

Walla Walla Subbasin Update

Oregon Water Resources Commission
January 26, 2017

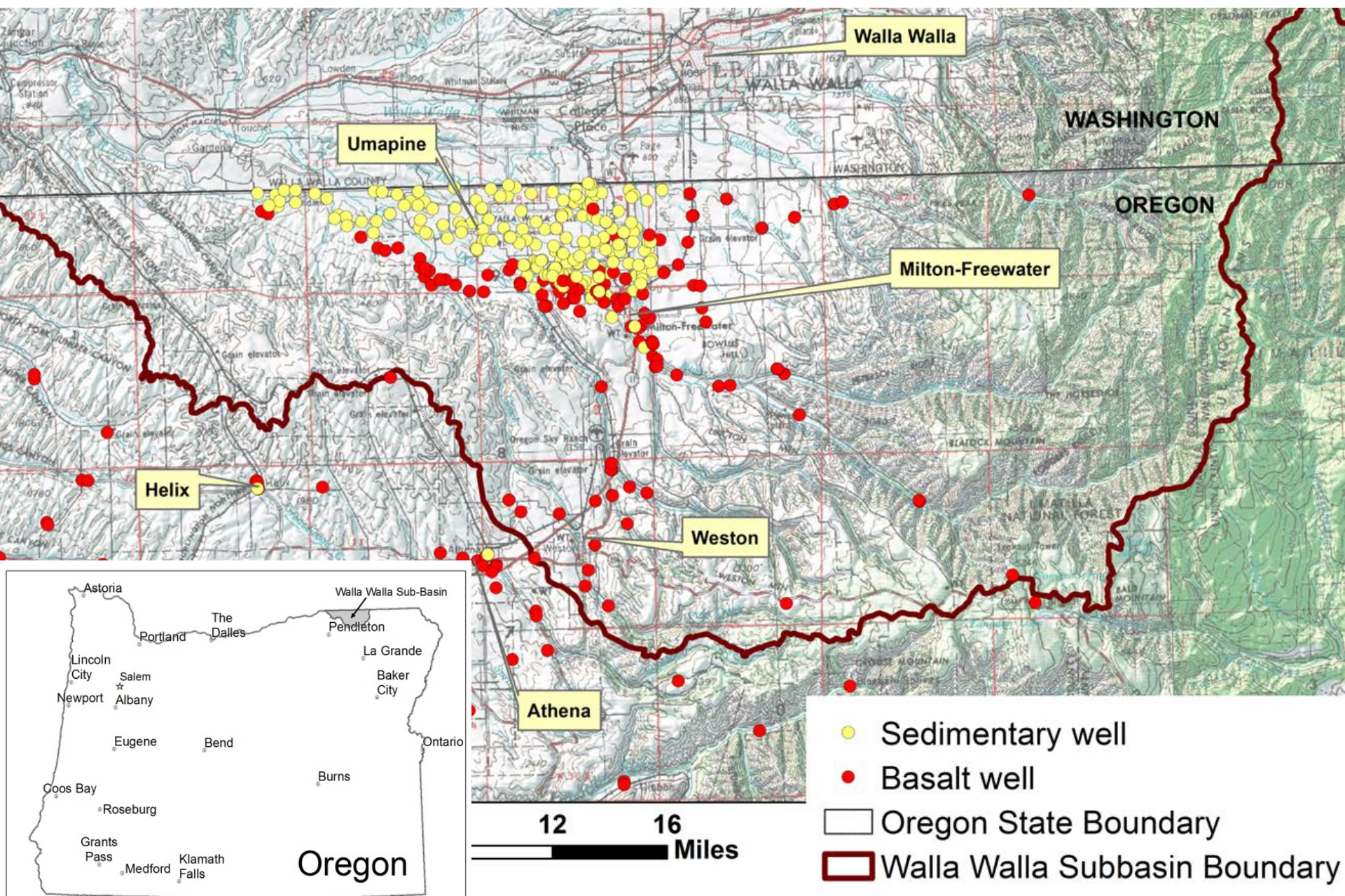


Brenda Bateman, Technical Services Division Administrator
Justin Iverson, Groundwater Section Manager

Background

- **October 2016 WRC Meeting:**
 - **Basalt Hydrogeology**
 - **Walla Walla Subbasin Water Level Declines**
 - **Department Concerns and Future Plans**

Background



Background

- **Walla Walla Sub-Basin Groundwater Management Priorities:**
 - **Close basin to further groundwater allocation***
 - **Increase basalt water use measurement and reporting by users***
 - **Increase Department data collection, drill dedicated observation well(s)**
 - **Stabilize groundwater levels***
 - **Encourage a voluntary, community-based, long-term, holistic water supply plan***

Work Since Last Meeting

- **Since last WRC meeting:**
 - **Held 3 additional public meetings (Oct, Dec)**
 - **Met with counterparts at WA Dept. of Ecology (Jan 4)**
 - **Convened a RAC and held first meeting (Dec 12)**

Current Rulemaking

Proposed changes to the OAR Chapter 690, Division 507 Umatilla Basin Program rules:

