

News from the Water Resources Department's Well Construction and Compliance Section

NEW NC REGION WELL INSPECTOR

Welcome to OWRD!



Please join us in welcoming Erik Thomasser as the new well inspector for the North Central Region, working out of the Pendleton office. Erik received his B.S. in Geology from the University of Oregon (UO), where he was also nominated as a USGS NAGT (National Association of Geoscience Teachers) scholar. After graduation, Erik worked with a paleontologist at the UO as a research assistant, where he gained experience with GIS and field mapping. Following his research assistant position, he became an Exploration Geologist specializing in Sediment-Hosted disseminated Gold Deposits (SHGDs) in the Western Cordillera of the United States. During his tenure in Nevada he was responsible for: on-site management of drilling operations, drill sample logging, field data collection, prospecting, data analysis / modeling, geochemical and geophysical survey implementation / interpretation, and drill target development. When Erik isn't busy out in the field, he enjoys college football, rock collecting, and fly fishing. He and his wife are expecting their first child in April.

We are very excited to have Erik join our team of well inspectors. If you would like to contact Erik with your well construction questions, please call him at (541) 278-5456 or email Erik.A.Thomasser@wrdd.state.or.us.



NEW WALLOWA COUNTY WATERMASTER

WALLOWA COUNTY

The Department is pleased to announce that as of October 7, 2014, Wallowa County has its own Watermaster: David Bates.

After graduating from Heppner High School, David attended Blue Mountain Community College. He received his degree in Physical Geography from the University of Idaho. While attending college, David worked for the U.S. Forest Service as a hydrology technician in the Umatilla National Forest. He continued his work with the Forest Service in Central Oregon, where he conducted night snorkeling research in Trapper Creek. In 2007, David was hired by OWRD as an

Assistant Watermaster for the Deschutes River Basin, gaining valuable experience in several different counties. In District 7, along with his normal duties, David is tasked with monitoring surface stream gaging networks and measuring discharge of streams.

For more information about District 7, contact David at (541) 426-4464 or David.D.Bates@wrdd.state.or.us.



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NEW WELL CONSTRUCTION RULES ADOPTED

At its November 21, 2014 meeting, the Oregon Water Resources Commission adopted new administrative rules related to well construction. The new rules became effective on November 25, 2014 and include the following changes and additions:

Regarding UNHYDRATED BENTONITE (UB)...

- UB may now be used to 200 feet and through up to 50 feet of standing water to seal water supply wells.
- UB must be screened across a minimum ¼ inch mesh screen prior to placement in the water-filled interval of the seal.
- UB cannot be used in the water-filled portion of the temporary casing or used as an annular seal if there is any up-hole flow of water.
- UB cannot be used in the water-filled portion of the annular space if the ground-water it comes in contact with exceeds 800 parts per million (ppm) total dissolved solids (TDS). The TDS reading must be reported on the well report when bentonite is used to seal a well.

Other items addressed...

- Water quality cannot interfere with the proper hydration of bentonite in closed loop installations and in water well installations.
- Well Constructors are now required to calculate and report the amount of sealing material required and the amount actually used when placing an annular seal.
- Only wells with well reports that describe the original construction of the well can be deepened without an approved special standard. A copy of the original report needs to be submitted with the deepening report or the original report number needs to be referenced on the deepening report.
- A rule reference error in the Geotechnical Hole rules has been corrected.
- Sparge well classification is changed from a geotechnical hole to a monitoring well.

These Rules were developed in conjunction with a Rules Advisory Committee (RAC) that included water supply well constructors, consultants, landowners, OWRD, and other natural resource agencies. The RAC met throughout the spring and summer of 2014 to develop the rules. The Department would like to thank everyone for their hard work and time commitment that made this possible. Copies of the new rules have already been mailed out to all licensed well constructors in the State and are available on our website at <http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/pages/law/oar.aspx>. Questions about the new rules should be directed to Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852 or Joel.W.Jeffery@wrdd.state.or.us.





WINTER RECHECK WELLS

The Department has received several calls recently from septic permit applicants in Oregon who are required by DEQ to install “winter recheck” wells. These wells are generally required by DEQ to monitor winter groundwater levels. Due to their construction and use, OWRD has classified winter recheck wells as piezometers. Piezometers are a type of monitoring well designed solely to obtain groundwater levels, and can only be installed where there is no known or reasonably suspected contamination. Only licensed Monitoring Well Constructors or landowners with a Landowner’s Permit and Bond may install piezometers. Start Cards and Well Reports are required to be submitted for these wells.

For more information about piezometers or winter recheck wells, contact Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852 or Joel.W.Jeffery@wrd.state.or.us.

