



Feedback on ODW Customer Service

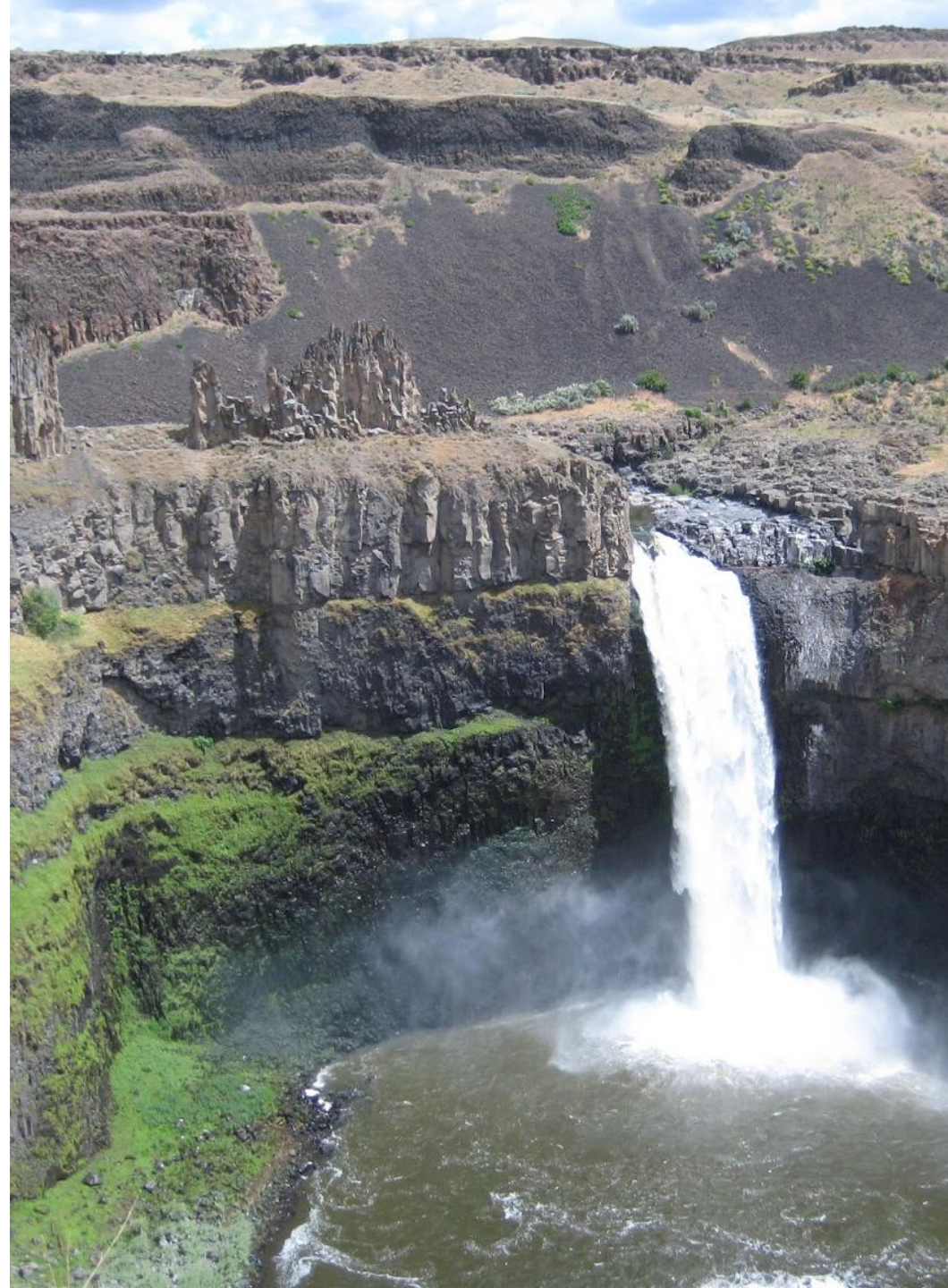
Drinking Water Advisory Group

December 1, 2025

Purpose: Determine what feedback to collect for a statewide water system survey

Laura Heinse – Performance Management and Quality Improvement Specialist

- Where do we (ODW) add value
- Demographics
- Understanding primacy and roles
- Customer service performance
- Resource priorities
- Fairness across Washington



