

**BEFORE THE WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
OF THE
STATE OF OREGON**

In the Matter of the 2024 Annual	)	PROPOSED ORDER
Allocation of Groundwater in the	)	NOT ALLOCATING GROUNDWATER
Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area,	)	AND OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING
Subarea H,	)	
Under Water Right	)	
Certificate 85257,	)	
Umatilla County, Oregon	)	

C/O Moneta Woollard
Branstetter Ranch
61306 Crooked Creek Rd
La Grande OR 97850-5296

Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 537.730 and 537.735 establish the process by which the Water Resources Commission may designate an area of the state as a critical groundwater area (CGWA). Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) Chapter 690, Division 507 implements the statutes in the Umatilla Basin and provides the Department procedures and criteria for the purpose of managing the groundwater resource and evaluating requests for allocation of groundwater.

AUTHORITY

- 1) OAR 690-507-0750 states in pertinent part that the Director issued an order on May 15, 1991 declaring the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area. The order described the exterior boundaries and divided the area with eight subareas for the purpose of managing the groundwater resource. The response of ground-water levels to pumpage in each subarea is largely independent of pumpage within other subareas.
- 2) OAR 690-507-0770 states in pertinent part that the use of water from the basalt groundwater reservoir within the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area shall be limited to the sustainable annual yield. Water from the basalt groundwater reservoir in the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area shall be used for irrigation only during the irrigation season. The irrigation season shall begin on the 1st of March and end on the 30th of November. The Department shall not accept any new applications for appropriation of water from the basalt groundwater reservoir within the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area.
- 3) OAR 690-507-0780 states in pertinent part that appropriation of groundwater from the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area is prohibited unless the water user meets certain requirements. A water user authorized by OAR 690-507-0810 to pump water from the basalt groundwater reservoir shall satisfy the following conditions:
 - a) Wells shall have an access port with a minimum diameter of 3/4 inch. The access shall be adequate to determine the water level at any time (OAR 690-507-0780(2)(a)).

- b) A water user may install a functioning airline with a pressure gauge in addition to the access port. The airline shall be calibrated and yield accurate data. The airline shall not enter the well through the access port. The airline shall be adequate to determine the water level at any time (OAR 690-507-0780(2)(b)).
 - c) A water user shall install and maintain a totalizing flow meter on each well authorized by OAR 690-507-0810 except wells authorized for irrigation of ten acres or less. The meter shall meet the requirements of OAR 690-507-0785 (OAR 690-507-0780(2)(c)).
 - d) If a flow meter is required, a water user shall record flow meter and power meter readings on a weekly basis at times when water is being used. The water user shall use forms provided by the Department and shall mail the readings to the Department in Salem by December 1st of the same year. The Department may accept other power-use information from a water user in lieu of weekly powermeter readings. Acceptable power-use information may include, but is not limited to, copies of monthly statements provided by the water user or directly by the utility (OAR 690-507-0780(3)).
 - e) A water user shall report broken flow meters to the watermaster in Pendleton within 48 hours after determining that the flow meter is broken. A water user shall not appropriate for more than 60 days without an operating flow meter. While the flow meter is broken, the water user shall record daily the hours the pump operates, the power meter reading and the time the power meter was read. The water user shall mail the data to the Department in Salem within one week of the installation of the repaired or replacement flow meter. The data shall include a statement of the initial reading on the newly installed flow meter and the current power meter reading. The water user shall notify the watermaster within 48 hours of installing the repaired or replacement flow meter (OAR 690-507-0780(4)).
 - f) A water user shall notify the Department in Salem or the watermaster in Pendleton prior to commencing any repair or modification work on a pump or well. If emergency repairs are required at times that preclude prior Department notification, a water user shall notify the Department by 5 p.m. on the first business day following commencement of the repair work. A water user shall mail a description of the repair or modification work to the Department within ten days of the completion of the repair or modification (OAR 690-507-0780(5)).
- 4) OAR 690-507-0790 states in pertinent part that each of the subareas in the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area shall be managed according to the sustainable annual yield within that subarea. The Department shall refine the sustainable annual yield value over time through the use of pumpage data and the response of groundwater levels. The initial sustainable annual yield for each of the seven managed subareas in the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area was determined using data from the 1980 through the 1989 irrigation seasons and is listed below:
- | | | |
|---|--------|------------|
| A | 11,450 | Acre Feet. |
| B | 200 | Acre Feet. |
| C | 400 | Acre Feet. |
| D | 3,250 | Acre Feet. |
| F | 200 | Acre Feet. |
| G | 2,750 | Acre Feet. |
| H | 8,850 | Acre Feet. |
- 5) OAR 690-507-0810 states in pertinent part that the method for distributing the sustainable annual

