



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

**Water Resources Department**

Technical Services Division

725 Summer St NE, Suite A

Salem, OR 97301

Phone 503 986-0900

**PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY  
GROUNDWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**TUESDAY, July 29, 2025**

**9:00 to 12:00**

**OWRD office in Salem, Oregon and online via ZOOM**

**GWAC members**

Zach Freed, Chair

Richard Smith

Dave Noble

Ken Bentz

Steve Patten

Eric Schneider

**OWRD staff**

Justin Iverson

Tim Seymour

Jason Spriet

Kelly Mainz

Annette Liebe

Kris Byrd

Darrick Boschmann

Linda Ray

**Attendees**

Christy Keerins

Michael Martin

Lisa Brown

Lorissa Singhose

Kristen Shellman

Ryan Krabill

Rob Frank

**A. Call to Order and Introductions**

<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=198>

**B. Division 512 (Harney Basin Critical Groundwater Area) Rulemaking Update**

Jason Spriet, East Region Manager, Tim Seymour, Assistant Groundwater Section Manager, and Kelly Mainz, Water Policy Analyst, presented on how the proposed amendments to the Division 512 rules will address declining groundwater levels and overdrawn conditions in the Harney Basin.

**OWRD Staff Presentation Recording:** <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=773>

- **Groundwater Report for the Division 512 Rulemaking:**  
<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=871>
- **Strategy and tools being implemented:**  
<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=1651>
- **Next Steps:** <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=4419>

**Presentation Question/Answer Recording:**

<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=4566>



## **Rulemaking webpage:**

[Oregon Water Resources Department : Harney \(Division 512\) Rulemaking :](#)  
[Oregon Administrative Rules : State of Oregon](#)

(Secretary of State submittal, draft rule language for public comment, and much more.)

## **C. Brief Public Comments to the Groundwater Advisory Committee**

**Recording:** <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=5478>

- **Rob Frank**, Harney Co Commissioner and RAC 512 member  
<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=5720>
- **KristinShelman** former HC commissioner, former GWAC member  
<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=5884>
- **Lorissa Singhose**, famer/rancher in Riley / Silver Creek, SAC and RAC and local collaborative member. <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=6019>
- **Lisa Brown**, Water Watch of OR staff attorney, PBP group member since 2014, 512 RAC member: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=6267>
- **Mario Petrilli Gortdou**, HC resident:  
<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=6397>
- **Michael Martin**, League of Oregon Cities:  
<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=6448>

## **D. Development of Committee Advice to the Commission**

**Recording:** <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=6588>

The Division 512 public comment period was open during this meeting and the Committee was invited to provide advice to the Commission on the proposed rules.

Chair, Zach Freed opened up the discussion for GWAC members to provide general reflections and opinions as a response to the staff presentation.

- Richard Smith: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=6733>
- Ken Bentz: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=7058>
- Dave Noble: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=7319>

**The committee worked together to develop recommendations to the Oregon Water Commission**

**Recording:** <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=7541>



The following recommendations were discussed and developed by the Groundwater Advisory Committee members present at the meeting:

1. GWAC agrees there is a need for corrective controls to reduce groundwater use.
2. GWAC agrees (majority, not consensus) that the three proposed tools (Classification, CGWA, SWMPA) are appropriate to use in this basin (additional advice on CGWA boundary)
3. GWAC agrees that the boundaries for implementation of the Classification and SWMPA are appropriate.
4. GWAC agrees (majority, not consensus) that the basin is one hydraulically connected groundwater reservoir, but the committee has questions about the upper Blitzen area being included in the CGWA.
5. GWAC agrees with six of the seven subarea designations; the upper Blitzen is the exception.
6. GWAC agrees that using the USGS numerical model of the Harney Basin to determine PTW and minimize economic impact was appropriate.
7. GWAC agrees that the adaptive management framework is a very important inclusion in the proposed rules.
8. GWAC agrees that an initial PTW designation based on water right duty of 2.5 ACFT/ac is appropriate.
9. GWAC agrees that actual “wet” water use is the appropriate benchmark for initial allocation.
10. GWAC agrees that a 30-year implementation timeline is appropriate for balancing community economic concerns with groundwater level stabilization.
11. GWAC agrees that a target water level trend as stated in rule is a good starting point. GWAC additionally recommends acknowledging and accounting for outliers (individual wells that may continue to show substantial declines).
12. GWAC recommends WRC to consider Voluntary Agreements to increase flexibility of water use within the subareas.

Examples discussed by GWAC include establishing a subarea special district, cooperative, or other local entity to provide local oversight and management authority for water use within the annual PTW and district (subarea) boundary.



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(Recording of GWAC-discussion of examples of voluntary agreement examples:

<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=9979>)

Richard Smith moved to adopt the above twelve recommendations as Critical Groundwater Area advise to send on to the Oregon Water Resources Commission.

Dave Noble seconded, the vote to adopt was as follows;

- Zach Freed - yes
- Dave Noble – yes
- Richard Smith – yes
- Eric Schneider – yes
- Steven Patten – yes
- Ken Bentz – yes

The department will submit these 12 recommendations to the Division 512 Rules Coordinator

### E. Public comments #2

<https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=10657>

Rob Frank: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=10680>

Lorissa Singhose: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=10784>

Kristen Shelman: <https://youtu.be/FbaHLdXq9ws?t=11003>

F. **Adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 12:07 pm.