Palouse Falls

Where Do We (ODW) Add Value

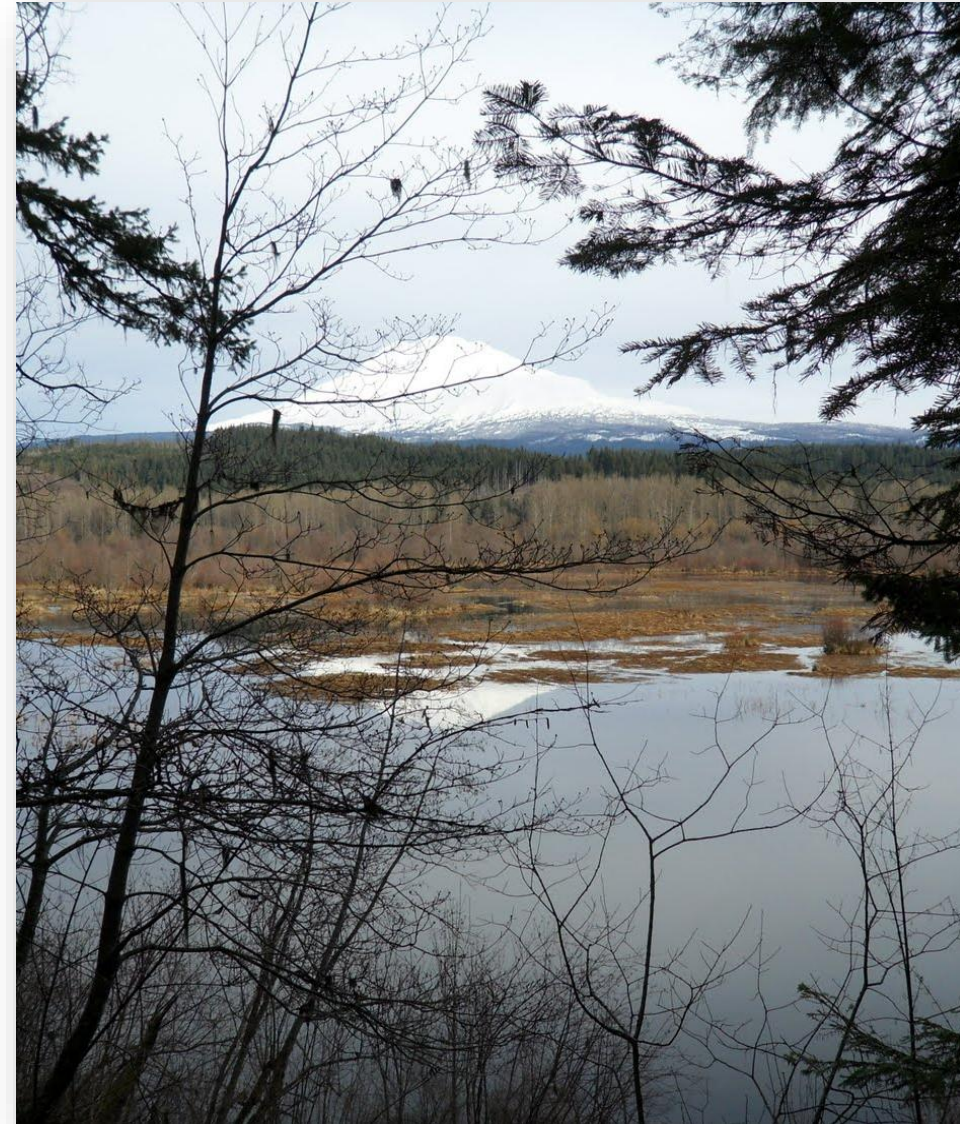
In a couple of words, where does ODW provide the most value to your system?

See link in chat, scan QR code, or go to [slido.com](https://www.slido.com) and submit the code below.

Your answer is anonymous. You may submit multiple answers.



