

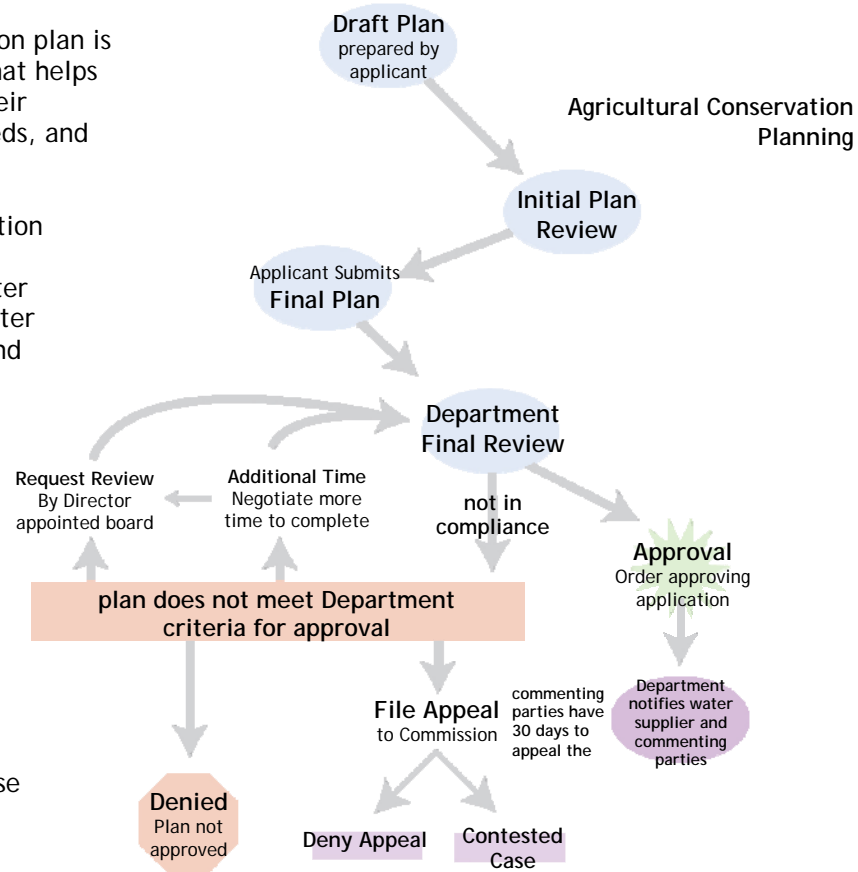
# Program Overview

The State of Oregon's agricultural conservation plan is a voluntary program that helps water suppliers examine their supply, demand, future needs, and water conservation tools.

By using this process, irrigation districts—and other agricultural water suppliers—can create a “water budget” for their current and future needs.

This water budget along with projected future demands on the system helps to clarify how much water is needed to meet current and future needs. Analysis and application of appropriate conservation tools may lead to an increase in available water supplies.

Some examples of conservation options include: promotion of energy audits, conversion to a metered pressurized system, piping or lining of canals, increased flexibility of deliveries, modifications of distribution facilities, or changes in price structure.



*The Conservation Planning Process provides an opportunity for public comment as well as an appeal process including review by the Water Resources Commission.*



State of Oregon  
Water Resources Department  
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A  
Salem, OR 97301

# Agricultural Planning Program

Instream Enhancement, Conservation, and Stewardship Programs

Conservation and Management Plans for Oregon's Agricultural Water Use

Program overview and diagram



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[www.wrd.state.or.us](http://www.wrd.state.or.us)

## Irrigation Districts

The agricultural industry in Oregon is supported through a variety of water-related districts whose main purposes are either to supply water to where it is needed or to drain excess water.

One such entity, the irrigation district, works with state and federal agencies to prepare agricultural water management and conservation plans. Formed to deliver water, irrigation districts in Oregon vary in structure, size, purpose, and history.

According to a 1990 study by the United States Geological Survey, irrigation accounts for up to 87% of the state's water withdrawals. As Oregon's population grows and water supplies become more scarce, irrigation has come under increasing scrutiny for the amount of water used.

Growing concern for the efficient use of water has resulted in a program to develop water management and conservation plans by irrigation districts.



*Center Pivot Irrigation*

## Conservation Planning

The water management and conservation program, under Chapter 690, Division 86 of the Oregon



*Flow Gage*

Administrative Rules (OAR), has been developed as a framework for both municipalities and agricultural water suppliers. The water management and conservation plans examine ways to manage both demand and supply side opportunities to fulfill current and future water supply needs.

### Goals

The goals of the water management and conservation program include stabilizing water supplies to serve existing water rights, restoring streamflows, and providing for future economic growth.

Other concerns include providing adequate streamflows to protect aquatic life, to provide recreational opportunities, and to maintain water quality.

## Requirements

While the agricultural conservation program is largely voluntary, some actions require plans under Oregon law. For example, if a district wants to transfer water rights from one district user to another to prevent forfeiture of water rights, a conservation plan must be in place.

In the event of a drought, the Governor may require a conservation plan or a drought curtailment policy. If a plan is not submitted within thirty days, a plan may be written for the water supplier and any necessary regulation carried out. If a district has an approved plan in place, the emergency requirement is waived.

In times of shortage, and approved drought curtailment component of the conservation plan allows water suppliers more flexibility in managing their water supplies. The available tools include temporary changes in type of use, place of use, or point of diversion.



*Flood Irrigation*



*Weather Station*

## Federal Planning

Beyond the State plan, the federal government requires new or updated water conservation plans every five years from irrigation districts that contract with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau).

The Bureau has agreed to follow Oregon's guidelines for conservation plans as the state guidelines cover their minimum requirements.

The Bureau is also providing funding for a number of irrigation districts to assist in timely completion of their conservation plans.

### For more information

For more information about funding and planning agricultural conservation and management plans, contact:

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation

Oregon Water Resources Department

Oregon Department of Agriculture