

Morrow-Umatilla Counties Drinking Water Roadmap



Frequently Asked Questions

Who is leading the Drinking Water Roadmap?

Through a joint effort between Morrow and Umatilla Counties, the Drinking Water Roadmap Project (“Roadmap Project”) was launched in 2024 to develop safe and reliable drinking water solutions for domestic well users. The Roadmap Project is funded through a research grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and is being managed by the Morrow County Planning Director (“Principal Investigator” under the EPA grant) with a consultant team led by GSI Water Solutions, Inc. to deliver the work.

What area is the project covering?

The Roadmap Project covers the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA), which includes northern portions of Morrow and Umatilla Counties. A map of the study area is shown on www.co.morrow.or.us/planning/page/water

What is the project’s schedule?

The Roadmap Project is being conducted in four stages over 2 ½ years. Stage 1 began in spring 2024 and focused on developing workplans, initial data gathering, preliminary outreach, and conducting baseline assessments of the study area. The final stage will culminate in summer 2026 with completion of a “Drinking Water Action Plan” that will present recommendations for implementing long-term solutions.

What are the anticipated outcomes?

The primary outcome for this research project is to identify long-term drinking water solutions for domestic well users in specific areas of the LUBGWMA affected by nitrate contamination in groundwater. It should be emphasized that the Roadmap Project will not include any “final decisions” on which alternative to implement, but it will provide a feasibility study of drinking water alternatives that includes possible paths forward for decision-makers to consider.

Feasibility of drinking water alternatives will consider technical, financial and legal factors, and public input obtained during public meetings. The project is being delivered in four stages, with each stage having at least one formal public engagement meeting (in addition to the Steering Committee meetings). Stage 1 includes a public meeting to discuss the well sampling objectives of the project. Stages 2 and 3 will each include a public meeting to describe the drinking water options being evaluated during that stage and to solicit public input on those options. Stage 4 will include a public meeting to discuss potential paths forward for the drinking water options at the studied areas. The specific timing of the meetings will be determined as each stage begins.

How are costs considered to well owners and residents for drinking water alternatives?

The scope of work and budget for the Roadmap Project will only allow a high-level (conceptual) planning assessment of costs to implement the drinking water alternatives. The intent is to provide a basis for comparing the relative costs of the alternatives to the well owners/residents, and to help identify funding needs for implementation. The information will be used as part of the feasibility assessment, and to let the county commissioners, county staff, and public understand cost implications associated with options. For example, the Drinking Water Action Plan will identify the need for a detailed water rate study as any alternative moves forward with implementation.



Morrow and Umatilla Counties are leading this project to develop long-term drinking water options in cooperation with state agencies.



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What opportunities do the well owners and general public have to engage with this project?

The Roadmap project includes the following opportunities for public participation: (1) all Steering Committee meetings are open to the public with meeting materials posted to the Morrow County website for the project; (2) the consultant team will be conducting public outreach activities and scheduling specific domestic well owners/residents identified for well sampling, during which project status is shared; and (3) the consultant team is scoped to conduct four public engagement meetings at key milestones of the project to update the public and solicit input on work to-date.

Outreach materials will be made available to announce the specific opportunities for public participation. Stage 2 in particular includes tasks to enhance the Morrow County website to improve accessibility and visibility for the project. The consultant team will also establish an email distribution list for sending project updates and announcements.

Because the Steering Committee meetings are intended to be “work sessions” between the consultant team and committee members, the meetings are scheduled based on their availability and convenience. However, the meetings are open to the public and provides an opportunity for the public to get a project update and to ask questions. Any questions or request for additional information regarding the steering committee can be sent to:

Tamra Mabbott
Morrow County Planning Director
tmabbott@morrowcounty.gov

Joseph P. Fiumara, MSEH, REHS
Umatilla County Public Health Director
joseph.fiumara@umatillacounty.gov

Is this project the same as the safe water services provided by the Oregon Health Authority and Public Health Departments?

This work is separate from the safe water services you are getting from OHA and its state and county public health department partners, and will not affect your access to well water testing, treatment and/or water delivery to make sure residents are drinking and cooking with clean water today.

Who can I contact to learn more about this project?

To learn more or if you have any questions about the Drinking Water Roadmap, please contact:

Morrow County Public Health
(541) 676-5421
apineyro@co.morrow.or.us

Umatilla County Public Health
(541) 278-6394
Health@umatillacounty.gov

Get Your Well Sampled!

If you’re living within this project area and rely on a well for drinking water, you are eligible for free sampling. If you are interested in learning more about our work or would like to schedule a time to get your well sampled, connect with us below.

Fill out this form at:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/welltesting

OR

Scan this QR Code



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