



Oregon's Kitchen Table – Mid-Coast Water Action Plan

INTRODUCTION

During the fall and winter of 2021-2022, the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership (the Partnership), worked with Oregon's Kitchen Table (OKT), to conduct a public engagement process to hear from people in the Mid-Coast (from Cascade Head to Cape Perpetua) about the Partnership's Water Action Plan. The Partnership particularly wanted to hear from members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, members of the Latinx community and Spanish speakers, people involved in tourism and hospitality and business and industry in the region, and from people who had participated in the previous public engagement process (2018). The following executive summary provides an overview of the engagement process as well as high level findings. The attached report contains five sections: themes regarding priority areas and concerns, themes regarding how people saw themselves playing a role in implementation, recommendations for future engagement, a brief conclusion, and annotated survey results.

ABOUT OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE

Oregon's Kitchen Table is a program of the National Policy Consensus Center in the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University, and was created by a group of non-partisan, non-profit community organizations dedicated to helping Oregonians have a voice in public decision-making. Oregon's Kitchen Table creates public consultations to allow Oregonians to weigh in on policy questions posed by elected officials and public managers. OKT has been used at the state, local and regional levels to gather feedback from a wide variety of Oregonians using both our online surveying tool to solicit input from thousands of participants and in-person community gatherings of various sizes and formats.

We are committed to engaging community members from all walks of life – particularly communities that typically have not been represented or engaged in public processes - to achieve deep engagement. Using culturally specific and targeted outreach, Oregon's Kitchen Table has a particular focus on hearing from Oregonians who have been left out of traditional engagement processes. We work with organizers, translators, and interpreters so materials and online and in-person consultations are available for Oregonians who speak a wide variety of languages and learn

in a variety of ways. We recognize that people bring all different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding issues / policies. We use approaches to ensure those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced.

The online surveying tool is not intended to be a scientific study; rather it is one way to allow the public to share ideas, beliefs, and values with decision-makers.

ENGAGEMENT GOALS

The goals of this project were multi-fold: 1. to hear from specific sectors as well as specific community groups in the Mid-Coast; 2. to identify the actions in the Mid-Coast Water Action Plan that those sectors and community members were most interested in; 3. to discover any additional ideas related to those actions that the Partnership may not be aware of; and 4. to return to people who participated in the 2018 public engagement effort and get their reactions to the strategies and solutions that the Water Action Plan laid out.

Because this engagement is intended for the general public, it assumes that respondents bring all different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding water and water policy to it. It is our goal to ensure that those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced.

From the 2018 public engagement process, the Partnership identified four particular groups of people to focus engagement on in 2022 to make sure that they continued to hear voices from those communities and sectors. The Partnership was particularly interested in continuing to work with the Siletz Tribal Council to create ways for members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to share what they thought. The Partnership also wanted to build on efforts from 2018 to conduct outreach to and hear from members of the Latinx and Spanish speaking communities in the Mid-Coast. Finally, the Partnership wanted to expand the input they heard from people in the industry and business sectors, especially those involved in tourism and hospitality.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Due to COVID restrictions and particularly with the emergence of the Omicron variant in the midst of the public engagement period, engagement activities took place either virtually through an online survey, Zoom listening sessions or small group discussions, phone interviews, or through a paper survey mailed to members of the Siletz Tribe.

During the 2018 engagement process, OKT and the Partnership were able to conduct in-person gatherings, particularly for Latinx, Spanish speaking and Mam speaking community members. In addition, members of the Partnership were able to let people know face-to-face about opportunities to engage and distribute fliers and postcards at community events as well as at key community sites where people often gather in person, such as libraries, coffee shops, or community centers. Because of public health restrictions and the renewed cautions and concerns around face-to-face gatherings due to Omicron, the opportunities to do outreach were very

limited. At the same time, there were many immediate, pressing priorities for people on a day-to-day basis.

Over the course of the engagement period, OKT and the Partnership pursued a variety of approaches, particularly in ensuring that the voices of Latinx and Spanish speaking community members were included. These included connecting with several community leaders and organizers, working with large area employers to disseminate paper surveys to their staff, and attempting to arrange for a Spanish speaking facilitator from OKT to attend a vaccination clinic and conduct interviews or hand out and collect paper surveys.

PARTICIPATION

Over 175 people took part in the various engagement opportunities from November 2021 to January 2022. 80 participants took the survey online and 76 submitted their responses via paper survey. 74 paper surveys came from enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Approximately 20 people participated in interviews and small group discussions focused on people in tourism, hospitality, business or industry sectors.

