

FINDINGS OF FACT

Application History

1. On July 9, 2019, Merritt Holdings LLC filed a complete application for the following water use:

Source: CROWSON WELL 1 AND CROWSON WELL 2 IN WILLAMETTE RIVER BASIN
Use: IRRIGATION OF 41.3 ACRES
Period of Use: MARCH 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 31
Rate: 0.52 CUBIC FOOT PER SECOND (CFS)
County: BENTON COUNTY
Place of Use: SECTIONS 23 AND 24, TOWNSHIP 14 SOUTH, RANGE 5 WEST, W.M.

2. On August 2, 2019, the Department mailed the applicant notice of its Initial Review, determining that the appropriation of 0.52 CFS of water from Crowson Well 1 and Crowson Well 2 in Willamette River Basin for irrigation of 41.3 acres is not allowable. The applicant did not notify the Department to stop processing the application within 14 days of that date.
3. On August 6, 2019, the Department noticed the application in its weekly public notice, requesting comments, and providing information for interested persons about obtaining future notices and a copy of the Proposed Final Order.

Presumption Criteria (a) - Consistency with Basin Program

4. The Department has determined, based upon OAR 690-009, that Crowson Well 1 and Crowson Well 2 will produce groundwater from unconfined alluvium within a quarter mile of the banks of surface water and is presumed to be hydraulically connected to the surface water. Such hydraulically connected groundwater is classified the same as the surface water source under OAR 690-502-0240. The use of water from Crowson Well 1 and Crowson Well 2 in Willamette River Basin for irrigation is not allowed under OAR 690-502-0050(1)(c), the Willamette Basin Program. However, OAR 690-502-0240 also states that, notwithstanding such classification, permits may be issued for the use of water from a well in an unconfined aquifer that is hydraulically connected to groundwater, within a quarter mile of a stream, provided that surface water impacts are mitigated through storage releases.
5. On September 8, 2020, the Department received Water Service Contract No. 199E102004 from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Releases under this contract will provide mitigation in accordance with OAR 690-502-0240. Therefore, irrigation is an allowable use under the Willamette Basin Program.

Presumption Criteria (b) - Water Availability

6. An assessment of groundwater availability has been completed by the Department. A copy of this assessment is in the file and can be viewed on the Department's website. Groundwater will likely be available within the capacity of the resource, and if properly conditioned (and if authorized), the proposed use of groundwater will avoid injury to existing groundwater rights. ORS 537.621(3)(c); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(c)

Presumption Criteria (c) - Injury Determination

7. The proposed use, if authorized, will not injure other water rights. ORS 537.621(3)(d); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(e)

Presumption Criteria (d) - Whether the use complies with rules of the Commission

8. Documentation has been submitted from the relevant land-use planning jurisdiction that indicates the proposed use is allowed outright. ORS 537.621(3)(b); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(b)
9. The Department has determined that the proposed groundwater use will have the potential for substantial interference with surface water, namely the Willamette River. ORS 537.621(3)(b); OAR 690-009-0040(4)
10. The finding of the potential for substantial interference requires that surface water availability be considered. Surface water is available during the full period requested (at an 80 percent exceedance probability). OAR 690-410-0070(1) and OAR 690-400-0010(11)(a)(A)
11. The proposed groundwater use is not located within a designated critical groundwater area. ORS 537.620(4)(a), 537.621(3)(a); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(a)
12. The proposed use is in an area of the state in which OAR 690-033-0210 thru -0230 and OAR 690-033-0310 thru -0340 apply. These rules establish definitions, additional procedures, and standards to aid the Department in determining whether a proposed use will impair or be detrimental to the public interest with regard to sensitive, threatened, or endangered fish species.

OAR 690-033-0210 Lower Columbia Rules (Below Bonneville Dam)

- A. The proposed use of water is not detrimental to the protection or recovery of a threatened or endangered species. OAR 690-033-0220(1)
- B. The application is not presumed to impair or be detrimental to the public interest.