Join at
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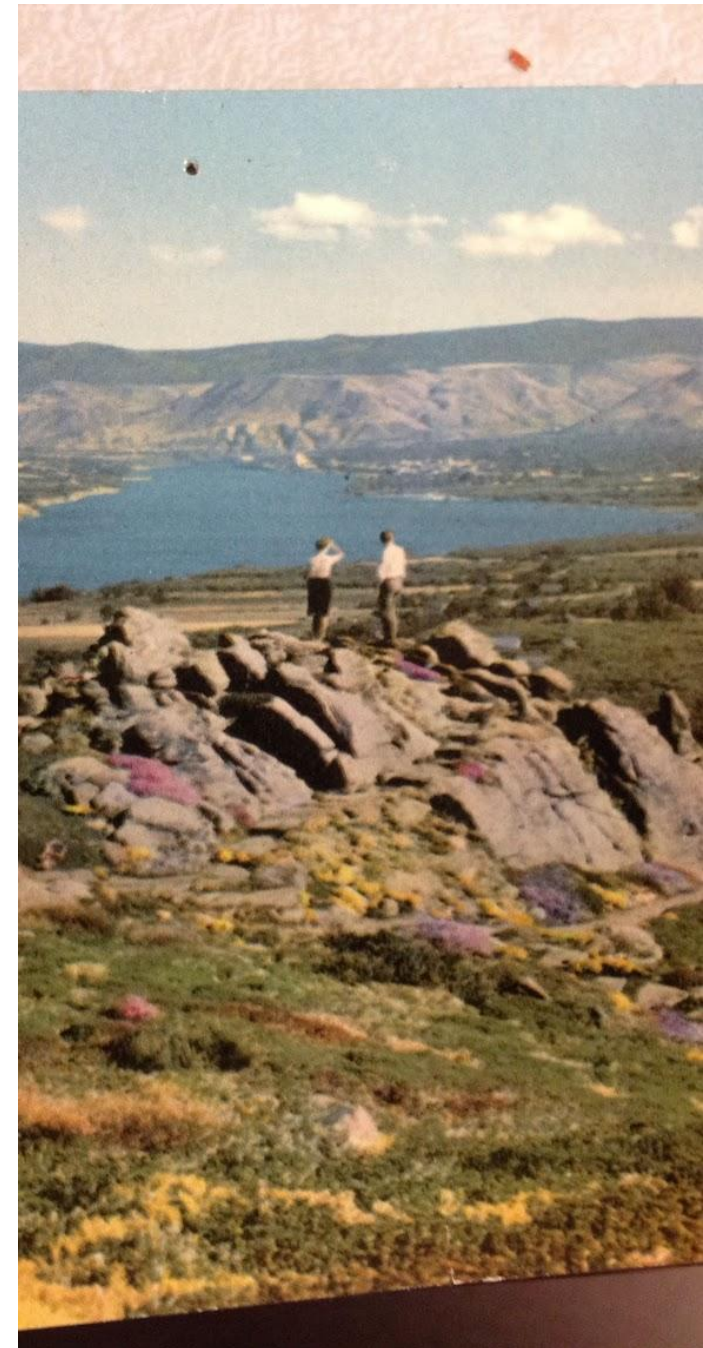
Where Do We (ODW) Add Value

Phone Support & Technical Assistance

- Responded to **~1,000 calls**; **70% TA** (regulatory guidance, forms, Sentry help, compliance support)
- Delivered **targeted operator support** (certification, monitoring schedules, well flow testing)
- Ensured **accurate referrals** to ODW programs, LHJs, Ecology & Public Disclosure
- Provided **emergency preparedness guidance** and distributed required documents/maps/forms

Complaint Response & Consumer Support

- Handled **~150 consumer complaints**; **70% with direct TA**
- Coordinated investigations with operators, engineers, LHJs
- Supported **Boil Water Advisories** & public notifications (content, timelines, reporting)
- Conducted **risk evaluations** (manganese, iron, arsenic, lead, coliform) & follow-up sampling



Where Do We (ODW) Add Value

Emergency Response (24/7/365)

- Maintained full **on-call coverage** nights, weekends, and holidays
- Responded to **28 Tier 1 Public Health Advisories**
- Assisted with **111 voluntary health advisories** (depressurizations, outages, contamination events)

Sanitary Surveys

- Completed **756 sanitary surveys** statewide
- **351 community system surveys**, with **215 completed by ODW staff**
- Partnered with LHJs and third-party surveyors to meet 3- and 5-year requirements

Capacity Building (Technical Assistance)

- Delivered ~ **38,000 hours** of technical assistance across **43 staff**



Customer Service

In a couple of words, how can ODW improve our customer service?