FINDINGS: COMMONLY HELD VALUES AND BELIEFS

Across all forms of engagement, the following commonly held values and beliefs emerged:

- While people care about water and expressed interested in how water planning intersected with issues like climate change and the region’s economy in the Mid-Coast, water planning is not currently a top priority for many people at this moment in time.
- Different sectors and communities throughout the region value water as an important component of many facets of life on the Mid-Coast and as a resource to be protected and cared for.
- Most people we heard from either were unfamiliar with the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership or knew only a little bit about it (74% of people responding to the paper and online survey).
- People from a wide variety of backgrounds have concerns about water rates, whether they were an emerging or new business trying to get started or individuals paying for water at their homes.
- Recent droughts, particularly in 2021, as well as concerns about aging infrastructure were often mentioned as concerns for the region and communities.
- People were interested in learning more about how they or their businesses might be able to participate in water storage. We heard this both in small group discussions and participants shared this via the surveys as well.

SECTION 1: PRIORITY AREAS AND CONCERNS

Across different forms of engagement and with different sectors, some common priority actions as well as some common areas of concern emerged.

1. Desire for guidance and clear points of resources

Several people in the business, tourism and hospitality sectors shared a desire to get more information and clear guidance around various regulations and rules related to both accessing water for their business as well as conservation measures. People shared that they felt like they were often on their own to figure things out and didn't know who to turn to as a resource on their water issues, particularly in situations where it wasn't clear which jurisdiction might be the regulator or decision-maker. Besides their local water provider, people weren't sure who else they could look to for leadership on water in the region. One business owner wondered if there was someone with expertise on the Partnership who could serve as a resource to business owners. Another person suggested that the Partnership consider offering some basic information and resources directly for business owners and industry via the Partnership.

2. Care for watershed ecosystem and water source protections

We heard in responses to both the online and paper surveys that two of the action areas people wanted to see the Partnership start work on first were protecting water sources and ecosystems of watersheds in the area. People were most willing to pay for higher water rates if that money went towards "Protect water sources like rivers, springs, or groundwater." Several people shared that they were concerned about impacts of logging, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, and sewage in water sources such as rivers. One person said, "The Siletz river seems to get lower and lower each year, I worry for our wild life and eco systems."

3. Concern for the condition of the region's water infrastructure

In our interviews and small group listening sessions, several people noted that when they thought about water in the region, one of the first things that came to mind was water infrastructure issues. "Replace and improve the region's systems that collect and supply water as well as water treatment plans so they are efficient and secure" was another action area that people chose as one of the top three action areas they wanted to see the Partnership take on first.

4. Concern for community-wide access to clean, safe water in an emergency

People were most confident in their ability to access clean, safe water in an emergency at their homes, with 70% saying they either had enough stored at home or they knew where to go to

get water if their water was cut off in an emergency. 53% of business owners / managers said that they either had enough clean, safe water stored at home if their water was cut off due to an emergency. Fewer people felt as confident about their community's ability to access to clean, safe water. 39% responded that they thought their community didn't have enough clean safe water, and didn't know where the community could go to get water in an emergency. Another 39% selected "I'm not sure."

SECTION 2: WAYS PEOPLE SAW THEMSELVES AS PART OF IMPLEMENTING THE MID-COAST WATER ACTION PLAN

In addition to asking people what they wanted to see the Partnership prioritize in its work, the survey, interviews, and small group discussions also posed questions about how people saw themselves or their businesses playing a role in implementing the Water Action Plan. We heard several common themes.

1. Desire to share approaches and highlight successful actions

From interviews and small group discussions with people in business and industry, we heard interest in highlighting what is already happening as examples that others could learn from. One manager shared that they already have a system to storm-water run-off for landscaping and their golf course. Others shared that they have signage to help direct customers in reducing water use while visiting the Mid-Coast. We heard a desire to investigate and understand better what options or solutions might be possible and to be proactive in taking actions to increase water conservation.

2. Conservation actions people already take

There was some disagreement about focusing on individual conservation actions versus other actions that might have a larger impact. Some people shared that they thought it was vital to take individual steps and to inform and educate people about how they might be influencing the region's water. Others thought that addressing larger needs, such as the region's infrastructure, would be more impactful. One person shared, "Infrastructure improvements are needed most. Would stopping restaurants from offering water at table put any kind of dent in water use as compared to water loss related to lacking infrastructure? Don't waste time and money on feel-good solutions. Focus on tangible and impactful solutions."

In the survey people most commonly selected the following ways that they were already conserving water at their home or business:

- I have appliances that save water like a low flow toilet or low flow faucet.
- I have outdoor plants that don't need a lot of water to live.

