

News from the Water Resources Department's Enforcement Section

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E-File Start Cards & Fees

Save time and money by filing online! As of September 25, 2006, the Department is accepting e-filing of start cards and paying for start card fees with a credit card through a web interface. E-filing eliminates the need to send the region office a copy of the start card. Contact Ken Smith at (503) 986-0867 to sign up.



Critical Ground Water Areas

The law requires that when pumping of ground water exceeds the long-term natural replenishment of the underground water reservoir, the Water Resources Commission must act to declare the source a critical ground water area and restrict

water use. The law is designed to prevent excessive declines in ground water levels. The order setting the limits of the critical area may also provide for certain users of water to have preference over other users, regardless of established water right priority dates. Critical ground water areas also can be declared if there is interference between wells and senior surface water users or deterioration of ground water quality.

Once a critical ground water proceeding is initiated by the Commission, no new well permits are issued during the course of the proceeding. The final order may restrict both existing and future uses in order to stabilize the resource.

To date Oregon has declared seven critical ground water areas. The critical areas are Cow Valley near Vale; The Dalles in Wasco County; Cooper Mountain-Bull Mountain southwest of Beaverton and Tigard; and the Butter Creek, Ordnanace (alluvial and basalt) and Stage Gulch areas in Morrow and Umatilla Counties.

Questions regarding critical ground water areas and the restrictions within those areas should be directed to the appropriate watermaster.

Ground Water Limited Areas

The northern Willamette Valley and much of the Columbia River plateau contain many sources of ground water that are isolated in volcanic rock. These aquifers are in the Columbia River Basalt group, or basalt for short. Heavy pumping from the basalt and another geologic unit, the Troutdale Formation, have caused declines in these areas.

The Commission has established 12 "ground water limited areas" in the northern Willamette Valley. These areas are located as follows: Sandy-Boring, Damascus, Gladtidings, Kingston, Mt. Angel, Sherwood-Dammasch-Wilsonville, Stayton-Sublimity, Parrett Mountain, Chehalem Mountain, Eola Hills, South Salem Hills and Amity Hills-Walnut Hill. The Willamette and Sandy Basin programs list the limitations. Outside the Willamette Valley are the Fort Rock and Ella Butte limited areas. Through changes to the basin programs, new water rights in these areas are restricted to a few designated uses.

The Department's role is to protect existing water rights

by preventing excessive ground water declines, restoring aquifer stability, and preserving aquifers with limited storage capacity for designated high public value uses. As more wells are drilled, the Department may find other areas where use from basalt and other aquifers must be limited. Such limitation applies to the specific aquifer that a well is tapping. In some cases, water may still be available at a different depth from a different geologic formation. Questions regarding the boundaries of these ground water limited areas should be directed to the appropriate watermaster.

Staff Changes

Denise Seaman recently started working in the Enforcement Section. She replaces Laurie Norton who took a position with the Department's Data Center. Denise is conducting well log research and reviewing well reports for completeness. She will be sending logs back to the bonded well constructor for clarification or correction. Prior to coming to the agency, Denise worked in the private sector. If you or one of your customers are looking for a well log contact Denise at (503) 986-0850.

Codi Holmes is also a new addition to the Enforcement Section. Codi replaces Janet Halladey.

Codi has been with the Section for approximately six months. She is responsible for the Well ID Program and reviewing Start Cards for completeness. If you need Start Cards, Well Logs or well tags, please give Codi a call at (503) 986-0854.

Warning of Silicosis Risks

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) warns of silicosis risks when there is exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust during well construction activities. Silicosis is a serious and potentially fatal respiratory disease. There are steps employers and employees can take to reduce risks.

Preventative steps include:

- A. Plan ahead to eliminate or control the dust at the source.
- B. Do not use silica sand or other substances containing more than 1% crystalline silica as abrasive blasting materials. Substitute less hazardous materials.
- C. Use engineering controls and containment methods such as blast-cleaning cabinets and machines, wet drilling, or wet sawing of silica containing materials to control the hazard and protect adjacent workers from exposure.
- D. Routinely maintain dust control systems to keep them in good working order.
- E. Practice good personal hygiene to avoid unnecessary exposure to other worksite contaminants such as lead (i.e. Dust on clothing, etc.)
- F. Wear disposable or washable protective clothes at the worksite.
- G. Shower (if possible) and change into clean clothes before leaving the worksite to prevent contamination of cars, homes, and other work areas.
- H. Conduct air monitoring to measure worker exposures and ensure that controls are providing adequate protection for workers.
- I. Use adequate respiratory protection when source controls cannot keep silica exposures below the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommended exposure limit.
- J. Provide periodic medical examinations for all workers who may be exposed to respirable crystalline silica.
- K. Post warning signs to mark the boundaries of work areas contaminated with respirable crystalline silica.
- L. Provide workers with training that includes information about health effects, work practices, and protective equipment for respirable crystalline