See link in chat, scan QR code, or go to slido.com and submit the code below.

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Anonymous Draft Survey

<https://forms.office.com/g/ekxa3wGBNh>



Demographics

What type of water system do you most commonly work with?



Customer Service Performance



“Rate ODW on the following customer service attributes:”
(1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent)

- Timeliness
- Consistency
- Responsiveness
- Fairness & equity across systems
- Clarity of expectations
- Professionalism/courtesy
- Helpfulness in identifying risk

Resource Priorities

“Given limited staff and increasing failing systems, which ODW activities should be the TOP priorities?”

(Drag-and-rank)

- Technical assistance
- Sanitary surveys
- Engineering plan review
- Enforcement / compliance work
- Emergency response
- Funding guidance
- Rule adoption & regulatory clarity
- Public communication support



Icicle Creek

Fairness Across Washington

“Do you feel ODW applies standards consistently across the state?”

- Yes
- Mostly
- Sometimes
- No
- Not sure

Understanding Primacy and Roles

“How well do you understand ODW’s regulatory responsibilities under primacy?”



Next Steps and Further Feedback

- Review DWAG input
- Gather input from ODW staff and partners
- Draft electronic survey with DOH guidance

Contact me at laura.heinse@doh.wa.gov

A nighttime photograph of a harbor. In the foreground, the dark silhouette of a boat's mast and rigging is visible on the left. The water is dark, reflecting the lights from the city in the background. The city skyline includes a prominent building with a lit-up dome, likely a state capitol building, and other illuminated structures. The sky is a deep twilight blue with some light clouds. The overall mood is quiet and scenic.

Questions?

RESULTS: Overview of Key Themes

- ODW's ideal role in supporting water systems
- Expectations beyond ODW's primacy authority
- Opportunities to improve customer service
- Additional questions/data to collect in future surveys
- Strategies to reach a diverse, representative sample



Palouse Falls

RESULTS: Where Do We (ODW) Add Value

In a couple words, where does ODW provide the most value to your system?

Your answer is anonymous. You may submit multiple answers.

Review answers 37 >



RESULTS: Customer Service

In a couple words, how can ODW improve our customer service?



RESULTS: Demographics

Responses

37



Average Time

06:40



Duration

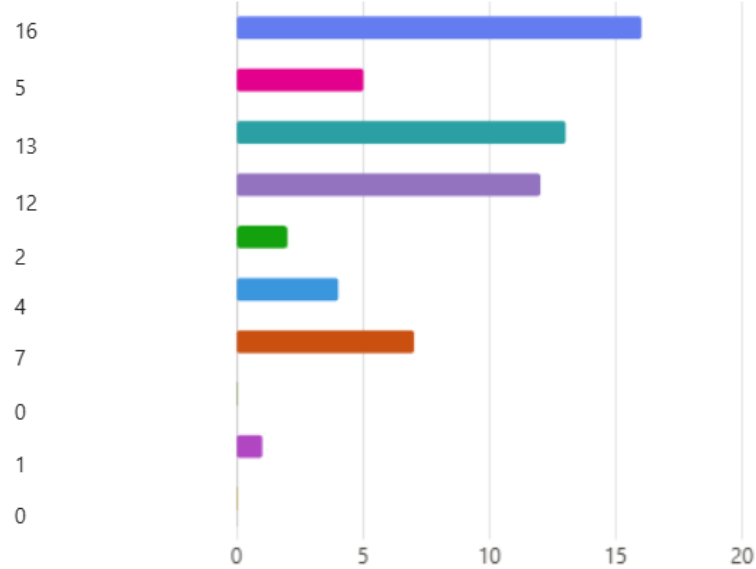
0 Days



1. Demographics: What type of water system do you most commonly work with? (Multiple answers allowed.)

[More details](#)

- Community system with 1,000 or more connections
- Community system between 500- 1,000 connections
- Community systems between 100 – 500 connections
- Community system less than 100 connections
- SMA owning multiple systems
- NTNC or TNC
- Group B
- Special Group – State Parks, Forest Service, etc.
- N/A
- Other