- I check for water leaks and repair them.

In addition, people selected “I turn off the water when I’m not actively using it while I’m doing things like brushing my teeth or washing dishes” as a common action they took in their homes.

3. Approaches people think would encourage water conservation

People thought that the following actions or incentives might be helpful to them in water conservation:

- Devices that will tell me how much water I’m using (21%)
- Money to help me pay to install equipment that saves water (19%)
- Information that tells me about how much water I’m using compared to others in my community (14%)

When people receive a notice of drought or that they need to restrict water usage due to a drought, they most often take the following two actions:

- I cut back on my daily water use at home like when I clean dishes or bathe. (36%)
- I cut back on how much I water my lawn or my plants. (35%)

Outside of the options that people could choose from, some people also shared that they don’t wash their vehicles or do other kinds of outdoor washing when they receive a drought or water restriction notice.

4. Desire for opportunities to learn more about water quality improvement and water catchment systems

There were a couple of different topics that people expressed interest in learning more. One was regarding water storage and water catchment systems for both homes and businesses. One person shared a common belief, “Seasonal rainwater collection isn’t hard, and as an investment it pays off. Building storage that can carry all usage through the dry season may be impractical, but storing as much as possible makes sense.”

While we heard a lot of interest in water storage, people also shared both confusion and frustration in finding information and clear guidance on rules and regulations regarding collection systems. One person said, “Creo que existe una legislación que limita el almacenamiento de agua. Considero que esa legislación debe ser estudiada de tal manera que ayude a preservar el agua en los tiempos de sequía.” (Rough English translation: “I think there is legislation that limits water storage. I believe that this legislation should be studied in such a way that it helps preserve water in times of drought.”)

In addition to interest in learning more about water collection or storage approaches, 70% of those who own land indicated on the survey that they would be interested in learning about ways to improve water quality on own land.

5. Help in cross-sector efforts

A few people noted in their comments that in general they wanted to see partners in Lincoln County collaborating on water issues. In addition, a major employer in the region shared that when they embarked on efforts to examine how they might conserve water or use water better, they get stuck when they consider a solution or opportunity that requires a broader conversation with multiple entities and sectors.

SECTION 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

During this second phase of community engagement in the Partnership's planning work, the Partnership identified a number of communities they hoped to especially get input from: members of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians, Latinx/a/o and Spanish speaking community members, and business, industry, tourism and hospitality sectors. While different individuals and organizations from these community groups have been involved in the Partnership or in the previous community engagement phase with Oregon's Kitchen Table, the Partnership desired to continue to build relationships, identify areas of shared interest, and understand what people care most about regarding their water.

As the Partnership starts to work on solutions and actions, we recommend that the Partnership consider future opportunities for community engagement, especially as it faces important decisions that impact these particular communities and sectors. Based on these two phases of engagement, we recommend the following approaches:

- The Partnership and the Tribal Council have developed an approach to community engagement over the past two engagement efforts that we recommend serve as an ongoing model for engaging members of the Siletz Tribal. Between phase 1 and phase 2, we saw double the participation rate, indicating success in using this model.
- Focus on in-person opportunities when Covid restrictions ease to build relationships with community organizers and leaders in the Latinx/o/a and Spanish speaking communities. In Phase 1, we were able to do relationship-building in person to make sure we were offering culturally appropriate ways to engage, particularly in settings like local churches and libraries.
- Consider how the Partnership could serve as a community partner through events and opportunities for information sharing about topics that are important both for the Partnership as well as Latinx/o/a community members. The development of the Olalla Center's Arcoiris Cultural, a space and center for resource navigation, arts, culture, and community building, presents possibilities for the Partnership to continue to engage with members of the Latinx, Spanish speaking, and Mam speaking communities.

- Engagement and relationship-building with those in the business, industry, and hospitality and tourism sector will also require time and attention. As with other communities, the return to in-person events and meetings will provide important opportunities to continue to build relationships and learn from each other. Many people pointed to resuming regular association luncheons as spaces for sharing and hearing from business and industry. Others pointed to recent arts and cultural activities
- While some major commercial water users were enthusiastic and shared a desire to be part of the Partnership's efforts, some either did not respond to outreach efforts during this phase or shared that they did not want to engage in any further discussions regarding water usage without consulting with legal counsel. These water users that have had and will likely continue to have a significant impact on water in the region, and the Partnership will need to continue to reach out and engage with major commercial water users in the region.

SECTION 5: CONCLUSION

The results of this engagement provide a sense of the values and beliefs held by those who participated at this particular time around the Mid-Coast Water Action Plan. They also reveal some of the different individual priorities and concerns that people have regarding their water uses and concerns. Across the different forms of engagement, some areas of agreement do emerge. A majority of people who participated want to be part of water planning efforts in some way and are eager to see water needs in the region addressed.

