

**Water Resources Department**  
**Water Right Services Division**

Water Rights Application  
Number G-17996

**Proposed Final Order**

*Summary of Recommendation:* The Department recommends that the attached draft permit be issued with conditions.

*Findings of Fact*

1. On February 11, 2015, Wilks Ranch Oregon Limited submitted an application to the Department for the following water use permit:
  - Amount of Water: 9.38 cubic feet per second (CFS)
  - Use of Water: domestic use, industrial/manufacturing uses, livestock use, and supplemental irrigation of 451.9 acres
  - Source of Water: Wilks Ranch Well #1 (MALH 54260/L115847) in Willow Creek Basin
  - Area of Proposed Use: Malheur County within Section 13, Section 14, and Section 23, Township 14 South, Range 39 East, W.M.
2. On July 17, 2015, the Department mailed the applicant notice of its Initial Review, determining that "...the appropriation of 9.38 CFS of water for year-round industrial/manufacturing uses and livestock use, further limited to 0.005 CFS for year-round domestic use for two households and 5.19 CFS for supplemental irrigation of 415.2 acres April 1 through September 1 of each year, from Wilks Ranch Well #1 in Willow Creek Basin is not allowable..." The applicant did not notify the Department to stop processing the application within 14 days of that date.
3. On July 21, 2015, the Department gave public notice of the application in its weekly notice. The public notice included a request for comments, and information for interested persons about obtaining future notices and a copy of the Proposed Final Order. No written comments were received within 30 days.
4. On July 27, 2015, the applicant put the application on Administrative Hold, which expired on January 27, 2016.
5. On May 12, 2016, the applicant reduced the requested rate to 5.19 CFS.

In reviewing applications, the Department may consider any relevant sources of information, including the following:

- any applicable basin program
- applicable statutes, administrative rules, and case law

- the amount of water available
  - the rate and duty for the proposed use
  - any general basin-wide standard for flow rate and duty of water allowed
  - the need for a flow rate and duty higher than the general standard
  - pending senior applications and existing water rights of record
  - any applicable comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance
  - recommendations by other state agencies
  - the Scenic Waterway requirements of ORS 390.835
  - designations of any critical groundwater areas
  - any comments received
6. The Malheur Basin Program allows domestic use, industrial/manufacturing uses, livestock use, and supplemental irrigation (OAR 690-510-0000).
7. Due to the reduction in the requested rate, a re-assessment of groundwater availability was completed on August 16, 2016, by the Department's Groundwater/Hydrology section. A copy of this re-assessment is in the file. Groundwater will likely be available within the capacity of the resource, and if properly conditioned, the proposed use of groundwater will avoid injury to existing groundwater rights.
8. Groundwater Findings Under OAR 690-009  
The Department determined, consistent with OAR 690-009-0040(4), that the proposed groundwater use will not have the potential for substantial interference with surface water.

In making this determination, the Department considered whether:

- A. There is a hydraulic connection from the proposed well(s) to any surface water sources.
- B. The point of appropriation is a horizontal distance less than one-fourth mile from the surface water source;
- C. The rate of appropriation is greater than five cubic feet per second, if the point of appropriation is a horizontal distance less than one mile from the surface water source;
- D. The rate of appropriation is greater than one percent of the pertinent adopted minimum perennial streamflow or instream water right with a senior priority date, if one is applicable, or of the discharge that is equaled or exceeded 80 percent of time, as determined or estimated by the Department, and if the point of appropriation is a horizontal distance less than one mile from the surface water source;
- E. The groundwater appropriation, if continued for a period of 30 days, would result in stream depletion greater than 25 percent of the rate of appropriation, if the point of appropriation is

a horizontal distance less than one mile from the surface water source.

According to the Department's rules, the potential for substantial interference is assumed if A and either B or C or D or E are met. For this application, the Department determined that there is no potential for substantial interference, because either A is not met, or B, C, D or E are not met, or both.

9. Wilks Ranch Well #1 (MALH 54260/L115847) in Willow Creek Basin is not within or above a State Scenic Waterway.
10. The Department finds that the amount of water requested, 5.19 CFS, is an acceptable amount.
11. Documentation has been submitted from the relevant land-use planning jurisdiction that indicates the proposed uses are allowed outright.
12. The proposed groundwater use is not within a designated critical groundwater area.