Draft Water System and Partners Survey

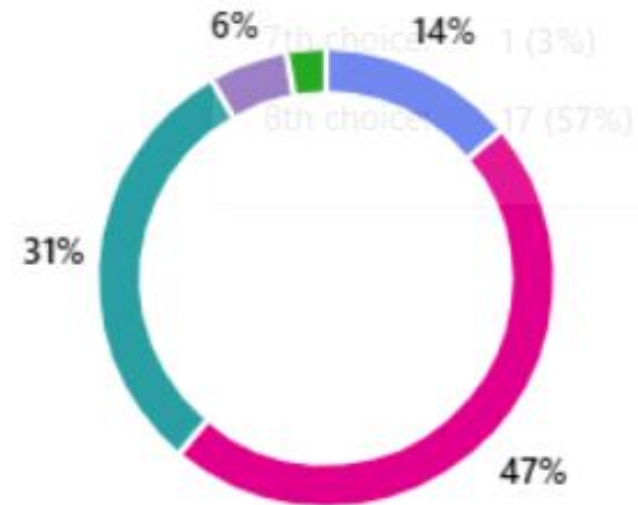


RESULTS: Primacy Understanding

5. How well do you understand ODW's regulatory responsibilities under primacy?

[More details](#)

● Extremely well	5
● Somewhat well	17
● Neutral	11
● Somewhat not well	2
● Extremely not well	1

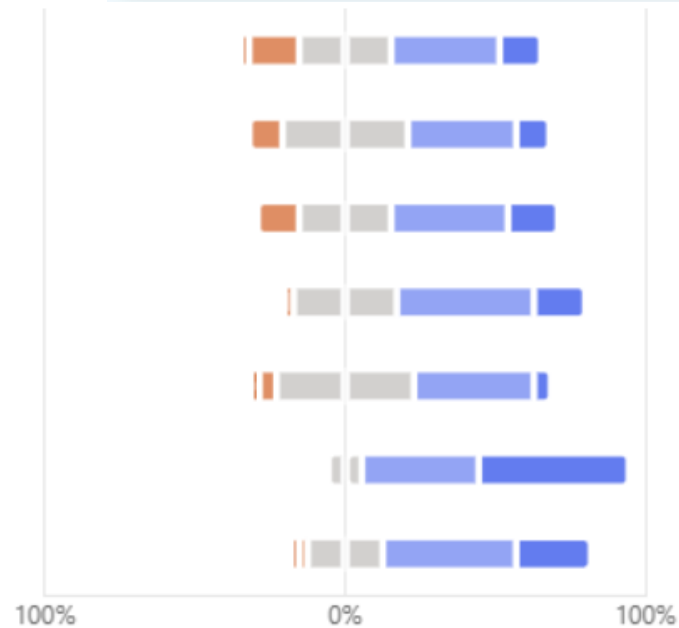


RESULTS: Customer Service

3. Rate ODW on the following customer service attributes (1 = Poor, 5 = Excellent)

● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5

Timeliness
Consistency
Responsiveness
Fairness & equity across systems
Clarity of expectations
Professionalism / courtesy
Helpfulness in identifying risk



4. Given limited staff and increasing failing systems, which ODW activities should be the TOP priorities?

[More details](#)



RESULTS: Respondents' View of ODW's Core Role

- Collaborative partner in protecting public health
- Provide timely, clear technical assistance & regulatory guidance
- Support compliance, TMF capacity, and informed decision-making
- Deliver system-specific guidance—not one-size-fits-all



White Salmon post damn removal

RESULTS: Additional Role Expectations

- Emergency response, design review, sanitary surveys
- Help clarify new rules & regulatory updates
- Offer funding navigation (SRF) and problem-solving support
- Provide consistent statewide expectations and communication



Icicle Creek

RESULTS: Expectations that Go Beyond ODW's Regulatory Role

- Expanded technical assistance and future planning support
- Act as intermediary with public & LHJs
- Stronger leadership when EPA guidance lags
- Additional public notification guidance
- Ensure regulatory approaches feel feasible and science-based



