On February 6, 2016, graduate students of Portland State University and Oregon State University joined together to take an in-depth look at the integrated water management within the Clackamas River Basin with transportation generously funded by the Institute for Water and Watersheds. We began at the North Clackamas County Water Commission Water Treatment Center, which currently services 300,000 residents in the area. Christine Hollenbeck and Joe Rogers demonstrated the plant’s gravity filtration system and its supplementary membrane filtration system, a state-of-the-art process that can provide up to 20,000 gallons per day for the area’s residents. These systems are carefully maintained to adapt and provide high quality water during any river flow condition.

Our second stop was the Portland General Electric (PGE) Clackamas River Hydroelectric Project in Estacada, Oregon. John Esler and Tim Shibahara led the group through the River Mill Dam, the Faraday Dam and Powerhouse and the North Fork Dam system where discussion ranged from fisheries management to collaboration, stakeholder investment, and ingenuity for finding sustainable solutions to balance resource protection and power needs into the future. The Clackamas watershed serves as a cornerstone in salmon restoration and the Faraday Dam’s salmon diversion system is a one-of-a-kind facility that allows for adaptive management of salmon populations and both up and down stream fish passage on the Clackamas River.

The final stop of the tour was a drive up the headwaters of the USFS Clackamas River Ranger District to where the Collawash River meets the Clackamas River. USFS Fisheries Biologist, Tom Horning, led discussion on source water protection and watershed management. This final stop emphasized the themes of the day and how diverse user groups can be effectively brought together within the unique natural system of the Clackamas River through the continuous work of many dedicated individuals.