*Conclusions of Law*

1. Under the provisions of ORS 537.621, the Department must presume that a proposed use will ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health if the proposed use is allowed in the applicable basin program established pursuant to ORS 536.300 and 536.340 or given a preference under ORS 536.310(12), if water is available, if the proposed use will not injure other water rights and if the proposed use complies with rules of the Water Resources Commission.
2. The proposed uses requested in this application are allowed in the Malheur Basin Program.
3. Water is available for the proposed uses.
4. The proposed uses will not injure other water rights.
5. No proposed flow rate and duty of water higher than the general basin-wide standard is needed.
6. The application is in compliance with the State Agency Coordination Program regarding land use.
7. The proposed uses comply with rules of the Water Resources Commission not otherwise described above.
8. For these reasons, the required presumption has been established.

9. Under the provisions of ORS 537.621, once the presumption has been established, it may be overcome by a preponderance of evidence that either:
  - A. One or more of the criteria for establishing the presumption are not satisfied; or
  - B. The proposed use would not ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health as demonstrated in comments, in a protest . . . or in a finding of the department that shows:
    - a. The specific aspect of the public welfare, safety and health under ORS 537.525 that would be impaired or detrimentally affected; and
    - b. Specifically how the identified aspect of the public welfare, safety and health under ORS 537.525 would be impaired or be adversely affected.
10. In this application, all criteria for establishing the presumption have been satisfied, as noted above. The presumption has not been overcome by a preponderance of evidence that the proposed use would impair or be detrimental to the public interest.
11. The Department therefore concludes that the proposed use would ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health as described in ORS 537.525.
12. When issuing permits, ORS 537.628(1) authorizes the Department to include limitations and conditions which have been determined necessary to protect the public welfare, safety, and health. The attached draft permit is conditioned accordingly.

Recommendation

The Department recommends that the attached draft permit be issued with conditions.

DATED April 18, 2017

*E. Timothy Wallin*

E. Timothy Wallin, Water Rights Program Manager  
for Thomas M. Byler, Director

Protests

Under the provisions of ORS 537.153(7) (for surface water) or ORS 537.621(8) (for groundwater), you can protest this Proposed Final Order. Protests must be received in the Water Resources Department no later than **June 2, 2017**. Protests must be in writing, and must include the following:

- Your name, address, and telephone number;
- A description of your interest in the Proposed Final Order, and, if you claim to represent the public interest, a precise statement of the public interest represented;
- A detailed description of how the action proposed in the Proposed Final Order would impair or be detrimental to your interest;
- A detailed description of how the Proposed Final Order is in error or deficient, and how to correct the alleged error or deficiency;
- Any citation of legal authority to support your protest, if known;
- To affect the department's determination that the proposed use in this application will, or will not, ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health as described in ORS 537.525, ORS 537.621(2)(b) requires that a protest demonstrate, by a preponderance of evidence any of the following: (a) One or more of the criteria for establishing the presumption are, or are not, satisfied; or (b) The specific aspect of the public welfare, safety and health under ORS 537.525 that would be impaired or detrimentally affected, and specifically how the identified aspect of the public welfare, safety and health under ORS 537.525 would be impaired or be adversely affected;
- If you are the applicant, the protest fee of \$350 required by ORS 536.050; and
- If you are not the applicant, the protest fee of \$700 required by ORS 536.050 and proof of service of the protest upon the applicant.
- If you are the applicant, a statement of whether or not you are requesting a contested case hearing. If you do not request a hearing, the Department will presume that you do not wish to contest the findings of the Proposed Final Order.

## Requests for Standing

Under the provisions of ORS 537.153(7) (for surface water) or ORS 537.621(8) (for groundwater), persons other than the applicant who support a Proposed Final Order can request standing for purposes of participating in any contested case proceeding on the Proposed Final Order or for judicial review of a Final Order.

Requests for standing must be received in the Water Resources Department no later than **June 2, 2017**. Requests for standing must be in writing, and must include the following:

- The requester's name, mailing address and telephone number;
- If the requester is representing a group, association or other organization, the name, address and telephone number of the represented group;
- A statement that the requester supports the Proposed Final Order as issued;
- A detailed statement of how the requester would be harmed if the Proposed Final Order is modified; and
- A standing fee of \$200. If a hearing is scheduled, an additional fee of \$500 must be submitted along with a petition for party status.