OAR 690-033-0310 Statewide Rules

- A. The proposed use occurs occur in an area that may affect the habitat of sensitive, threatened or endangered fish species. OAR 690-033-0310(2)
- B. The applicant has been notified that based on a preliminary determination, the proposed use may affect the habitat of sensitive, threatened or endangered fish species and the application may be conditioned or denied. OAR 690-033-0330(1)(a)
- C. The interagency review team has been notified that an application has been received in an area that may affect the habitat of sensitive, threatened or endangered fish species. OAR 690-033-0330(1)(b)
- D. The interagency review team was convened to review the application and recommended conditions as necessary to achieve the standards listed in 690-033-0330(2)(a) and (b). The draft permit includes conditions, numbered 3 and 4, to protect water quality.

Determination of Presumption that a proposed groundwater use will ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health

13. Based on the review of the presumption criteria (a)-(d) above, the presumption has been established. ORS 537.621(2); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(g)

Further evaluation of the proposed use

14. No comments were received by the close of the comment period. OAR 690-310-0140(3)(a)
15. Information available in Department files, received from other interested agencies, and other available information does not provide a preponderance of evidence that the proposed use would not ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health under ORS 537.525. OAR 690-310-0140(3)

Other Criteria and Requirements

16. The proposed use is not located within or above a state scenic waterway, as designated under ORS 390.826. 537.621(3)(a); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(a)
17. The amount requested, 0.52 CFS, is necessary for the proposed use. ORS 537.621(3)(c); OAR 690-310-0150(2)(d)
18. The applicant proposed methods to measure the amount of water appropriated, prevent damage to aquatic life and riparian habitat, prevent discharge of contaminated water to a surface stream, or to prevent damage to public uses of any affected surface waters. These measures are adequate at this time. OAR 690-310-0150(2)(j)
19. The proposed use complies with rules of the Water Resources Commission not otherwise described above.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The proposed use, as conditioned, would ensure the preservation of the public welfare, safety and health as described in ORS 537.525.

NOTE: 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.

PROPOSED ORDER

The Department recommends approval of Application G-18839 and issuance of a permit consistent with the attached draft permit.

DATED March 16, 2021

Alyssa Mucken
Water Rights Section Manager, for
Thomas M. Byler, Director
Oregon Water Resources Department

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 by the Water Resources Department no later than **April 30, 2021**.

IMPORTANT: Due to COVID-19, the Department's office is closed to walk-in services. The Department encourages the submission of protests by U.S. mail. Please consider mailing early to ensure the Department receives the protest by the deadline specified above.

Protests must be in writing and 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, a protest fee of \$410 required by ORS 536.050; and
- If you are not the applicant, a protest fee of \$810 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.

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 **April 30, 2021**. 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 \$230. If a hearing is scheduled, an additional fee of \$580 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 Servicemembers: Active duty servicemembers have a right to stay 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.

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- If you have any questions about statements contained in this document, please contact Kim French at Kim.R.French@oregon.gov or 503-986-0816.
 - If you have questions about how to file a protest or if you have previously filed a protest and you want to know the status, please contact Patricia McCarty at 503-986-0820.
 - If you have any questions about the Department or any of its programs, please contact our Water Resources Customer Service Group at 503-986-0900.
 - Address any correspondence to : Water Right Services Division
725 Summer St NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301-1266
Fax: 503-986-0901
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DRAFT

This is not a permit.

DRAFT

STATE OF OREGON

COUNTY OF BENTON

DRAFT PERMIT TO APPROPRIATE THE PUBLIC WATERS

THIS DRAFT PERMIT IS HEREBY ISSUED TO

MERRITT HOLDINGS LLC
27949 EUREKA ROAD
CORVALLIS OR 97333

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

APPLICATION FILE NUMBER: G-18839

SOURCE OF WATER: CROWSON WELL 1 AND CROWSON WELL 2 IN WILLAMETTE RIVER BASIN

PURPOSE OR USE: IRRIGATION OF 41.3 ACRES

MAXIMUM RATE: 0.52 CUBIC FOOT PER SECOND

PERIOD OF USE: MARCH 1 THROUGH OCTOBER 31

DATE OF PRIORITY: JULY 9, 2019

AUTHORIZED POINTS OF APPROPRIATION:

POA Name	Twp	Rng	Mer	Sec	Q-Q	Measured Distances
CROWSON WELL 1	14 S	5 W	WM	24	SW SW	1270 FEET NORTH AND 1080 FEET EAST FROM SW CORNER, SECTION 24
CROWSON WELL 2	14 S	5 W	WM	24	SW SW	1120 FEET NORTH AND 1080 FEET EAST FROM SW CORNER, SECTION 24

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 2.5 acre-feet for each acre irrigated during the irrigation season of each year.

