



CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS CASE STUDY

The Oregon-Washington Drinking Water Providers Partnership

The Partnership: The Drinking Water Providers Partnership (DWPP) forms ties between Municipal Water Providers and seven partner organizations to provide clean, cold, and affordable water to towns and cities in Oregon and Washington. The DWPP partners include U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service (USFS), Geos Institute, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Washington Department of Health, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Wild Earth Guardians.

What are the partnership’s shared concerns? The Partners share a common vision that watershed restoration is an important and effective way to provide clean, and affordable drinking water to communities and protect native fish populations. Since 2014, the partners have been gauging interest among water providers to partner with watershed restoration practitioners in activities that would restore and protect water quality and the upstream watershed. There was unanimous support among drinking water providers and local restoration partners, however, a regional funding source was requested for implementing on-the-ground source water protection and restoration activities.

How did the partnership form? The partnership formed at the grassroots level. Representatives from U.S. Forest Service and Geos Institute met with local water providers in the Cascade and Coastal mountain ranges of Oregon to introduce the concept of forming a partnership to restore watershed conditions within their municipal watershed. There was strong support wherever they went. Several meetings were held to bring together water providers and local watershed restoration practitioners. Meeting participants identified common goals and specific actions to meet those goals. A census of these grassroots partnerships indicated the need for a regional source of funding to support municipal watershed restoration projects. At that point, additional interested partners were invited to participate at the regional level and contributed technical and funding resources.

THE PARTNERS:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture: Forest Service (USFS)
- Geos Institute
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Washington Department of Health
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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What are the partnership goals?

- Restore and protect the health of watersheds which communities depend upon for drinking water through the development and support of local partnerships between drinking water providers, landowners, and restoration practitioners.
- Benefit aquatic and riparian ecosystems, including the native fish that inhabit them, through the successful implementation of those projects.

How is the partnership pursuing these goals? The Drinking Water Providers Partnership is dependent on grassroots partnerships at the municipal watershed scale to identify and implement restoration actions. The region-wide DWPP partners will continue to provide a source of funding and other support for these projects and partnerships.

What barriers has the partnership experienced and how has it overcome these barriers? The only barriers the DWPP partners have experienced to date is limited funds for the regional funding source. The first year, the partners were able to develop a funding pool of \$650,000. We continue to search for additional agencies and organizations with shared interests to participate in the partnership and contribute to the fund, which is fully dedicated to additional restoration projects.

Partnership Member Contacts

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