



## Consortium Board Meeting Summary

OCTOBER 8, 2025 CALLED TO ORDER: 6:30 PM ADJOURNED: 7:55 PM

QUORUM PRESENT – YES – 14 MEMBERS

(MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE)

### Approval of June 5, 2025 Meeting Summary

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Commissioner Naomi Angier made a motion to approve the June 5, 2025 Consortium Board meeting summary as presented. Councilor Bridget Brooks seconded the motion. The Consortium Board approved the June 5, 2025 Consortium Board meeting summary as presented (14:0:0).

### Public Comment

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None

### Director Report

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Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director advised that this will be her last Board meeting as Managing Director as she officially retired as of October 1. Ms. Geisen will continue to work as a retiree part-time to assist with the transition of the new Managing Director and to finish up the Emergency Drinking Water Framework Tabletop Exercises. Ms. Geisen shared the following updates:

- Tri-Annual Activity Report: A detailed tri-annual activity report was included in the meeting materials packet. Board members were encouraged to look over the report for information on activities conducted since the last Board meeting in June.
- Staffing Update: The Consortium Managing Director position recruitment was posted in early September and was open for approximately two weeks. The recruitment link was shared with all Consortium committees. First interviews have been scheduled. Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) members were part of the application review and are on the interview panels. Hope to have someone on board by November/December. Ms. Geisen will still be in her role as Managing Director until the new Director is hired.
- Emergency Drinking Water Framework Tabletop Exercises: The second of five county-specific exercises, the Columbia County workshop, was held on July 29. Participants included nine water providers, county staff, and state agencies. The Multnomah County

exercise is planned for October 16 and Washington County held internal, preliminary meetings to kick off the planning process. The project will conclude in April 2026.

Ms. Geisen shared a retrospective of her time with the Consortium. Ms. Geisen has been with the Consortium for the past 26 years and shared reflections and hopes for the future of the organization. Ms. Geisen reflected on the Consortium's development and growth of a regional emergency preparedness and resiliency program; the expansion of the Consortium's outreach program beyond conservation to include the value of water, emergency preparedness, and multilingual messaging; and the uniqueness of the Consortium's regional collaboration efforts. Ms. Geisen commented that there are not many organizations like the Consortium that come together in such a meaningful way that they work together for the benefit of the region and the people they serve. She noted that the Consortium has become a trusted source for drinking water information and that she is proud of the work the Consortium did during the pandemic – how we pivoted with messaging and getting it out; advanced the resilience of our drinking water systems and community education about emergency drinking water; and how the Consortium has made connections and built a drinking water community.

Ms. Geisen concluded that now is a great time to bring in a new generation of leaders with new ideas and priorities in addition to its core work that will make the Consortium stronger, and even more important and relevant.

## Program Report

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Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Manager shared the following updates:

### **2025 Consortium Multimedia Campaign:**

Summer Media Campaign – The Consortium summer media campaign ran July 7 through September 30. The Consortium partnered with Affiliated Media for a second year to help conduct much of its summer to fall multimedia campaign. This partnership resulted in a strong campaign that included a diverse media mix of broadcast television, cable television, broadcast radio, digitally placed audio and video ads, social media ads, and digital display ads. Ms. Cushman noted that an important aspect of the Consortium's work with media campaigns is leveraging partnerships to do production that can be used throughout the campaign at no or small cost to members. This year, the Consortium leveraged 26 in-kind television ads and 14 Spanish and Russian ads for a very small budget.

Print Media – This year's campaign also included working with a public relations consultant which resulted in earned media story placement in three Washington County Pamplin Media Publications and one in the Portland publication, SE Examiner.

## **Program Updates:**

- **RegionalH2O.org website** – Updated pages with a lot of technical information; planning a sitewide review of Spanish language content to make sure Spanish speakers have the same access to drinking water information as English speakers; working to ensure all content is accessible for users with disabilities in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and ADA Title II, and creating a new URL for Spanish language outreach—aguaregional.org which automatically redirects visitors to Spanish resources on regionalH2O.org.
- **Tabling events** – The Consortium continued its focus on tabling at regional events that serve multicultural, multilingual attendees in 2025. Staff from City of Hillsboro tabled at the Latino Cultural Festival in June and at Fiesta Latina en el Parque in September. At both events, staff shared water conservation and emergency preparedness information and handed out English and Spanish print materials, shower timers, hose nozzles, and emergency water bags to event attendees.
- **Youth Education Programming** – Consortium Staff shared Youth Education programming recommendations for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 with the Consortium Conservation Committee (CCC), Water Communicators Network (WCN), and the Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) at their meetings this past fall. The recommendations were in response to higher than expected costs for school programming and included: 1. Foregoing in-school programming options altogether; 2. Completing the update of the of the “What Do You Know About H2O?” activity booklet project and providing members with a start-up supply of the new books as part of the 2026 annual print order; 3. Providing technical support to recruiting and onboarding a new Children’s Clean Water Festival event planner contractor. The CCC, WCN, and CTC all supported these recommendations with no changes.