yield from the basalt groundwater reservoir within each managed subarea in the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area is as follows:

- a) A water user who intends to pump water for any authorized use except municipal use during any year shall make a request to the Department in Salem by July 1st of the preceding year on forms provided by the Department (OAR 690-507-0810(1)(a)).
- b) The Department shall assume that municipal water users intend to pump a quantity of water equivalent to the average pumped for the previous three (3) years, unless the municipal water user informs the Department otherwise by July 1st (OAR 690-507-0810(1)(b)).
- c) The distribution of groundwater for any authorized use except municipal use shall be based on the priority dates of the water rights within the individual subarea (OAR 690-507-0810(1)(c)).
- d) In determining the amount of groundwater each water user is allocated to pump during the next calendar year or irrigation season, the Department may consider:
 - i. Requests for allocations received;
 - ii. The sustainable annual yield;
 - iii. The limits of the groundwater rights;
 - iv. The relative dates of priority, with preference given without regard to priority date for municipal use;
 - v. Historical usage;
 - vi. Whether or not a water user is physically capable of pumping and putting to a beneficial use the quantity requested; and
 - vii. Any other factors deemed appropriate by the Department (OAR 690-507-0810(1)(d)).
- e) If pumpage for a particular year exceeds the sustainable annual yield for a subarea, the total subarea allocation for the second year after that occurrence shall be reduced by that volume (OAR 690-507-0810(2)).
- f) If any water user requests more water than has been historically used, the Department may allocate less water than requested if, upon investigation, it appears unlikely the user will pump the volume requested (OAR 690-507-0810(3)).
- g) If any water user requests less water than has been historically used, the Department may allocate more water than requested if, upon investigation, it appears likely that the user will pump more than the volume requested (OAR 690-507-0810(4)).
- h) The method of requesting and distributing water may not apply if a voluntary agreement among groundwater users in any subarea is reached. The Director may approve the agreement if it is consistent with ORS 537.730 to 537.740 and the requirements of these rules (Division 507). The Department shall be a party to any agreement reached (OAR 690-507-0810(5)).
- i) Any agreement approved by the Director may be terminated by the lapse of time as provided in the agreement, by consent of the parties to the agreement or by the Director, if the Director finds, after investigation and a public hearing upon adequate notice, that:
 - i. The agreement is not being substantially complied with by the parties thereto;
 - ii. Changed conditions have made the continuance of the agreement a detriment to the public welfare, safety and health or contrary in any particular to the intent, purposes and requirements of ORS 537.505 to 537.795 or OAR Division 690, Chapter 507; or

- iii. That the agreement is ineffective in achieving reasonably stable water levels (OAR 690-507-0670(6)).

FINDINGS OF FACTS

1. Branstetter Ranch is a water user in the Subarea H of the Stage Gulch CGWA.
2. Certificate 85257 is a valid water right in the Subarea H with a priority date of March 12, 1981.
3. For 2024, the sustainable annual yield in the Subarea H is 8850.00 acre-feet.
4. In 2022, 8850.00 acre-feet of water was allocated for the Subarea H.
5. In 2022, 4729.69 acre-feet of water was pumped in the Subarea H.
6. For 2024, 8850.00 acre-feet is allocated for the Subarea H. This is a reduction of 0 acre-feet from the sustainable annual yield based on the pumpage that exceeded the sustainable annual yield in 2022.
7. In June, 2023, the Department sent letters asking water users to request the amount of water they would need for the 2024 irrigation season, per OAR 690-507-0810(1)(a).
8. For 2024, the Department received allocation requests totaling 19755.73 acre-feet for the Subarea H subarea.
9. The 2024 annual allocation request under Water Right Certificate 85257 is 232.5 acre-feet.

