Oregon Water Resources Congress

2026 Annual Conference

Best Western Plus Hood River Inn, Hood River, Oregon

DRAFT Agenda

Monday, November 30

1:00-4:30 **Workshop: Funding Opportunities & Tips for Successful Applications** – *Riverview Room*
Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Clean Water Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF);
Oregon Water Resources Dept (OWRD) Water Project Grants and Loans;
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Grants (invited);
U.S Bureau of Reclamation WaterSMART Program;
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service - Q&A only
Energy Trust of Oregon (invited); & Farmers Conservation Alliance

4:00-6:00 Registration Check-in – *Atrium, Gorge Building*

Tuesday, December 1 – *All Events in Gorge Building unless noted*

7:15 Registration Check-in

8:00 ***Welcome – OWRC President Bruce Scanlon, Ochoco Irrigation District***

8:10 **Perspectives on Managing Drought, Major Infrastructure Projects, & Other Challenges**
Speakers TBD

9:00 **Weather Predictions & Water Supply Outlook for 2027**
Leah Pope, NOAA National Weather Service

9:45 *Break – Trillium Room*

10:15 ***Message from U.S. Senator Ron Wyden*** *(Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee)*

10:20 **Key Updates from Oregon's Natural Resources Agencies**
Leah Feldon, Director, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) (invited)
Ivan Gall, Director, Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD)
Lisa Hanson, Director, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) (invited)

11:15 **Counteracting Myths with Fact Based Media**
Adam Ratliff, the Armchair Engineer

12:00 ***General Lunch*** *– Gorge Room*
District Directors' Lunch *– (For District Board Members) – Shoreline Room*
Water Attorneys' Lunch *– (Open to Attorneys attending conference) – Riverview Room*
Office Staff Lunch – *(Open to all district office staff) – Table in Gorge Room*

1:10 ***Keynote Speaker: Dustin Sherer, Senior Advisor to the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, U.S Department of Interior*** *(invited)*

1:45 **Reusing Every Drop: Barriers & Opportunities for Recycled Water Projects with Districts**
Mark Cullington, Kennedy Jenks (invited)
Other Speakers TBD

2:35 ***Message from U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley,*** *(Chair of Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, & Related Agencies)*

2:45 *Break – Trillium Room*

3:10 ***Message from U.S. Congressman Cliff Bentz*** *(CD-2, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, & Fisheries, House Natural Resources Committee; House Committee on Energy & Commerce)*

3:15 **Report from Washington, DC: A Look Back at 2026 & What to Expect in 2027**
Lane Dickson, OWRC Federal Lobbyist, The Ferguson Group
Congressional Staff, TBD

4:10-5:10 **Federal Affairs Committee Meeting** – *Riverview Room (in hotel building)*
Join the FAC for an in-depth discussion of federal activities and help inform OWRC's draft federal program priorities for 2027

5:00-7:00 **Exhibitors' Reception** – *Trillium Room*

8:30-11:00 **OWRC Hospitality Suite – Riverside Suites #1 & #3**

Wednesday, December 2 – *all meetings in Gorge Building unless noted*

7:15 ***OWRC Members Only Breakfast***

8:15 **Annual Membership Meeting – *Current OWRC Members Only***
Includes Board Elections

9:30 *Break – Trillium Room*

10:10 ***Message from U.S. Congresswoman Andrea Salinas*** *(CD-6, House Agriculture Committee)*

10:15 **Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO) in the Willamette Basin & Beyond**
Andy Smith, U.S Army Corps of Engineers

11:10 **Understanding Crop Evapotranspiration, Consumptive Use, & Water Evaporation Data: Limitations & Potential Uses in Oregon**
Dr. Justin Huntington, Desert Research Institute (invited)

12:00 ***General Lunch***

1:00 ***Keynote Speaker: Aubrey Bettencourt, Principal Deputy Commissioner, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation*** *(invited)*

1:45 ***Message from U.S. Congresswoman Val Hoyle*** *(CD-4, Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, & Fisheries, House Natural Resources Committee; House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee)*

1:50 **Legal Updates and Recent Cases Impacting Irrigated Agriculture**
Kirk Maag, Stoel Rives LLP
Marika Sitz, Jordan Ramis PC

2:45 *Break – Trillium Room*

3:15 **SDAO Best Practices for District Board Members & District Managers**
Frank Stratton, Executive Director, Special Districts Association of Oregon (SDAO)
Other Speakers TBD

5:00 *Program Adjourns*

5:15 **Reception** *(with no-host bar) – Gorge Room*

6:15 **OWRC & Oregon Water Resources Foundation (OWRF) Dinner Banquet** – *Gorge Room*
Join us for our annual banquet dinner and program. The program will include OWRF 2026 scholarship recipients, silent auction, raffle prizes, awards, entertainment, & more!

9:00-11:30 **OWRC Hospitality Suite – Riverside Suites #1 & #3**