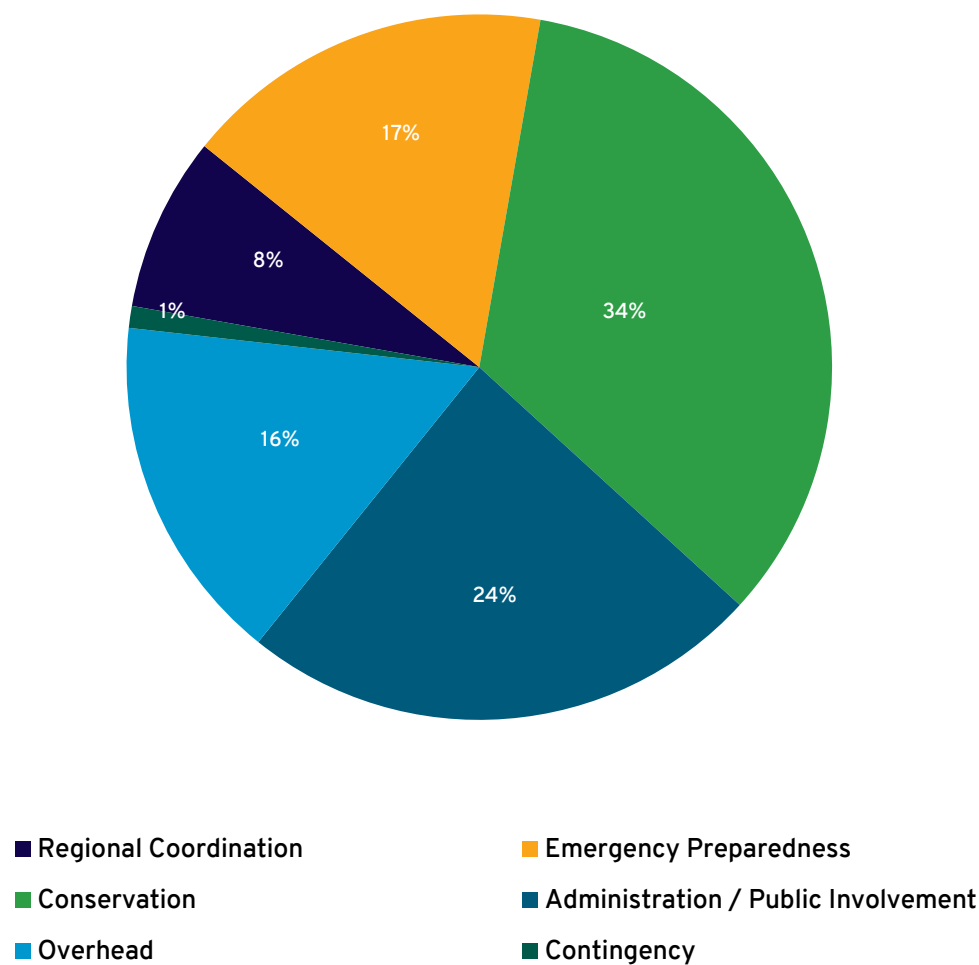
Adopted Budget and Expense

Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021 Work Plan and Budget

The Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021 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 2020 - 2021 was \$997,612 which included carryover funds of \$77,885 from Fiscal Year 2018 - 2019. This resulted in the dues-collected amount of \$919,727.

Consortium Budget Allocation by Program Area



Expense reports were completed bi-monthly and showed line-item expenditures and percentages. In Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021, approximately 87%, \$879,000, of the budget was expended. The remaining 13%, \$134,000, 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. The City of Wilsonville joined the Consortium and paid dues after the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 work plan and budget was adopted. Wilsonville’s dues of approximately \$16,000 is included in the carry over amount. Consortium members can find the Fiscal Year 2020 - 2021 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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