AUTHORIZED PLACE OF USE:

Twp	Rng	Mer	Sec	Q-Q	Acres
14 S	5 W	WM	23	NE SE	9.1
14 S	5 W	WM	23	SE SE	2.5
14 S	5 W	WM	24	NW SW	14.8
14 S	5 W	WM	24	SW SW	14.9

1. Water Use Measurement, Recording, and Reporting Condition:

- 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 used each month, and shall submit an annual report which includes the recorded 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.

2. Static Water Level Condition:

To monitor the effect of water use from the well(s) authorized under this permit, the Department requires the water user to obtain, from a qualified individual (see below), and report annual static water level measurements. The static water level shall be measured in the month of March. Reports shall be submitted to the Department within 30 days of measurement.

Measurements must be made according to the following schedule:

Before Use of Water Takes Place

Initial and Annual Measurements

The Department requires the permittee to report an initial water level measurement in the month specified above once well construction is complete and annually thereafter until use of water begins; and

After Use of Water has Begun

Seven Consecutive Annual Measurements

Following the first year of water use, the user shall report seven consecutive annual static water level measurements. The first of these seven annual measurements will establish the reference level against which future annual measurements will be compared. Based on an analysis of the data collected, the Director may require the user to obtain and report additional annual static water level measurements beyond the seven year minimum reporting period. The additional measurements may be required in a different month. If the measurement requirement is stopped, the Director may restart it at any time.

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 and be submitted to the Department on forms provided by the Department. The Department requires the individual performing the measurement to:

- A. Identify each well with its associated measurement; and
- B. Measure and report water levels to the nearest tenth of a foot as depth-to-water below ground surface; and
- C. Specify the method used to obtain each well measurement; and
- D. Certify the accuracy of all measurements and calculations reported to the Department.

The water user shall discontinue use of, 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 non-use or restricted use shall continue until the water level rises above the decline level which triggered the action or until 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 senior water rights. The water user shall in no instance 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.

3. Division Limitation:

The permittee shall not divert water under this water use permit unless streamflow in the Willamette River is at or above 1,750 cubic feet per second, as determined at Gaging Station 14174.

4. Water Quality Condition:

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

5. Agricultural Water Quality Management Condition:

The permittee shall comply with basin-specific Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Rules described in Oregon Administrative Rule Chapter 603-095. The permittee shall protect riparian areas, including through irrigation practices and the management of any livestock, allowing site capable vegetation to establish and grow along streams, while providing the following functions: shade (on perennial and some intermittent streams), bank stability, and infiltration or filtration of overland runoff.

6. 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.

7. Mitigation Conditions:

- A. Mitigation water must be provided for the life of the permit and subsequent certificate(s). Regulation of the use and/or cancellation of the permit, or subsequent certificate(s) will occur if the required mitigation is not maintained.
- B. The use of water under this right is subject to the maintenance and terms and conditions of contract No. 199E102004 or satisfactory replacement, with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, a copy of which must be on file in the records of the Water Resources Department.
- C. Failure to comply with these mitigation conditions shall result in the Department regulating the groundwater permit, or subsequent certificate(s), proposing to deny any permit extension application for the groundwater permit, and proposing to cancel the groundwater permit, or subsequent certificate(s).

STANDARD CONDITIONS

- 1. 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.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Construction of the well shall begin 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 construction deadline to begin is missed.
10. 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.
11. Within one year after complete application of water to the proposed use, 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

Dwight French
Water Right Services Division Administrator, for
Thomas M. Byler, Director
Oregon Water Resources Department

Mailing List for PFO/Draft Permit Copies

Application G-18839

PFO Date March 16, 2021

Original mailed via CERTIFIED MAIL to applicant:

MERRITT HOLDINGS LLC
ATTN GARY HORNING
27949 EUREKA ROAD
CORVALLIS OR 97333

Copies Mailed

By: _____
(SUPPORT STAFF)

on: _____
(DATE)

Sent via auto email:

1. Applicant - ghorning1@gmail.com
2. Agent – Steve Bruce - steve@skookumwater.com
3. WRD – Watermaster District #2, Lanaya F. Blakely
4. WRD - Mike McCord NWR
5. WRD – SW Section

Copies sent to:

1. WRD - File # G-18839

Application Specialist: Kim French