After the protest period has ended, the Director will either issue a Final Order or schedule a contested case hearing. The contested case hearing will be scheduled only if a protest has been submitted and either:

- upon review of the issues, the director finds that there are significant disputes related to the proposed use of water, or
- the applicant requests a contested case hearing within 30 days after the close of the protest period.

If you do not request a hearing within 30 days after the close of the protest period, or if you withdraw a request for a hearing, notify the Department or the administrative law judge that you will not appear or fail to appear at a scheduled hearing, the Director may issue a Final Order by default. If the Director issues a Final Order by default, the Department designates the relevant portions of its files on this matter, including all materials that you have submitted relating to this matter, as the record for purpose of proving a *prima facie* case upon default.

You may be represented by an attorney at the hearing. Legal aid organizations may be able to assist a party with limited financial resources. Generally, partnerships, corporations, associations, governmental subdivisions or public or private organizations are represented by an attorney. However, consistent with OAR 690-002-0020 and OAR 137-003-0555, an agency representative may represent a partnership, corporation, association, governmental subdivision or public or private organization if the Department determines that appearance of a person by an authorized representative will not hinder the orderly and timely development of the record in this case.

**Notice Regarding Service Members:** Active duty service members have a right to stay proceedings under the federal Service Members Civil Relief Act. 50 U.S.C. App. §§501-597b. You may contact the Oregon State Bar or the Oregon Military Department for more information. The toll-free telephone number for the Oregon State Bar is: 1 (800) 452-8260. The toll-free telephone number of the Oregon Military Department is: 1 (800) 452-7500. The Internet address for the United States Armed Forces Legal Assistance Legal Services Locator website is: <http://legalassistance.law.af.mil>

*This document was prepared by Kim French. If you have any questions about any of the statements contained in this document I can be reached at 503-986-0816.*

*If you have questions about how to file a protest or a request for standing, please refer to the respective sections in this Proposed Final Order entitled "Protests" and "Requests for Standing". If you have previously filed a protest and want to know its status, please contact Patricia McCarty at 503-986-0820.*

*If you have other questions about the Department or any of its programs please contact our Customer Service Group at 503-986-0801. Address all other correspondence to:*

*Water Rights Section, Oregon Water Resources Department, 725 Summer St NE Ste A, Salem OR 97301-1266, Fax: 503-986-0901.*

DRAFT

This is not a permit.  
STATE OF OREGON

DRAFT

COUNTY OF MALHEUR

DRAFT PERMIT TO APPROPRIATE THE PUBLIC WATERS

THIS DRAFT PERMIT IS HEREBY ISSUED TO

WILKS RANCH OREGON LIMITED  
4945 WILLOW CREEK RD  
IRONSIDE, OR 97908

The specific limits and conditions of the use are listed below.

APPLICATION FILE NUMBER: G-17996

SOURCE OF WATER: WILKS RANCH WELL #1 (MALH 54260/L115847) IN WILLOW CREEK BASIN

PURPOSE OR USE: DOMESTIC USE FOR TWO HOUSEHOLDS, INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING USES, LIVESTOCK USE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION OF 451.9 ACRES

MAXIMUM RATE: 5.19 CUBIC FEET PER SECOND (CFS), FURTHER LIMITED TO 0.005 CFS FOR DOMESTIC USE FOR TWO HOUSEHOLDS

PERIOD OF USE: YEAR-ROUND: DOMESTIC USE FOR TWO HOUSEHOLDS, INDUSTRIAL/MANUFACTURING AND LIVESTOCK USE  
APRIL 1 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 1: SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION OF 415.2 ACRES

DATE OF PRIORITY: FEBRUARY 11, 2015

WELL LOCATION: SW ¼ SE ¼, SECTION 14, T14S, R39E, W.M.; 900 FEET NORTH AND 2725 FEET EAST FROM SW CORNER, SECTION 14

The amount of water used for irrigation under this right, together with the amount secured under any other right existing for the same lands, is limited to a diversion of ONE-EIGHTIETH of one cubic foot per second and 3.0 acre-feet for each acre irrigated during the irrigation season of each year.