BENTON COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM

Benton County Environmental Health (BCEH) recently received a grant of \$5,000 from the Domestic Well Safety Program (DWSP), a division of the Oregon Health Authority. This grant allowed BCEH to purchase arsenic and total coliform bacteria / E. coli tests from a local analytical Laboratory in Corvallis and to provide free domestic well testing for 90 Benton County residents. Additionally, the Oregon State University’s Cooperative Extension Program was able to donate 90 nitrate tests to augment the domestic well testing program.

The intent of the program was twofold: First, to collect and test domestic well water samples for arsenic, total coliform bacteria, and nitrates; and second, to provide outreach and education to domestic well users regarding well safety.

The BCEH pilot program started with four targeted areas: Children’s Farm Home, Monroe, Nash Road at Brooklane Drive, and 53rd St. at Bellfountain Rd. These areas were chosen based upon guidance from a technical advisory group which is composed of BCEH’s partners and stakeholders. Later, the program was expanded to include the entire county.

After the 90 participants were chosen for the program, the well sampling was conducted by BCEH Interns and volunteers. Each well site visit included a visual inspection of the well, collection of a water sample, and distribution of educational material and data to the homeowner. The water samples were delivered to the analytical laboratory on the day of collection. If total coliforms tested positive, E. coli tests were conducted.

The results of the water testing revealed that 25 wells contained nitrates, 15 wells had arsenic, and 14 wells contained total coliform. All 90 wells tested negative for E. coli contamination.

A review of the test results revealed that although coliform was located throughout Benton County, a few groupings were located close to Highway 99 and Highway 20. A small number of the wells that had arsenic were also grouped together. Additionally, a grouping of wells with nitrates was identified near Highway 20.

The Grant Outcomes Report determined that many well owners do not have their wells tested for nitrates, arsenic, total coliform and E coli. Therefore, it is imperative to continue promoting proper well maintenance through outreach and education.



ACCESS PORTS

The Department would like to get the word out about **temporary abandonments**. Well constructors that temporarily abandon a water supply well and weld a metal plate on top of the casing still must provide the ½ inch access port. This port is often the only way to access the well in order to obtain a static water level measurement. If a well is temporarily abandoned and no access port is installed, you may be contacted by OWRD to return to the site and install the access port.

Questions about temporary abandonment requirements should be directed to Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852 or Joel.W.Jeffery@wrd.state.or.us.

CONTINUING EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Water Resources Department is pleased to announce that on December 16, 2014 Mr. Warren McCann, Monitor Well Constructor License #10459, was elected to the position of Vice Chair of the OWRD Continuing Education Committee (CEC).

Mr. McCann has many years of experience in the drilling industry and is the owner of Subsurface Technologies in North Plains, Oregon. The OWRD, along with CEC Chairperson Greg McInnis, welcome Mr. McCann to his new position and look forward to his continued insight and commitment to the CEC.

Questions about the CEC or continuing education credits should be directed to Laurie Norton at (503) 986-0856 or Laurie.K.Norton@wrd.state.or.us.

WELL IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

Of all the water wells drilled in the State of Oregon prior to 1996, only a fraction have been identified and labeled. Part of our mission in the Well Construction and Compliance Section is to locate and identify these unlabeled wells.

According to the well identification and labeling rules which took effect in 1996, all wells drilled, deepened, converted or altered after 1996 are required to have a well ID number attached to the well head. The Well ID Program facilitates better management of Oregon's ground water resources and provides the public easier access to information about specific wells. It also links existing wells (such as domestic, irrigation, commercial, monitoring, etc.), with Department records through the process of tagging them. If the well is not "tagged", the owner of the property where the well is located is responsible for obtaining a Well ID number when the property changes ownership.

For more information regarding the Well ID Program please contact Ladeena Bell at (503) 986-0854 or Ladeena.K.Bell@wrd.state.or.us.

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 Well Construction & Compliance 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) 986-0851 or Kristopher.R.Byrd@wrd.state.or.us



For Well Construction & Compliance resources, log onto http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/gw/wcc_index.aspx

PROBLEMS NOTED IN THE FIELD



Damaged and uncovered, this monitoring well is directly in the path of large trucks. Without a proper covering, it can easily become a conduit for contamination.

This piece of rusty casing is from a well abandonment. The casing was so corroded and pitted that it pulled apart during abandonment work.



The owner of this well built a well pad over the top. Not only was it very difficult to access, but it also does not meet standards for top terminal height.



This well casing had significant rust damage, resulting in large holes which allowed access to the aquifer.



At the time of this picture this well was still being used.



WCC: "Protecting water resources through appropriate prevention and enforcement."





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