Well Said Newsletter

Available on the web at www.wrd.state.or.us/OWRD/GW/forms.shtml.

Please share with others at your organization.

Well Said is a production of the Oregon Water Resources Department's Enforcement 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 can be directed to Kristopher Byrd at (503)986-0851 or Kristopher.R.BYRD@ wrd.state.or.us.

“Serving the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management.”

silica.
M. Report all cases of silicosis to State health departments and OSHA.

NIOSH is the federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations for the prevention of work-related injury and illness. For more information about silicosis contact NIOSH at 1-800-35-NIOSH or visit their web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html>.

OGWA Fall Convention Presenters

Ken Lite, Hydrogeologist, will be one of the Department's presenters at the Oregon Ground Water Association Fall Convention in October. Bob Devyldere, Information Services Manager, will be presenting the Department's progress toward E-filing Start Cards.

Static Water Level Readings

A static water level reading should be taken prior to and after deepening a well. The new well log forms have fields to enter this data. Questions regarding amendments to well reports should be directed to Codi Holmes at 503-986-0854.

When is a Well Considered a Public Water System?

If you serve four or more households from a well it may be considered a public water system. Public water systems are regulated by the Oregon Health Division. Questions about public water systems and well head protection should be directed to the Oregon Health Division's drinking water section at (503) 731-4010 or the Department of Environmental Qualities Water Quality Division at (503) 229-5279.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q- *Who is allowed to construct geotechnical holes?*

A- Geotechnical holes may be constructed by Oregon registered professional geologists, Oregon registered professional civil engineers, licensed Water Supply Well Constructors or licensed Monitoring Well Constructors.

Q- *Can I take a water sample out of a temporary geotechnical hole?*

A- "Temporary" geotechnical holes may be used to collect a water quality sample without

being considered a well. "Temporary" means the hole is abandoned within 72 hours.

Q- *I have a dry well on my property. What do I need to do to abandon it?*

A- Dry wells are regulated by the Department of Environmental Quality. Questions regarding the abandonment of dry wells should be directed to Barbara Priest, Senior Watershed Assessment Coordinator, at (503) 229-5945. <http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/groundwa/unichome.htm>.

Q- *What are the setbacks for a well from a property line?*

A- There is no setback from property lines, however, before placing a well close to a property line, care should be taken to make sure the well is placed on your property.

Q- *Can I abandon a water supply well with bentonite?*

A- No, not without a special standard.

Q- *Who is required to repair a well involved in a real estate transaction. The buyer or the seller?*

A- The landowner where the well is located is ultimately responsible to maintain the well so it does not become a source of contamination or is considered a health hazard.

**Put A Salmon
On Your** 

**Help Oregon streams,
parks, and fish.**

Learn more at the
Oregon Plan for Salmon
and Watersheds website:
www.oregon-plan.org

Everyone can benefit. Anyone can help.

Put a Salmon on Your Plate!

Purchase a salmon license plate and join thousands of Oregonians who support abundant salmon populations, clean water and state park salmon projects.

Salmon plate purchasers pay an extra \$30 every two years above regular passenger vehicle registration fees. Half the fee goes directly to fix road-related impacts to salmon and trout streams by improving water quality, fish habitat and fish passage through OWEB grants. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department invests the other half in salmon habitat and related projects in state parks.

For more information about salmon license plates, visit the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds website at www.oregon-plan.org.



We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.wrd.state.or.us

Well casing



Figure 1. Void in well seal.



Figure 2. Sewage near a well. The well is inside building on left.



Figure 3. Damaged Water Supply Well.



Figure 4. This well is completely submerged. You can barely make out the well cap in the photo.



We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.wrd.state.or.us

Region Office Directory

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Southwest

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Phone: (541)388-6669
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North Central

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Fax: (541)278-0287

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**Enforcement
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