THE PLACE OF USE IS LOCATED AS FOLLOWS:

<u>QQ</u>	<u>SUPPLEMENTAL IRRIGATION</u>	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>INDUSTRIAL/ MANUFACTURING</u>	<u>LIVESTOCK</u>
SW ¼ NE ¼	13.7 ACRES			
SE ¼ NE ¼	15.0 ACRES			
SW ¼ NW ¼	3.4 ACRES			



<u>QQ</u>	<u>SUPPLEMENTAL</u> <u>IRRIGATION</u>	<u>DOMESTIC</u>	<u>INDUSTRIAL/</u> <u>MANUFACTURING</u>	<u>LIVESTOCK</u>
SE ¼ NW ¼	3.0 ACRES			
NE ¼ SW ¼	34.5 ACRES			
NW ¼ SW ¼	38.5 ACRES			
SW ¼ SW ¼	21.5 ACRES			
SE ¼ SW ¼	18.0 ACRES			
NE ¼ SE ¼	35.5 ACRES			
NW ¼ SE ¼	37.5 ACRES			
SW ¼ SE ¼	7.0 ACRES			
SE ¼ SE ¼	6.0 ACRES			

SECTION 13

SW ¼ NE ¼	3.5 ACRES			
SE ¼ NE ¼	4.0 ACRES			
SW ¼ NW ¼	10.5 ACRES			
SE ¼ NW ¼	10.5 ACRES			
NE ¼ SW ¼	38.2 ACRES			
NW ¼ SW ¼	32.0 ACRES			
SE ¼ SW ¼	4.0 ACRES	X	X	X
NE ¼ SE ¼	37.5 ACRES			
NW ¼ SE ¼	37.5 ACRES			
SW ¼ SE ¼	18.0 ACRES	X		
SE ¼ SE ¼	22.6 ACRES			

SECTION 14

NE ¼ NW ¼		X	X	X
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SECTION 23

TOWNSHIP 14 SOUTH, RANGE 39 EAST, W.M.

Measurement devices, and recording/reporting of annual water use conditions:

- A. Before water use may begin under this permit, the permittee shall install a totalizing flow meter at each point of appropriation. The permittee shall maintain the device in good working order.
- B. The permittee shall allow the watermaster access to the device; provided however, where any device is located within a private structure, the watermaster shall request access upon reasonable notice.
- C. The permittee shall keep a complete record of the volume of water diverted each month, and shall submit a report which includes water-use measurements to the Department annually, or more frequently as may be required by the Director. Further, the

Director may require the permittee to report general water-use information, including the place and nature of use of water under the permit.

- D. The Director may provide an opportunity for the permittee to submit alternative measuring and reporting procedures for review and approval.

Groundwater production shall be from no shallower than 605 feet below land surface.

#### Static Water Level Conditions

The Department requires the water user to obtain, from a qualified individual (see below), and report annual static water levels for each well on the permit. The static water level shall be measured in the month of March. Reports shall be submitted to the Department within 30 days of measurement.

The permittee shall report an initial March static water-level measurement once well construction is complete and annual measurements thereafter. Annual measurements are required whether or not the well is used. The first annual measurement will establish a reference level against which future measurements will be compared. However, the Director may establish the reference level based on an analysis of other water-level data. The Director may require the user to obtain and report additional water levels each year if more data are needed to evaluate the aquifer system.

All measurements shall be made by a certified water rights examiner, registered professional geologist, registered professional engineer, licensed well constructor or pump installer licensed by the Construction Contractors Board. Measurements shall be submitted on forms provided by, or specified by, the Department. Measurements shall be made with equipment that is accurate to at least the standards specified in OAR 690-217-0045. The Department requires the individual performing the measurement to:

- A. Associate each measurement with an owner's well name or number and a Department well log ID; and
- B. Report water levels to at least the nearest tenth of a foot as depth-to-water below ground surface; and
- C. Specify the method of measurement; and
- D. Certify the accuracy of all measurements and calculations reported to the Department.

The Department may require the discontinuance of groundwater use, or reduce the rate or volume of withdrawal, from the well(s) if any of the following events occur:

- A. Annual water-level measurements reveal an average water-level decline of three or more feet per year for five consecutive years; or
- B. Annual water-level measurements reveal a water-level decline of 15 or more feet in fewer than five consecutive years; or
- C. Annual water-level measurements reveal a water-level decline of 25 or more feet; or
- D. Hydraulic interference leads to a decline of 25 or more feet in any neighboring well with senior priority.