DISCUSSION

The Department considered all of the factors described in OAR 690-507-0670 (Distribution of Sustainable Annual Yield) to distribute the total allowable allocation of water for the Subarea H in 2024. The attached table describes the past water use and the 2024 allocation of water for the Subarea H.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

The allocation of groundwater for the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area for the year 2024 is consistent with the requirements of ORS 537.705 and 540.505 to 540.580, and Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 690, Division 507.

ORDER

Now, THEREFORE, it is ORDERED that 0 acre-feet of water is allocated under Certificate 85257 for the year 2024 from the Subarea H of the Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area to be used under the terms of Certificate 85257.

OPPORTUNITY FOR HEARING

You are entitled to a hearing on this matter as provided by the Administrative Procedures Act (Chapter 183, Oregon Revised Statutes). If you want a hearing, you must file a written request for hearing directed to Mr. Kristopher Byrd, Manager, Well Construction and Compliance Section, Water Resources Department, 725 Summer Street NE, Suite A, Salem, Oregon 97301-1271. The request for hearing must state your grounds for disagreement with the proposed action and must be received by the Department by 5:00 P.M. on August 26, 2023 (within 30 days of the date of service of this notice). Failure to request a hearing by August 26, 2023 shall waive the right to hearing under ORS Chapter 183. If you request a hearing, you will be notified of the date set for hearing. You will also be given information on the procedures, right of representation and other rights of parties relating to the conduct of the hearing before commencement of the hearing. Any hearing will be held by an administrative law judge from the Office of Administrative Hearings, as required by ORS 183.635. You have a right to be represented by an attorney. Legal aid organizations may be able to assist a party with limited financial resources.

This Proposed Order will become a Final Order on Default on August 26, 2023 (30 days after the date of service of this notice) if:

1. You do not request a hearing by the date and time set out above; or
2. You request a hearing and then withdraw your request for hearing; or
3. You notify the agency or the administrative law judge that you will not appear at a scheduled hearing; or
4. You fail to appear at a hearing at the date and time scheduled for a hearing.

In the event of a Final Order on Default, the existing agency file, including materials you submit, will be designated as the record for the purpose of proving a prima facie case.

NOTICE TO ACTIVE DUTY SERVICEMEMBERS

Active duty servicemembers have a right to stay these proceedings under the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act. For more information contact the Oregon State Bar at 800-452-8260, the Oregon Military Department at 503-584-3571 or the nearest United States Armed Forces Legal Assistance Office through <http://legalassistance.law.af.mil>. The Oregon Military Department does not have a toll free telephone number.

Dated at Salem, Oregon this July 27, 2023



Justin Iverson
Groundwater Section Manager
Technical Services Division

RIGHT TO JUDICIAL REVIEW OF FINAL ORDER

You have the right to appeal a Final Order to the Oregon Court of Appeals pursuant to ORS 183.482. To appeal you must file a petition for judicial review with the Court of Appeals within 60 days from the day this Order becomes final. If you do not file a petition for judicial review within the 60-day time period, you will lose your right to appeal.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on July 27, 2023, I mailed the attached PROPOSED ORDER NOT ALLOCATING GROUNDWATER by certified mail to:

C/O Moneta Woollard
Branstetter Ranch
61306 Crooked Creek Rd
La Grande OR 97850-5296

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kristi Seyfried".

Kristi Seyfried
Oregon Water Resources Department

Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area, Subarea H
Proposed Allocations by Well and Water Right for 2024
Sustainable Annual Yield: 8850.00 acre-feet
Total Allocation: 8850.00 acre-feet

