



Oregon

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Douglas E. Woodcock, Acting Director

SUBJECT: Agenda Item B, November 17, 2022
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Commission Appointments to the Groundwater Advisory Committee

I. Introduction

During this agenda item, the Commission will be asked to consider re-appointing one member and appointing two new members to the Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC).

II. Background

The Groundwater Advisory Committee is a nine-member committee charged with certain duties pursuant to ORS 536.090. These duties include: (1) advice on rules related to groundwater; (2) licensing and examination of well constructors; and (3) review of the proposed expenditures of start card fee revenue.

The Commission's rules under OAR Chapter 690, Division 235, provide a process to identify GWAC candidates, prescribe a range of categories of expertise that may be represented on GWAC, and allow appointments for up to three years. The rules result in the expiration of three appointments each year, thus staggering membership. Each year, staff seeks Commission action on GWAC appointments and/or reappointments. The Commission has directed that appointed members be limited to two terms (six years) on the Committee.

GWAC members represent a range of interests and expertise, including at least three members from the well drilling industry and the remainder representing interests in hydrogeology, irrigation, local government, Indian Tribes, environment, public health, industry, commerce, water project development, watershed enhancement, instream flow, agriculture, well pump installation, exempt groundwater users, or any other category with a groundwater interest (OAR 690-235-0005).

The current members of the Committee are listed in the following table. The members with expiring terms are italicized. The Department thanks these Committee members for their service.

Name	City of Residence	Category Represented	Term
Kenneth Masten, Chair	Bonanza	Groundwater Irrigator	2nd Term Expires 11/30/2024
Marshall Gannett, Vice-Chair	Portland	Hydrogeologist	2nd Term Expires 11/30/2023
<i>Chad Courtney</i>	<i>Pendleton</i>	<i>Monitoring/Water Well Industry</i>	<i>2nd Term Expires 11/30/2022</i>
Floyd Sippel	Salem	Monitoring/Water Well Industry	1st Term Expires 11/30/2023
<i>Mark Owens</i>	<i>Crane</i>	<i>Groundwater Irrigator</i>	<i>2nd Term Expires 11/30/2022</i>
Phil Brown	Beavercreek	Hydrogeologist	2nd Term Expires 11/30/2024
Richard Smith	Hillsboro	Domestic Well Owner	1st Term Expires 11/30/2023
<i>Susan Baker</i>	<i>Medford</i>	<i>Local Government</i>	<i>1st Term Expires 11/30/2022</i>
Trent Castner	Portland	Monitoring/Water Well Industry	2nd Term Expires 11/30/2024

III. Discussion

The terms for Chad Courtney, Mark Owens, and Susan Baker expire on November 30, 2022. Chad Courtney and Mark Owens are completing their second term and are not eligible for reappointment. We thank them for their service and dedication. Susan Baker is completing her first term and has expressed interest in serving for a second term.

In accordance with the rule process, GWAC has three open positions that must be filled. In order to comply with statute, one of the open positions must be filled by a person who is actively engaged in some aspect of the water supply or monitoring well drilling industry. The other two positions may represent other groundwater interests, expertise, or geography.

The Department maintains a rolling application process for GWAC positions and letters of interest are accepted year-round. Details of the application process are posted on the Department's GWAC webpage, and the Department sends a notice of recruitment to members of the GWAC and Commission email listservs each fall. The 2022 notice advised interested parties of the Committee vacancies and asked those wishing to be considered for a position on GWAC notify the Director by October 28 to ensure consideration for appointment in November 2022. The Director received three applications for membership and one letter of support by this date. The Department reached out to field staff and other local contacts to solicit references for the applicants.

The Department recommends reappointment of Susan Baker to serve a second term on the Committee. The Department recommends Ken Bentz and Brandon Brown to fill the remaining two seats on the Committee. Terms for these three members would begin December 1, 2022 and continue through November 30, 2025.

Short biographies for the three recommended individuals are as follows:

Susan Baker is the Drinking Water Program Coordinator for Jackson County Health and Human Services, where she focuses on environmental public health. Ms. Baker oversees monitoring and compliance with public groundwater quality regulations for more than 200 groundwater-sourced public water systems in the county. Ms. Baker is especially interested in the impacts of the burgeoning hemp and marijuana industry on the groundwater resources of southwest Oregon. Ms. Baker will continue to represent local government interests and SW Oregon groundwater concerns on the Committee.

Ken Bentz is a rancher and groundwater irrigator in the Harney Basin, where he has been active in working to find solutions to declining water levels over the past several years. Mr. Bentz is also a ranch real estate broker and has worked with several ranches that have had a groundwater component to their value. Mr. Bentz will continue representation of agricultural and southeastern Oregon groundwater concerns on the Committee and bring new insights to the Committee from his experience in the real-estate sector.

Brandon Brown is a fourth-generation water well supply driller and drilling industry business owner in northeast Oregon. Mr. Brown has interests and experience related to groundwater and those engaged in agriculture, irrigation, domestic use, and the well drilling industry itself. Mr. Brown is also interested in how groundwater and well drilling relate to Oregon commerce and communities. Mr. Brown will continue representation from the well drilling industry and northeastern Oregon groundwater concerns on the Committee.

IV. Alternatives

The Commission may consider the following alternatives:

1. Appoint Susan Baker, Ken Bentz, and Brandon Brown to GWAC terms beginning December 1, 2022, through November 30, 2025; or
2. Direct staff to return to the next Commission meeting with another slate of appointments, which reflects a different set of interest categories and/or geographic locations.

V. Recommendation

The Acting Director recommends the Commission select Alternative 1 and appoint the recommended slate of candidates for the stated term.

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