The period of restricted use shall continue until the water level rises above the decline level which triggered the action or the Department determines, based on the permittee's and/or the Department's data and analysis, that no action is necessary because the aquifer in question can sustain the observed declines without adversely impacting the resource or causing substantial interference with senior water rights. The water user shall not allow excessive decline, as defined in Commission rules, to occur within the aquifer as a result of use under this permit. If more than one well is involved, the water user may submit an alternative measurement and reporting plan for review and approval by the Department.

Access to perform pressure measurements at Wilks Ranch Well #1 (MALH 54260/L115847) shall be granted to the Department. This access shall include an isolation valve or stopcock at the wellhead that can be used to install a pressure transducer and/or to perform routine hand-held measurement.

#### Well Identification Tag Condition

Prior to using water from any well listed on this permit, the permittee shall ensure that the well has been assigned an OWRD Well Identification Number (Well ID tag), which shall be permanently attached to the well. The Well ID shall be used as a reference in any correspondence regarding the well, including any reports of water use, water level, or pump test data.

#### **STANDARD CONDITIONS**

Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this permit may result in action including, but not limited to, restrictions on the use, civil penalties, or cancellation of the permit.

If the number, location, source, or construction of any well deviates from that proposed in the permit application or required by permit conditions, this permit may be subject to cancellation, unless the Department authorizes the change in writing.

If substantial interference with surface water or a senior water right occurs due to withdrawal of water from any well listed on this permit, then use of water from the well(s) shall be discontinued or reduced and/or the schedule of withdrawal shall be regulated until or unless the Department approves or implements an alternative administrative action to mitigate the interference. The Department encourages junior and senior appropriators to jointly develop plans to mitigate interferences.

The well(s) shall be constructed and maintained in accordance with the General Standards for the Construction and Maintenance of Water Supply Wells in Oregon. The works shall be equipped with a usable access port adequate to determine water-level elevation in the well at all times.

If the riparian area is disturbed in the process of developing a point of appropriation, the permittee shall be responsible for restoration and enhancement of such riparian area in accordance with ODFW's Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Policy OAR 635-415. For purposes of mitigation, the ODFW Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Goals and Standards, OAR 635-415, shall be followed.

The use may be restricted if the quality of downstream waters decreases to the point that those waters no longer meet state or federal water quality standards due to reduced flows.

Where two or more water users agree among themselves as to the manner of rotation in the use of water and such agreement is placed in writing and filed by such water users with the watermaster, and such rotation system does not infringe upon such prior rights of any water user not a party to such rotation plan, the watermaster shall distribute the water according to such agreement.

Prior to receiving a certificate of water right, the permit holder shall submit to the Water Resources Department the results of a pump test meeting the Department's standards for each point of appropriation (well), unless an exemption has been obtained in writing under OAR 690-217. The Director may require water-level or pump-test data every ten years thereafter.

This permit is for the beneficial use of water without waste. The water user is advised that new regulations may require the use of best practical technologies or conservation practices to achieve this end.

By law, the land use associated with this water use must be in compliance with statewide land-use goals and any local acknowledged land-use plan.

Construction of the well shall be made within five years of the date of permit issuance. The deadline to begin construction may not be extended.

This permit is subject to cancellation proceedings if the begin construction deadline is missed.

Complete application of the water shall be made within five years of the date of permit issuance. If beneficial use of permitted water has not been made before this date, the permittee may submit an application for extension of time, which may be approved based upon the merit of the application.

Within one year after making beneficial use of water, the permittee shall submit a claim of beneficial use, which includes a map and report, prepared by a Certified Water Rights Examiner.

Issued

DRAFT - THIS IS NOT A PERMIT

E. Timothy Wallin, Water Rights Program Manager  
for Thomas M. Byler, Director

# Mailing List for PFO Copies

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Application #G-17996

PFO Date April 18, 2017

**Original mailed via CERTIFIED MAIL to applicant:**

WILKS RANCH OREGON LIMITED, 4945 WILLOW CREEK RD,  
IRONSIDE, OR 97908

Copies Mailed By: _____ (SUPPORT STAFF) on: _____ (DATE)
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**SENT VIA EMAIL:**

1. WRD - Watermaster # 9
2. Agent - [agm@bakercitylaw.com](mailto:agm@bakercitylaw.com)

Copies sent to:

1. WRD - File # G-17996

Protest/ Standing Dates checked _____
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CASEWORKER : Kim French