## **Children’s Clean Water Festival:**

Ms. Cushman gave an overview of the Children’s Clean Water Festival (CCWF). The Festival is a half day of learning and fun for 4th and 5th grade students that includes hands-on, water-focused activities, classroom presentations, and stage shows that reinforce STEM, Common Core, and Next Generation Science concepts. The festival costs about \$30,000 annually to put on. Approximately 10 Consortium members contribute money to help fund the CCWF. The Consortium typically pays about \$1,000 - \$3,000 per year in sponsorship funds and also contributes staff time.

The CCWF has always been committee-supported. Many committee members have specific roles – volunteers, presenters/exhibitors, fiscal, lunches, stage shows, web, buses & signage. In addition to participating in the planning committee, many sponsoring agencies also choose to provide funding, additional staff time the day of the event, and some pay for busses to take the kids to the Festival.

The CCWF also has a contractor event planner who helps coordinate the event (event planning, teacher communications, engage the planning committee, facility rental). That role has been the same for 20+ years. The current contractor has retired so the Consortium is working with staff from Rockwood Water PUD, Clackamas River Water Providers, Tualatin Valley Water District, and City of Hillsboro to recruit and onboard a new contractor. Rockwood PUD is the Festival fiscal agent and will manage the new event planner contract.

The current CCWF only serves 1000 students – about 30-35 classes. Pre pandemic, the event was able to do a full day event for about 1400 kid/52 classes. The size limiting is due to bus availability – there is a shortage and buses have to be there for their regular for morning and afternoon runs. Classes are chosen in December by the planning committee with a goal of having some from everywhere across the region. There are always more classes that apply than there are spots so they try to rotate so that the same schools aren't always chosen.

Board members were unable to participate in a planned activity from the Children's Clean Water Festival due to time constraints.

## FY 2026-27 Budget and Workplan Concepts Discussion

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Ms. Geisen noted that it is time to start exploring Fiscal Year 2026-27 budget and workplan concepts. FY 2026-27 will be the first full year under a new staffing model, including a new Consortium Managing Director.

### **Staffing**

Consortium staff is currently comprised of two part-time staff: Managing Director (.3 -.5 FTE) and Management Assistant (.9 FTE), and two full-time staff: Outreach Program Manager and Program Specialist. Starting FY 26-27, the Consortium will transition to a 3 FTE model with the potential for a temporary, part-time staff position to be added as needed. This new model will provide the Consortium with consistent staffing that is solely focused on the work of the Consortium. It will also allow staff to operate as a more cohesive unit within the evolving City of Portland/Portland Water Bureau structure. Actual staffing costs will be available in December. It is important to note that staffing costs may shift but should not increase overall. Here's why:

- New Managing Director position is a different job classification with a lower pay range charged as a FTE vs hourly.
- Management Assistant position will be filled spring 2026 before Patty Burk fully retires on June 30, 2026. Job duties and classification will be determined after the new Consortium Manager is hired. The new hire will likely have lower starting salary.
- Work assignments may change for existing staff and result in positions being reclassified.
- Remaining staffing budget could be used to hire a part-time position for special projects or administrative work

### **FY 2026-27 Proposed Program & Projects:**

The projects shared below serve as a menu of options brainstormed by staff for discussion and consideration. The Consortium Technical Committee and Executive Committee helped staff prioritize projects for Board consideration. Ms. Geisen noted that not all of the below proposed projects can be completed next fiscal year so staff is looking to the Board to help prioritize the work and give staff guidance on where to focus their time and resources. She advised that projects that are not on the FY 2026-27 work plan can be added to future work plans.