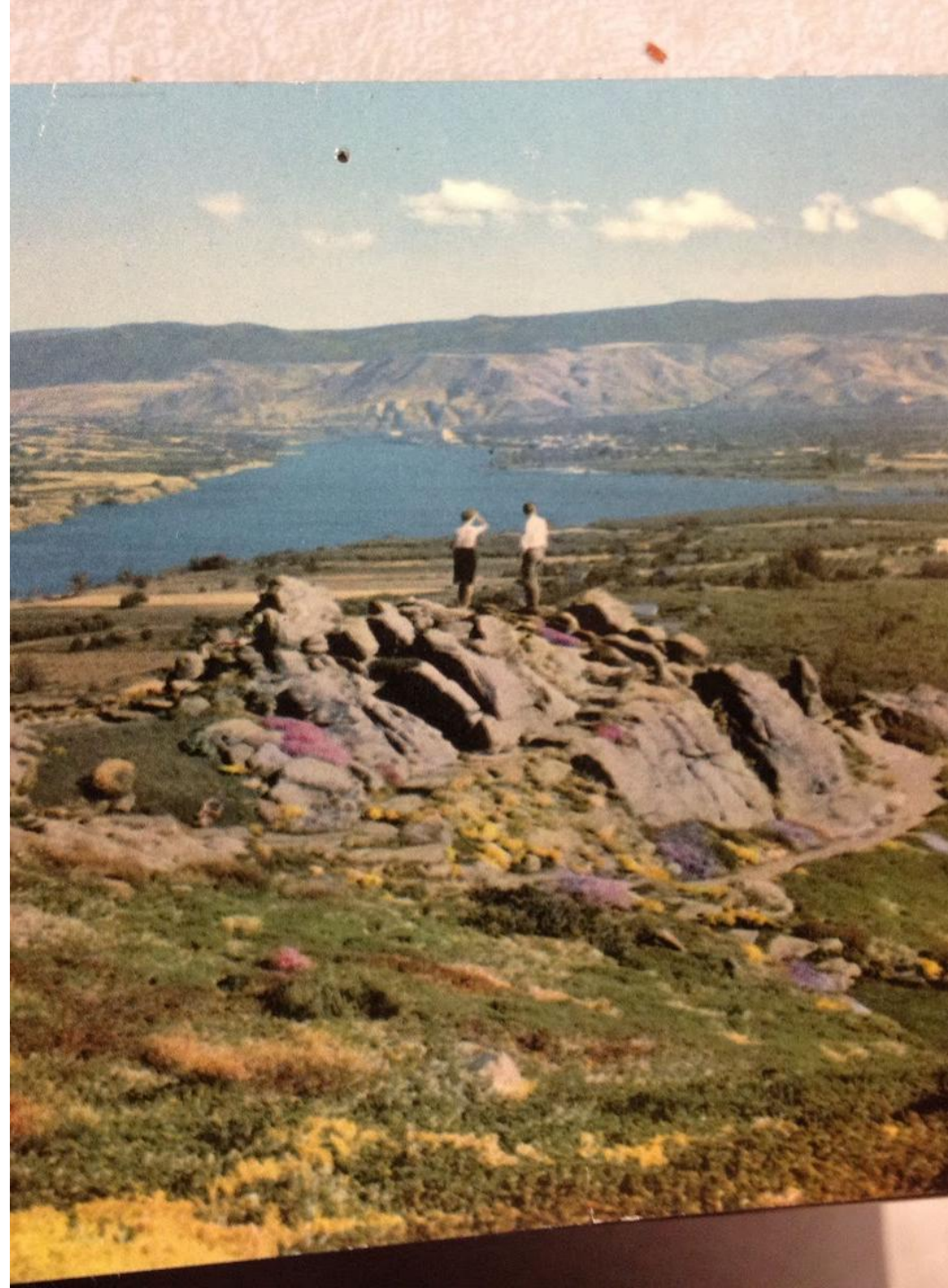
RESULTS: How ODW Can Improve Customer Service

- Faster response times and improved availability
- More consistent statewide guidance; streamlined processes
- Updated guidance documents & clearer communication
- Transparent review timelines and webpage updates
- Better continuity between programs (reduce “kingdoms”)
- Staff retention and stronger local presence
- Better contact pathways for operators
- More FAQs, PFAS matrices, and tools to support compliance
- Biannual feedback opportunities



