

Oregon Water Resources Department  
**Water Conservation, Reuse and Storage Grant Program**  
Evaluation for September 2, 2008 Applications

**APPLICANT:** Grande Ronde Model Watershed  
**STUDY TYPE:** Storage Other Than Above-Ground (including Aquifer Storage and Recovery [ASR])  
**APPLICATION NO.:** GB0015 09  
**STUDY NAME:** Union and Wallowa Counties Watershed Storage  
**BASIN:** Grande Ronde **WRD DISTRICT:** 6  
**WRD FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$100,000 **TOTAL COST:** \$220,000

**APPLICATION DESCRIPTION:**

The planning study will evaluate the potential applications of managed underground storage techniques in Bear Creek, Lostine River, upper Catherine Creek and the upper Grande Ronde River watersheds. The goals are to determine feasible ways to augment late season stream flows that are currently consumed by irrigation and to help mitigate declining groundwater tables in the upper Grande Ronde Valley. The study will also consider whether artificial recharge can be used in the Bear Creek and Lostine River watersheds, and whether artificial recharge and aquifer storage and recovery options are available in the upper Catherine Creek and upper Grande Ronde River watersheds.

**APPLICATION REVIEW TEAM EVALUATION:**

The Application Review Team was confident that the goals could be achieved, in part because the watershed council is well organized and highly motivated. The team found the feasibility study tasks to be logical and clearly identified. The geology and groundwater resources of the upper Catherine Creek and upper Grande Ronde River watersheds were believed to be better suited to this type of study than the Bear Creek and Lostine River watersheds. The greatest need was also felt to be in the upper Catherine Creek and upper Grande Ronde River watersheds. Consequently, since grant funds were limited the team felt the most benefit would be achieved by funding the upper Catherine Creek and upper Grande Ronde River watersheds studies.

The study is a priority for funding under SB 1069 because it is identified on the Department's statewide water assessment and inventory of potential conservation opportunities. The study could begin on January 1, 2009 and be completed by September 1, 2010.

**Funding Recommendation:** Do Fund: High Priority at \$51,500. Fully fund the studies in the upper Catherine Creek and upper Grande Ronde River watersheds.

**COMMENTS:**

A letter of support for this application was received from Donald G. Sampson, Executive Director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Mr. Sampson indicates that local demands on water resources will continue to increase while threats to endangered fish species will continue. Understanding the potential of aquifers in the Grande Ronde sub basin enhances the opportunities to "assure a plentiful supply of water for farms, fish, and people."

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

**Do Fund at \$48,925;** contingent on contract negotiations to ensure that all provisions of the statute are met. Fully fund the studies in the upper Catherine Creek and upper Grande Ronde River watersheds.

The staff recommendation reflects a 5 percent across the board funding reduction on all studies.

**Commission Action:**

**On December 5, 2008, the Water Resources Commission took action to:**

*“Release funding to all feasibility study applicants the Commission authorized at its’ November 20 meeting, at a level representing 95% of staff recommendations, and move forward with grant agreement negotiations and signatures.”*

**This feasibility study received an award amount of \$46,478.**