



## WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH GRANT PROPOSAL

**Project ID:** 2002OR7B

**Title:** Remote Collaborations: Lateral Learning in Transboundary Water Conflicts

**Project Type:** Information Transfer

**Focus Categories:** Law, Institutions, and Policy, Management and Planning

**Keywords:** Water Conflict Prevention and Resolution, Lateral learning

**Start Date:** 02/15/2002

**End Date:** 02/14/2003

**Federal Funds:** \$15,000

**Non-Federal Matching Funds:** \$30,764

**Congressional District:** Oregon 5th

**Principal Investigator:**

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**Abstract**

One critical hindrance to sustainability in long-term water management is the fact that, as water use intensifies, so too does the potential for conflict between users. These disputes become more acute in transboundary settings, defined as water being shared by any sets of interests, be they political, economic, or legal. Conflicts over shared water resources occur at multiple scales, from sets of individual irrigators, to urban versus rural uses, to nations that straddle international waterways. Transboundary waters share certain characteristics that make their management especially complicated, most notable of which is that these basins require a more-complete understanding of the political, cultural, and social aspects of water, and that integrated management is dependent on extremely intricate awareness of the decision-making process.

An explicit dialog between the local and international settings of transboundary water dispute would offer opportunities for lateral learning, provide perspective to actors within both communities, and spark thinking about creative solutions.

Within this context, we are proposing to hold a one-day workshop, as well as follow up activities, to bring international researchers and Oregon academics and practitioners together in a unique learning environment to focus on a critical, yet underplayed aspect of water resource management -- the role of water conflict, its mediation, resolution, and prevention. This workshop will provide an opportunity for lateral learning between Oregon researchers and professionals and their international counterparts. Project output will include:

1. A White Paper on Water Conflict Policy. A working document suggesting policy directions that serves as a platform for further research, technological investment, education, and training on water conflict issues for Oregon and elsewhere.
2. Progress toward Partnership goals toward Oregon, including the following areas:

- Data Accumulation: Broaden existing datasets of conflict to include Oregon specific data
- Coordinated Research: Create a database of Oregon researchers and publications that can be made readily available and quickly mobilized to assess and resolve future conflict
- Graduate and Professional Certification: Improve curriculum to meet the needs of Oregon and regional water professionals to deal with conflict (graduate and professional curriculum development)
- Training Program. Develop tools in education and outreach for community leaders and the public

3. Creation of transboundary water website, linking workshop participant institutions, publications, and workshop results

Potential beneficiaries cover a broad swath of the state, including water managers, agriculturists, environmentalists, and academics. Both Senators Wyden and Smith have been directly involved crafting legislation to mediate conflict in the Klamath Basin, indicating the potential interest of policymakers at the highest levels.