Owner Name	Water Right	Priority Date	Logid	Water Use (af) 2020	Water Use (af) 2021	Water Use (af) 2022	Requested Allocation (af)	Proposed Allocation (af)
Morrison Ranch LLC	Inchoate: T 13113 CF (REG) *	01/28/1953	UMAT 3010	70.00	685.71	5.14	35.40	35.40
			UMAT 58365			0.00	35.40	35.40
			Water Right Total:				70.80	70.80
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Inchoate: T 11473 CF (REG) *	09/16/1954	UMAT 1351	373.00	378.16	199.51	61.65	61.65
			Water Right Total:				61.65	61.65
GLENN ROHDE	Cert:55612 CF *	10/04/1966	UMAT 1356	149.40	109.52	117.83	0.00	118.65
			Water Right Total:				0.00	118.65
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Cert:85124 (T 6775 RR) CR *	06/08/1971	UMAT 1295	898.76	538.19	517.57	0.00	540.00
			Water Right Total:				0.00	540.00
REESE FARM	Cert:55613 CF *	02/02/1972	UMAT 1364	153.06	241.64	170.93	300.00	200.00
			Water Right Total:				300.00	200.00
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Cert:80850 (T 6775, T 11086 RR) *	02/16/1973	UMAT 1300	93.20	139.26	30.89	1,246.00	260.00
			Water Right Total:				1,246.00	260.00
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Inchoate: T 11473 CF (REG) *	11/30/1973	UMAT 1351	373.00	378.16	199.51	212.40	212.40
			Water Right Total:				212.40	212.40
RICHARD & ASHLEY SNOW	Cert:47008 OR *	07/19/1974	UMAT 1359	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			Water Right Total:				0.00	0.00
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Cert:87666 CF *	07/19/1974	UMAT 1295	898.76	538.19	517.57	150.00	150.00
			UMAT 1300	93.20	139.26	30.89	150.00	150.00
			UMAT 1326	239.09	216.25	188.14	150.00	150.00
			UMAT 54853	495.84	1,097.64	1,197.65	150.00	150.00
			Water Right Total:				600.00	600.00
EMA TRUST, ERIC ANDERSON, TRUSTEE	Cert:86213 (RR) *	10/21/1974	UMAT 1382	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			Water Right Total:				0.00	0.00
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Cert:87667 CF *	10/21/1974	UMAT 1295	898.76	538.19	517.57	90.35	90.35
			UMAT 1300	93.20	139.26	30.89	90.35	90.35
			UMAT 1326	239.09	216.25	188.14	90.35	90.35
			UMAT 54853	495.84	1,097.64	1,197.65	90.35	90.35
			Water Right Total:				361.40	361.40
GOLDEN VALLEY FARMS	Inchoate: T 10517 CF (REG) *	11/12/1975	UMAT 1361	1,140.27	1,004.93	786.93	600.00	600.00
			UMAT 1369	327.35	319.16	438.88	600.00	600.00
			Water Right Total:				1,200.00	1,200.00
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Cert:80849 CF *	12/29/1975	UMAT 1329	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			UMAT 54853	495.84	1,097.64	1,197.65	2,142.00	1,484.62
			Water Right Total:				2,142.00	1,484.62

Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area, Subarea H
Proposed Allocations by Well and Water Right for 2024
Sustainable Annual Yield: 8850.00 acre-feet
Total Allocation: 8850.00 acre-feet

