

A research program to inform policy development and guide decision-making

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There is a need for an interdisciplinary research community that can help inform policy development, facilitate improved understanding of the dynamic human dimensions of critical environmental problems, and guide decision-making under conditions of rapid change and high uncertainty in the Pacific Northwest. A comprehensive program that will effectively promote research and collaboration to inform policy must include innovative, interdisciplinary training of water resource professionals, access to a broad range of physical, environmental and social data that are required for informed management of water resources, development of partnerships to enhance institutional capacity for addressing water-related issues, and research on water governance. Here we describe efforts at Oregon State University to assist in the development of such a comprehensive program in the Pacific Northwest, including education, action and facilitation of cooperation, development of databases and partnerships, as well as case studies at different scales, illustrating how these approaches can be used to inform policy in the Pacific Northwest, regionally and internationally.