### **Meeting Water Needs:**

#### Youth Education

- Develop marketing materials and member messaging toolkit for updated “What Do You Know About H2O?” kids’ activity book and other collateral materials.
- Develop activity kit for teachers to use in their classrooms

#### Workforce Development

- Assemble working committee to develop recommendations. Potential options include: More collaboration with Baywork, Special Districts Association of Oregon, Oregon Association of Water Utilities, Joint Water Commission’s Hired to Operate, etc.
- Website content updates/additions
- Develop career fair materials and provide coordination to streamline participation and materials
- Panel discussion (see below)

#### Emergency Preparedness & Resilience:

- Equipment Drill (As part of its strategic plan, the Consortium is committed to conducting a large-scale water treatment and distribution equipment drill every 3-5 years. The last drill was held in fall 2023).
- Interconnections TTX Follow-up Projects - Plan follow-up event from recent Interconnections TTX (e.g. field-testing day.)
- Reconvene GIS work group with the goal of updating the Interconnections Geodatabase.
- Seed Money for Group Emergency Water Bag Order (\$10,000+/-)

#### Strengthening Regional Partnerships:

- Plan one to two Consortium-sponsored workshops or panel discussions. Possible topics could include:
  - Affordability
  - Micro-hydro
  - BMPs on engaging community partners to deliver Consortium materials and programming
  - Member panel on new supply sources coming online in the next couple years and customer outreach
  - Workforce Development

### **FY 2026-27 Carryover**

Next year's carryover amount exceeds the historical range of about \$115,000-\$120,000 that the Consortium has experienced over the last five years. For FY 2026-27 there will be a carryover of \$182,884. Having a significantly larger carryover presents the Consortium with a unique opportunity. At its September meeting, the CTC recommended that the Consortium use carryover funds for two purposes:

1. Use the majority to defray member dues
2. Spend some funds on a one-time project (e.g. emergency drinking water bags).

Historically, all carry-over funds have been used to defray member dues. Using carry-over funds for a one-time project will keep the overall amount of member dues stable from year-to-year. This will make it easier for members to budget for their annual Consortium membership dues. Staff are bringing this recommendation forward to the Board for consideration. If supported, the Board would vote in February 2026 as part of its adoption of the budget. If supported by the Board, the CTC and staff will work together to solidify the one-time project this fall. Lastly, with the shift to three full time employees, the carry-over from staffing will be greatly reduced moving forward.

Board members discussed the FY 2026-27 budget and work plan concepts presented and supported the proposed projects. There was broad support for work force development. There was interest expressed in exploring some discussion or study on group procurement. With increased costs due to tariffs, it was noted that now might be a good time to research how to leverage the benefits of the Consortium's purchasing power/economies of scale. Ms. Geisen advised that she would take the recommendation back to the Consortium Technical Committee for their thoughts/suggestions on how to move forward with that idea. The Board supported staff to bring a proposal to use some of the carryover funds to purchase emergency bags.

Ms. Geisen advised that Consortium staff will continue to work with the CTC and EC to refine the FY 2026-27 Consortium budget and work plan and bring it to the Board for their approval at their meeting in February.

Meeting Attendees:

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**25 Total Members**  
**Quorum = 13**

Councilor Kevin Teater – City of Beaverton	Commissioner Naomi Angier and Tom Heidgerken – Clackamas River Water	Councilor Cathy Keathley and Mike Whiteley – City of Gresham
Councilor Jim Yent and Jessica Dorsey – City of Hillsboro	Councilor Robert Massey – City of Milwaukie	Heidi Bullock – Oak Lodge Water Services
Councilor Mitch Green and Sarah Murphy Santner – City of Portland	Janine Casey – Rivergrove Water District	Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD
Councilor Kristina Ramseyer and Ryan Wood – City of Sandy	Chair Renee Brouse and Rich Sattler – City of Sherwood	Commissioner Gary Barth – Sunrise Water Authority
Councilor Bridget Brooks – City of Tualatin	Commissioner Jim Duggan – Tualatin Valley Water District	Commissioner Paul Schuler – West Slope Water District
Councilor Adam Cunningham and Martin Montalvo – City of Wilsonville	Rebecca Geisen, Bonny Cushman, Patty Burk, and Riley Berger – Consortium Staff	

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Consortium members agencies not represented by elected officials at this meeting included the City of Forest Grove, City of Gladstone, Lake Grove Water District, City of Lake Oswego, Raleigh Water District, Rockwood Water PUD, South Fork Water Board, City of Tigard, and City of Troutdale.

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 4, 2026, via Zoom/videoconference**