There are also some areas where people hold different values and beliefs, particularly around how much of an impact individual conservation actions can take versus focusing actions that will have larger impacts, such as addressing the City of Newport's water infrastructure or focusing on particular industries.

Across sectors and communities, the interest in action areas like water storage provide the Partnership for further outreach and engagement efforts. These common areas of interest offer opportunities for the Partnership to build relationships and facilitate solutions for the region's water needs.

Appendix A. Annotated Survey Results

Note: Total percentages of responses may not add up to 100% due to rounding

1. How often do you think about how much water you use?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=155
All the time	26%
Often	46%
Sometimes	19%
Rarely	7%
Never	2%

2. How often do you think about how much water other people in your community use?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=154
All the time	10%
Often	39%
Sometimes	28%
Rarely	19%
Never	3%

3. If you own or manage a business in the Mid-Coast, how often do you think about how much water your business uses?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=148
All the time	4%
Often	4%
Sometimes	4%
Rarely	5%
Never	2%
I don't own or manage a business in the Mid-Coast	81%

*21% of business owners across "all the time", "often" and "sometimes". 25% "rarely". 11% "never".

4. Do you swim, fish or do other water activities in the Mid-Coast? Please select all of the activities that you like to do in water in the Mid-Coast.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=622
Swim or wade in the water	16%
Fish	11%
Dig for clams	8%
Kayak	10%
Relax	17%
Spend time with friends or family	18%

Have a picnic or eat a meal	14%
Other...	6%

5. Please share with us where you like to go for these activities. Select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=775
State parks	12%
Devils Lake	4%
Siletz River	13%
Yachats River	5%
Salmon River	5%
Alsea River	6%
Yaquina River	7%
D-River	3%
Estuaries or where rivers and streams meet the ocean	9%
Siletz Bay National Wildlife Refuge	6%
Yaquina Bay	9%
Beaver Creek	6%
Drift-Creek Falls	5%
Oregon Coast Trail	5%
Cooks Ridge Trail	<1%
Eckman Lake	2%
Other...	4%

6. Which of these actions do you want to see the Partnership focus on over the next two years? Please select your top three choices. I want the Partnership to:

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=373
Give me information to understand the region's water challenges. And also help me be part of making decisions about water.	4%
Help water providers coordinate and work together.	4%
Give decision makers the data they need to understand what is taking place with water and water use in the region.	6%
Find and get more funds to pay for our water systems and programs.	8%
Help people or businesses save and re-use water.	10%
Protect and improve the ecosystems of watersheds in the region.	19%
Replace and improve the region's systems that collect and supply water as well as water treatment plants so they are efficient and secure.	17%
Make sure there are enough skilled people to work in our water sector.	5%

Protect the health of the rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, springs, and groundwater that provide water around the region.	22%
Detect more sources of water for our region. This could be from storage, water reuse, or other options.	5%

7. Do you have enough clean, safe water stored at your home if your water gets cut off in an emergency?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=153
Yes	39%
No, but I know where to go to get water in an emergency	31%
No, and I don't know where to go to get water in an emergency	24%
I'm not sure	7%

8. If you own or manage a business in the Mid-Coast, do you have enough clean, safe water stored at your business if your water gets cut off in an emergency?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=147
Yes	5%
No, but I know where to go to get water in an emergency	3%
No, and I don't know where to go to get water in an emergency	7%
I'm not sure	<1%
I don't own or manage a business	84%

**35% of business owners selected Yes, 17% "No, but I know where to go", 43% "No, and I don't know where to go", and 4% "I'm not sure".*

9. Do you think your community has enough clean, safe water stored if water is cut off in an emergency?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=152
Yes	5%
No, but I know where my community can go to get water in an emergency	16%
No, and I don't know where my community can go to get water in an emergency	39%
I'm not sure	39%

10. Please choose the statement that you agree with the most, even if you agree with many or all of them. I would be willing to pay more for my water if I knew that those extra dollars were going to...