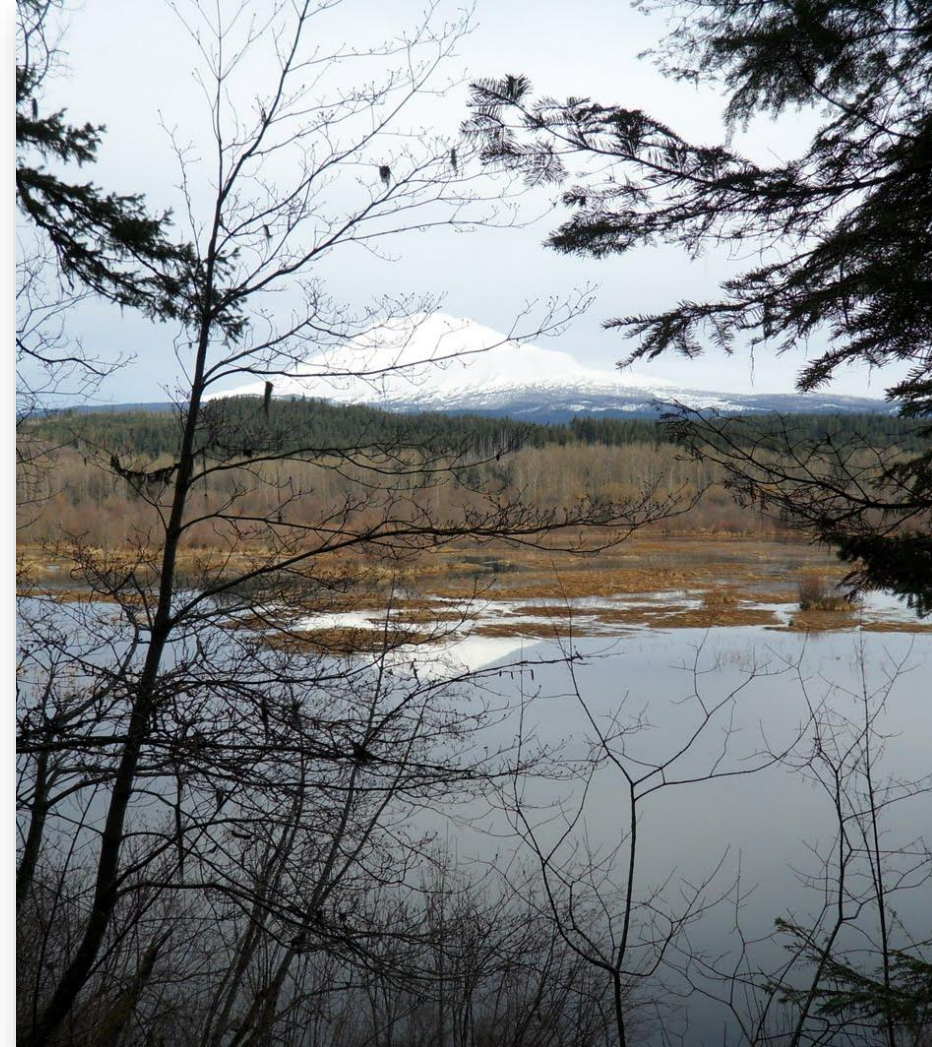
RESULTS: What Future Surveys Should Ask

- Respondent demographics (role, org type, system size, years in WA)
- Community data: MHI, PFAS costs/impacts, conservation metrics
- Types of TA received
- Clear definitions (timeliness vs. responsiveness)
- Open-ended: “What do you appreciate?” & “What should change?”
- Clarify what “diverse” means (economic, social, geographic, size)



RESULTS: Reaching Diverse and Representative Systems

- Use multiple channels: email, phone, mailers, on-site visits
- Leverage regional engineers for direct, personal outreach
- Partner with rural water associations, utility districts, Tribes
- Collect surveys at CEU trainings & in-person events
- Include survey links in guidance documents
- Focus on smaller systems to increase representation



RESULTS: Summary and Next Steps

- Feedback highlights need for responsiveness, consistency, and clarity
- Systems want partnership, feasible requirements, and timely guidance
- Next: refine survey, expand outreach, and strengthen statewide alignment