Owner Name	Water Right	Priority Date	Logid	Water Use (af) 2020	Water Use (af) 2021	Water Use (af) 2022	Requested Allocation (af)	Proposed Allocation (af)
			UMAT 1362	924.46	840.23	715.93	1,027.50	620.00
Branstetter Ranch	Cert:85256 (RR) *	07/16/1976		Water Right Total:			1,027.50	620.00
			UMAT 1362	924.46	840.23	715.93	328.20	207.00
Branstetter Ranch	Cert:89677 CF *	07/16/1976		Water Right Total:			328.20	207.00
			UMAT 1367	130.44	153.97	106.23	318.00	84.50
Dan McCarty	Inchoate: T 13632 CF (REG) *	09/09/1976		Water Right Total:			318.00	84.50
			UMAT 1367	130.44	153.97	106.23	177.00	45.50
M and Shirley Temple	Cert:97009 (T 13632 RR) *	09/09/1976		Water Right Total:			177.00	45.50
			UMAT 1300	93.20	139.26	30.89	75.36	75.36
			UMAT 1326	239.09	216.25	188.14	75.36	75.36
			UMAT 1361	1,140.27	1,004.93	786.93	75.36	75.36
			UMAT 1369	327.35	319.16	438.88	75.36	75.36
			UMAT 54853	495.84	1,097.64	1,197.65	75.36	75.36
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Cert:87713 CF *	12/15/1976		Water Right Total:			376.80	376.80
			UMAT 2998	640.26	356.69	16.09	1,147.50	635.00
JML	Cert:67300 CF *	05/23/1977		Water Right Total:			1,147.50	635.00
			UMAT 1356	149.40	109.52	117.83	0.00	50.00
GLENN ROHDE	Cert:55015 OR *	12/06/1977		Water Right Total:			0.00	50.00
			UMAT 2999	509.96	0.00	0.00	1,980.00	425.00
			UMAT 3000	1,762.89	399.75	15.56	3,168.00	1,050.00
			UMAT 3004	868.79	261.89	196.23	166.50	150.00
			UMAT 3007	16.71	39.40	26.18	1,498.50	53.50
ST HILAIRE	Cert:80295 (T 8688 RR) *	02/15/1978		Water Right Total:			6,813.00	1,678.50
			UMAT 2999	509.96	0.00	0.00	20.00	20.00
			UMAT 3000	1,762.89	399.75	15.56	32.00	20.00
			UMAT 3004	868.79	261.89	196.23	1.68	1.68
			UMAT 3007	16.71	39.40	26.18	1.50	1.50
ST HILAIRE	Cert:88817 CF *	02/15/1978		Water Right Total:			55.18	43.18
			UMAT 1361	1,140.27	1,004.93	786.93	185.40	0.00
			UMAT 1369	327.35	319.16	438.88	185.40	0.00
GOLDEN VALLEY FARMS	Inchoate: T 10517 CF (REG) *	02/21/1978		Water Right Total:			370.80	0.00
			UMAT 1361	1,140.27	1,004.93	786.93	535.05	0.00
			UMAT 1369	327.35	319.16	438.88	535.05	0.00
GOLDEN VALLEY FARMS	Inchoate: T 10517 CF (REG) *	08/02/1978		Water Right Total:			1,070.10	0.00
			UMAT 1361	1,140.27	1,004.93	786.93	539.10	0.00
GOLDEN VALLEY FARMS	Cert:84095 (T 10517 RR) *	08/02/1978		Water Right Total:			539.10	0.00
			UMAT 1364	153.06	241.64	170.93	0.00	0.00

Stage Gulch Critical Groundwater Area, Subarea H
Proposed Allocations by Well and Water Right for 2024
Sustainable Annual Yield: 8850.00 acre-feet
Total Allocation: 8850.00 acre-feet

Owner Name	Water Right	Priority Date	Logid	Water Use (af) 2020	Water Use (af) 2021	Water Use (af) 2022	Requested Allocation (af)	Proposed Allocation (af)
REESE FARM	Cert:56073 OR *	05/10/1979		Water Right Total:			0.00	0.00
			UMAT 1351	373.00	378.16	199.51	108.90	0.00
FARMLAND RESERVE INC	Inchoate: T 11473 CF (REG) *	05/10/1979		Water Right Total:			108.90	0.00
			UMAT 1383		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
HARRIET ISOM	Cert:55842 OR *	03/17/1980		Water Right Total:			0.00	0.00
			UMAT 1362	924.46	840.23	715.93	232.50	0.00
Branstetter Ranch	Cert:85257 (RR) *	03/12/1981		Water Right Total:			232.50	0.00
			UMAT 1362	924.46	840.23	715.93	279.00	0.00
Branstetter Ranch	Cert:89678 CF *	03/12/1981		Water Right Total:			279.00	0.00
			UMAT 3010	70.00	685.71	5.14	0.00	0.00
			UMAT 58365			0.00	25.50	0.00
Morrison Ranch LLC	Inchoate: T 13113 CF (REG) *	03/28/1983		Water Right Total:			25.50	0.00
			UMAT 3010	70.00	685.71	5.14	692.40	0.00
LORENZEN RANCHES, INC	Cert:94466 (T 13113 RR) *	03/28/1983		Water Right Total:			692.40	0.00
Subarea H Total:				7,583.20	6,782.39	4,729.69	19,755.73	8,850.00