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WELL SAID NEWSLETTER

Available on the web at OWRD home page, under Agency Spotlight > Well Said Newsletter.

Please share with others at your organization.

Well Said is a production of the OWRD Well Construction Section and is designed to inform the drilling industry and the public about program activities and other items of interest.

Questions or suggestions about this newsletter may be directed to Kristopher Byrd at (503) 991-2470 or email at Kristopher.R.Byrd@water.oregon.gov



Serving the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management.

MEET BOBBY BUCKMISTER: NEW SW REGION WELL INSPECTOR

Please join the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) in welcoming Bobby Buckmister as the new Southwest Region Well Inspector out of the Medford office.

Bobby grew up in Southern Oregon and fell in love with the landscape. He has lived there most of his life only moving away to attend the University of Oregon where he received a B.S. in Geology; geology has always been a passion of his, and one that he is excited to continue pursuing in his career as a well inspector. Bobby looks forward to furthering his knowledge of the regional geology to help monitor, protect, and understand the groundwater in the Southwest Region. Bobby spent a little over three years working as an assistant watermaster in the region at both the county and state levels. This experience has given him valuable and practical knowledge concerning the resource and public outreach. There is nothing he would love to do more than to use his knowledge and ability to protect natural resources in his home state.

In his free time, Bobby enjoys camping, hiking, fishing, cooking and spending time with his family. He looks forward to getting his dog on some trails and in the drift boat. Bobby may be contacted at (541) 218-5122 or by email at Bob.N.Buckmister@water.oregon.gov.



WELL CONSTRUCTION MODERNIZATION: HOUSE BILL 2145 - UPDATE

House Bill (HB) 2145 was passed during the 2021 legislative session to (a) modernize and increase efficiency within the well construction program to prevent well deficiencies that can lead to contamination or waste of groundwater, (b) better protect groundwater resources for Oregonians, and (c) give the well construction industry timely assurance that their work is being performed in a manner that is consistent with state requirements.

As the Department implements the bill and modernizes the well construction program, we will be focused on improving the program to better serve well owners and the well drilling community.

Phase one implementation of the Start Card fee increase was accomplished on schedule in January 2022. The transition of responsibility from the well owner to the driller to submit the exempt use fee and map was also successfully completed. **Phase two** implementation included the development of IT systems and staff processes for the 100% well report reviews, that began July 1, 2022.

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HB 2145 - Update, cont'd

The Department began conducting technical reviews of 100% of the well reports submitted starting July 1, 2022. These reviews ensure the well report is complete and, based on information contained in the well report, that the well appears to have been constructed in accordance with minimum well construction standards. Technical well report reviews are another mechanism, in addition to inspections, to identify potential construction deficiencies. The well report review process includes a notification to the bonded well constructor that their reports have been evaluated within 120 days of submittal of the report.

Additionally, the Department will follow up with the driller regarding any potential issues found during the well report review. The first of these notifications to drillers, for well reports submitted from 7/1/2022 to 9/30/2022, will be mailed to all bonded well drillers in late October 2022.

For more information regarding HB 2145, please visit our website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/WCC/Pages/HouseBill-2145.aspx>.

Additionally, the Department will be giving a presentation focused on the implementation of HB 2145 at the Oregon Ground Water Association (OGWA) Fall Convention; see OGWA's website for more information: <https://www.ogwa.org/event-4944579>.

To ensure that well constructors can be easily contacted regarding well report evaluations, they are encouraged to **verify that their email address is up to date with the Department**. Email addresses, along with other contact information, may be updated by clicking "Update Contact Information" under Resources for Well Constructors on the WRD homepage.

Questions about the implementation of HB 2145 should be directed to Travis Kelly, Well Construction Compliance Coordinator, at Travis.N.Kelly@water.oregon.gov, or call (971) 304-5079.

GROUNDWATER ALLOCATION MEETINGS



The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) held 5 facilitated hybrid public outreach meetings across the state in late September and early October to share information and ideas about updating the OWRD groundwater allocation policy. The meetings provided a review of Oregon's framework for groundwater allocation, and initial ideas for revisions to the groundwater allocation process. During the meetings there was an opportunity for meeting participants to ask questions and provide public input. It was also noted that this policy will only affect people who are interested in applying for new groundwater rights in Oregon. It will not impact existing groundwater users or exempt uses. Agendas, background materials, and meeting summaries will be posted to this project website: www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/GW/GWAP.

Why is the Department undertaking this process? Groundwater development results in impacts, either in the short-term or long-term, to groundwater and surface water resources. The current groundwater allocation process is designed to prevent those groundwater uses that would have a relatively immediate impact.

MODERNIZING POLICIES

The Water Resources Commission directed OWRD to develop recommendations for a plan of action that will lead to a modernized groundwater allocation policy that is more sustainable and protective of existing water right holders, both surface and groundwater. Information obtained during the workshops will be utilized to prepare draft rules, that will be discussed with a rules advisory committee to further refine the draft rules in preparation for public comment and hearings to develop a final draft of rules for Commission consideration.

DROUGHT & WATER SUPPLY WELL MAINTENANCE



It is recommended that well owners take steps to ensure that their water systems are operating safely and efficiently as Oregonians continue to experience drought conditions, which impacts both the productivity and water quality of a water supply well. Many well owners even have their well inspected every year by a licensed and bonded well constructor, who can identify current and potential problems with a system before they become serious and ultimately cost a lot of money to repair. Although having a well inspection does not guarantee that there will not be any problems, it is still a good practice that may help to protect a water system during prolonged periods of drought.