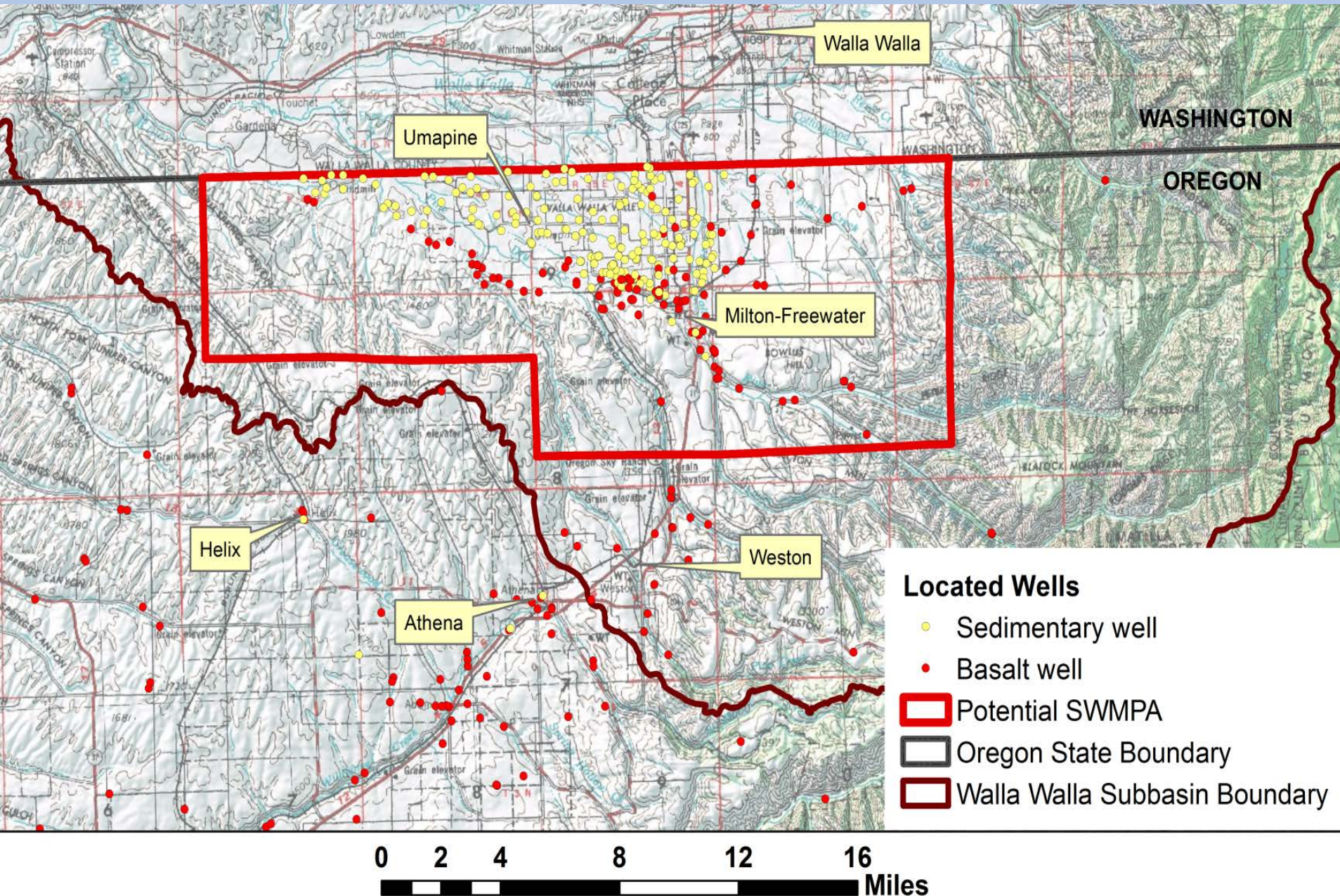
- **Classify Groundwater in the Walla Walla Subbasin**
 - **Classify for exempt uses only**
 - **Don't exacerbate groundwater declines**

Current Rulemaking

Proposed changes to the OAR Chapter 690, Division 507 Umatilla Basin Program rules:

- **Establish a Serious Water Management Problem Area (SWMPA)**
 - Require basalt water use measurement and reporting by existing users
 - Better understand the water budget of the basalt system

Proposed SWMPA Boundaries



Rules Advisory Committee

- **12-member RAC representing:**
 - **Basalt Groundwater Irrigators**
 - **Senior and Junior, Small Business and Large**
 - **Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation**
 - **Umatilla County**
 - **City of Milton-Freewater**
 - **Walla Walla Watershed Council**
 - **Walla Walla Irrigation District**
 - **The Nature Conservancy**
 - **Oregon Cattleman's Association**

Rules Advisory Committee

- **Discussion included:**
 - **Placing further limits on exempt uses? No.**
 - **Expanding boundaries of the SWMPA**
 - **Enforcement issues.**
 - **Applicants seeking permit extension.**

Next Steps

Continued scientific, policy, and community outreach efforts:

- January: Revise proposed rule language**
- February 3: Convene 2nd RAC meeting**
- Spring 2017: WRD continues field & data work**
- Month of March: Public Comment**
- Week of March 20: GWAC review and comment**
- Week of March 26: Public hearing in the basin, Commissioner Eric Quaempts, presiding**
- May 11: Bring rules to Commission for adoption**
- Meters installed by Jan. 1, 2018**

Next Steps, continues

- **Staff continue to work with local basalt well users to discuss management options to curtail declining groundwater levels:**
 - **July 2017: Public meetings regarding sub-area boundaries**
 - **September 2017: Sub-area groups declare intention to draft voluntary agreements**

Thank you!
Questions?