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=145
Improve the quality of the water.	5%
Make sure we are prepared to have clean, safe water in case of an emergency.	14%
Create ways we can save or re-use water.	10%
Protect water sources like rivers, springs, or groundwater.	31%
Pay for all of the above.	29%
None of the above.	11%

11. How do you save and reuse water in your home now? Please select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=428
I have appliances that save water like a low flow toilet or low flow faucet.	22%
I have outdoor plants that don't need a lot of water to live.	18%
I have devices that tell me how much water I am using.	3%
I check for water leaks and repair them.	19%
I turn off the water when I'm not actively using it while I'm doing things like brushing my teeth or washing dishes.	30%
None of these	2%
Other...	7%

12. If you own or manage a business, how do you save and reuse water in your business now? Please select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=173
I have appliances that save water like a low flow toilet or low flow faucet.	6%
I have outdoor plants that don't need a lot of water to live.	6%
I have devices that tell me how much water I am using.	1%
I check for water leaks and repair them.	8%
I turn off the water when I'm not actively using it while I'm doing things like brushing my teeth or washing dishes.	3%
I ask my clients or customers to conserve water while on the Mid-Coast like giving water to drink only when they ask or posting signs about conserving water.	3%
I reuse water for other things like landscaping or cooling equipment.	2%
I don't own or manage a business	62%
None of these	5%
Other...	3%

13. What do you think might help you or your business to reuse or save water? Please select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=249
Money to help me pay to install equipment that saves water	19%
Devices that will tell me how much water I'm using	21%
Information that tells me about how much water I'm using compared to other businesses in my community	7%
Information that tells me about how much water I'm using compared to other homes in my community	14%
Changes to my water rates	10%
Ways to invite my clients or visitors to change how they use water when they visit	5%

None of these	2%
Other...	22%

14. How do you change your water use when you receive statements about drought or water shortages? Please select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=295
I cut back on how much I water my lawn or my plants.	35%
I cut back on my daily water use at home like when I clean dishes or bathe.	36%
I reuse water from cooking or cleaning for other things.	10%
I turn to water that I've stored from before like from a rain barrel.	9%
I don't do anything	3%
Other...	7%

15. Are there other ways you think you or your business could save or reuse water that are not listed in any of the questions above? If so, what are they?

Responses to Question 15 available in separate file

16. Would you be interested in learning more about ways to improve the water quality on your own land?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=148
Yes	42%
No	9%
I'm not sure	9%
I don't own any land where I could make changes to the water on it	40%

**70% of those who own land, said they would be interested*

17. Before today how much did you know about the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership's work?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=152
I knew a lot about it	7%
I knew some about it	18%
I knew a little about it	31%
I didn't know about it at all	43%

18. What are the ways you or your community might want to stay informed about water issues on the Mid-Coast? Please select all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=482
Through paper or online surveys	9%
As part of community events that I and others already attend	7%
Through social media like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok or Clubhouse	13%

Through my business or work	3%
Through the Mid-Coast Water Planning Partnership website or emails	13%
Through websites or emails from regional partners, governments or organizations	12%
Through newspaper or radio	9%
From my water bills	13%
From mailings to my address or PO Box	105
At businesses that I visit	3%
Other...	<1%

19. Is there anything else you would like to share about water in our region?

Responses to Question 19 available in separate file

20. Please share how you are part of a community in the Mid-Coast. That is, from Cascade Head to Cape Perpetua. This includes Lincoln County and some parts of Tillamook, Polk, Benton, and Lane Counties. Check all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=349
I live in the Mid-Coast or Lincoln County area.	36%
I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians.	18%
I work in the Mid-Coast or Lincoln County area.	17%
I own or manage a business in the Mid-Coast or Lincoln County area.	4%
I work in a restaurant, hotel, or other job that serves visitors to the Mid-Coast.	3%
I own a home in the Mid-Coast or Lincoln County area, but my main residence is somewhere else.	5%
I visit the Mid-Coast or Lincoln County area but live or work elsewhere.	5%
I'm retired in the Mid-Coast or Lincoln County area.	10%
Other...	3%

**74 paper surveys were submitted by enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians; however, not all of those marked off "I am a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians."*

21. Please check the box next to the community where you get your water. Check just one.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=145
Lincoln City	13%
Depoe Bay	2%
Newport	17%
Siletz	21%
Seal Rock	6%
Yachats	6%

Toledo	6%
Waldport	2%
Kernville-Gleneden-Lincoln Beach	3%
Land outside of a city in the county (not incorporated)	9%
Other...	14%

22. What language do you prefer to get information in?

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=81
English	93%
Spanish	6%

23. Which races and ethnicities do you consider yourself to be? Please mark all that apply.

RESPONSE CATEGORY	N=94
Asian, Pacific Islander	5%
Black, African American, African, Caribbean	2%
Hispanic, Latino/a	12%
Native American, American Indian, Native Alaskan*	4%
Middle Eastern, North African	1%
White/Caucasian	76%

**74 abbreviated paper surveys were submitted by enrolled members of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians that did not include all demographic questions.*