Along with yearly well inspections, it is highly recommended that annual or semi-annual water level measurements be taken to understand how the groundwater levels fluctuate in the well. There is growing evidence that lower water tables, deeper wells, and extreme drought have led to higher levels of contaminants in the groundwater. Many times, contaminants can be identified, and a treatment method determined, with a simple water quality test.

Proper maintenance and routine water level testing leads to increased longevity for a water supply well. In addition, by fixing leaks and utilizing more efficient water technology, not only are well owners conserving water, they are helping to ensure that water levels remain healthy for those living around them.

CASING HEIGHT AND PUMPHOUSES



When constructing a well for a land owner, it's important to communicate to them that if they plan to build a pumphouse around the well, the casing is required to be 12 inches above their pumphouse floor. Lately, the Department's well inspectors have been encountering wells where the landowner has poured a concrete slab for the pumphouse floor, leaving the well head less than 12 inches above grade. To bring the casing height into compliance, it either needs to be extended or the concrete slab needs to be broken up around the well to obtain the minimum 12 inches required by rule.

In addition to the casing height, well owners should also be aware that if they plan to construct a pumphouse that is going to be a permanent structure, they will need to comply with OAR 690-210-0030(1)(g), which requires a five-foot setback from a permanent structure or the roof, eaves or overhangs of a permanent structure. This setback is meant to provide enough room for a drill rig to access the well for future repair or abandonment work.

Questions should be directed to Tommy Laird at Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov or (503) 302-8618.

DUG WELL ABANDONMENTS

When landowners have old - and often neglected - dug wells on their property, many hire a licensed and bonded driller for the decommissioning work, or abandon the well themselves under the supervision of OWRD staff. What some may not realize, however, is that if the dug well is to be abandoned by a driller, Department approval is needed before beginning abandonment work.

Drillers that have contracted to abandon a dug well are encouraged to notify Tommy Laird, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at (503) 302-8618 or Tommy.K.Laird@water.oregon.gov, with an abandonment plan to be reviewed.

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Dug Well Abandonments, cont'd

The following information should be included in the abandonment plan:

- Well Location
- Well diameter
- Well depth
- Depth to water
- Casing/liner material
- Pictures of the well
- Proposed abandonment method/materials

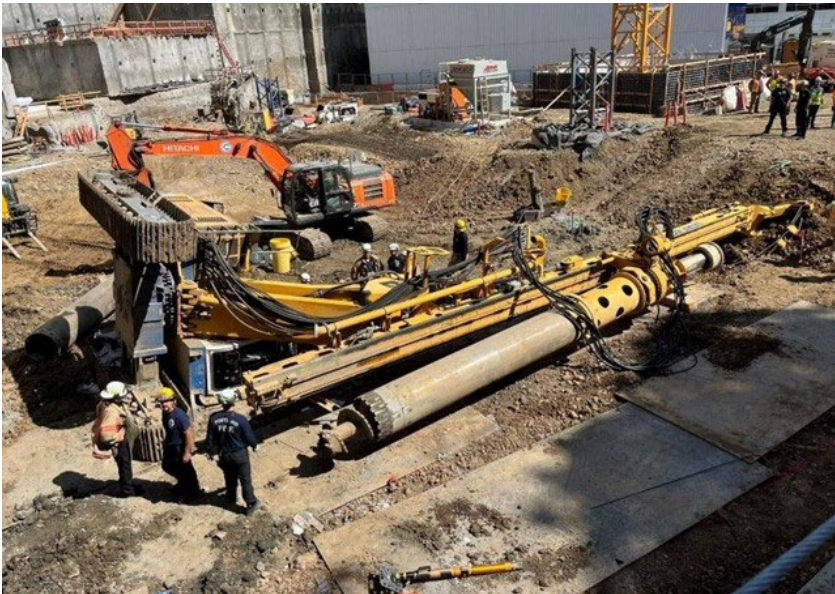
Standard dug well abandonment requirements include that the well must be free of debris, so if there is debris in the well, it will need to be removed before beginning work. Once a driller has an approved abandonment plan, they may proceed with the work.

Once work has been completed, the well report should state in the Comment/Remark section that approval for the abandonment was received from Tommy Laird with OWRD, and include the approval date.

Dug well abandonments that were not previously approved may need to be re-abandoned to adequately protect the resource.

If the landowner wishes to perform the abandonment work themselves, please direct them to their regional well inspector at the following link: <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/WCC/resourcesforwellconstructors/Pages/default.aspx>.

TRACK DRILL RIG TIPS OVER IN PORTLAND



Site safety is a serious concern in the well drilling industry, and although the following incident is not related to well construction, it is still an important reminder that drillers need to be cautious when operating a drilling machine.

A 50-ton Bauer track-mounted rotary drilling rig tipped over on August 12th, 2022, in Portland, pinning the operator in the cab of the machine. The accident occurred at the site of the \$650 million expansion of the Oregon Health & Science University in

Portland, where the operator was using the drill rig to cast vertical pylons for construction of a building. The seriously injured operator was taken to a local hospital.

Firefighters praise the construction crew for their efforts in placing a jack under the cab which allowed the emergency crew to break the glass and extricate the injured operator in under 15 minutes.

For more information about safety, please contact Oregon OSHA at (503) 378-3272 or by email at tech.web@dcbs.oregon.gov.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Monitoring well, SW Region



Large diameter well, SC Region



Damaged well, NW Region



Artesian well, NW Region



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