

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

## EXEMPT USE OF GROUNDWATER & MARIJUANA

For those water well constructors who have clients interested in water use laws as it pertains to the growing and cultivation of medical and recreational marijuana, the OWRD home page ([www.oregon.gov/OWRD](http://www.oregon.gov/OWRD)) now offers a brief summary titled "Understanding Water-Use Regulations: Medical and Recreational Marijuana". This two-page document explains that marijuana-related water use is subject to the same regulations as any other irrigated crop. As such, there are no exempt uses of groundwater for irrigating a commercial crop.



Use of groundwater to grow plants for commercial purposes requires a water right permit. Under the Oregon Water Code of 1909, all water belongs to the public and any right to use water is assigned by the state. With few exceptions, cities, irrigators, businesses, and other water users must obtain a water right from the Water Resources Department to use water from any source—whether it is underground, or from lakes or streams. If you have further questions, please call your local watermaster or the Salem office of the Water Resources Department at (503) 986-0801.

## INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY

The Oregon Water Resources Department was the 2015 recipient of the American Water Resources Association's Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Award. This award recognizes outstanding IWRM teamwork on a water resources project. IWRM teams are widely recognized as essential to complex water management efforts.

"Oregon is honored to receive the 2015 IWRM Award and greatly appreciates the Association's commitment to and recognition of Integrated Water Resources Management," Tom Byler, Director of OWRD remarked. "Receiving this award is a positive reminder to continue fostering collaborative planning across different sectors and institutions."



Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy offers a road map for meeting the State's instream and out-of-stream water needs, including water quantity, quality, and ecosystem needs. The 2013 Oregon Legislature strongly supported implementation of the state's first water strategy, providing more than \$30 million in funding across agencies, allowing for greater collaboration. The 2015 Oregon Legislature continued this investment, providing an additional \$54 million for water-related planning, analysis, and project development.

Receiving AWRA's IWRM Award in Denver, Colorado.  
(L-R) Wade Peerman, Oregon DEQ; Alyssa Mucken, OWRD;  
John Tracy, AWRA President (2015).

### ARTICLES

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## RULES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## Rules

The Oregon Water Resources Department is currently assembling a rules advisory committee (RAC) to review and discuss the administrative rules pertaining to both water supply and monitoring wells. The RAC will consist of members of the drilling and consulting community as well as Department staff. After the RAC meetings have concluded, a proposed version of the rules will be circulated for public review. We will accept written comments on the proposed rules and also hold public hearings during 2016. If you wish to obtain a copy of the draft rules, when they are available, or find out when the public hearings will be held, please contact Kristopher Byrd at (503) 986-0851 or by e-mail at [Kristopher.R.Byrd@wrdd.state.or.us](mailto:Kristopher.R.Byrd@wrdd.state.or.us).

## WELL OWNER FLOOD TIPS

One of the effects of flooding throughout parts of Oregon is well contamination due to surface water infiltration. Flood water can be contaminated with bacteria, chemicals or other pollutants that may get into the groundwater system through a missing or inadequate annular seal, well cap, or broken or missing pump riser or conduit. In addition, if any part of the well's electrical system is flooded there is the potential for electrical shock.

Well affected by flood water in Ontario, Oregon. →



The following wells have a greater risk of contamination:

- Older wells that may not have been constructed to current standards.
- Shallow wells, or wells that draw their water from surface water-connected sources.
- Wells that have been completely covered by flood waters.
- Hand dug, excavated, or drive point wells.

Due to concerns associated with flooding, well owners should do the following to remain safe:

- Stay away from the well pump while it is flooded to avoid electrical shock.
- Do not drink the water from the well or use it before disinfection to avoid becoming sick.
- Hire a licensed and bonded water well constructor or pump installer to clean and turn on the pump, flush and disinfect the well, and perform any other necessary maintenance.

If your well has been flooded, use water from a safe drinking water source until a professional water well or pump services contractor can examine your well and pump system. Questions about well construction and maintenance should be directed to Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852 or [Joel.W.Jeffery@wrdd.state.or.us](mailto:Joel.W.Jeffery@wrdd.state.or.us).

## Exempt Well Recording Program Update

In March 2013, the Department conducted a thorough review of the Exempt Well Recording Program. Based on the review, it was decided several program changes were in order. One of the biggest changes was the inclusion of aerial photos for properties where wells are constructed. These photos are meant to simplify the process for well owners and help them complete the map requirement in a much more timely and accurate manner. The Department includes these photos in initial information packets sent to well owners.

The Exempt Well Recording Program was designed to have land owners provide the Department with maps, or aerial photos, showing the location of their exempt well on their property. Prior to program changes, the compliance rate hovered around 30 percent, with much of the submitted information unusable. However, since the program changes, the quality of the submitted data has improved dramatically and the compliance rate has jumped to approximately 70 percent. The increase in compliance benefits the well construction industry, landowners, realtors, the Department, and others, by providing accurate well location information.

Questions about the Exempt Well Recording Program should be directed to Scott Kudlemyer at (503) 986-0861 or [Scott.B.Kudlemyer@wrd.state.or.us](mailto:Scott.B.Kudlemyer@wrd.state.or.us).



Example — Hollow Stem Auger Drilling Machine.

## SAFETY CORNER

The following article was published on the Occupational Safety & Health Administration's (OSHA) *Quick Takes* Accidents Website:

A driller and driller's helper were operating a mobile drilling machine used for soil and foundation investigations. A hollow stem auger section about 5 feet in length was attached by a coupling to a drive chuck on the machine. The driller left the control station while the auger was engaged and slowly rotating and reached across the auger to grab his gloves from the frame of the drilling machine. Apparently a projection of the rotating coupling caught the drillers vest and pulled him into the auger. The auger continued to rotate, twisting the driller around it. The helper, seeing what happened, shut down the machine. The driller suffered broken ribs and his right arm had to be amputated.

In this case the driller was lucky that the helper was on-site and able to shut down the machine. Caution should always be taken around heavy equipment and site safety plans should be followed.



"Otter Be Safe!"

### WELL SAID NEWSLETTER

Available on the web at [www.oregon.gov/owrd/pages/gw/forms.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/pages/gw/forms.aspx). 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](mailto:Kristopher.R.Byrd@wrd.state.or.us)



For Well Construction & Compliance resources, log onto [http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/gw/wcc\\_index.aspx](http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/gw/wcc_index.aspx)



## DEQ Offers FREE WELL WATER TEST in Clatsop & Tillamook Counties this Spring

The DEQ is testing groundwater in the North Coast for nitrate, arsenic, bacteria and pesticides. The DEQ will test 60 to 100 wells and send well owners an individualized report of well water.

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature provided funds to the DEQ's Groundwater Protection Program to monitor groundwater across Oregon. Using available data, DEQ staff identified "Hot Spots" or Areas of concern around the state. Nitrate concentrations and shallow aquifers, as well as community interest, indicated the North Coast as a potential "hot spot."

Public water suppliers are required to test their water on a regular basis, however, home owners who rely on well water are not required to test their well water unless they transfer the property.

For these reasons, the DEQ is continuing this groundwater study to learn more about groundwater quality and communicate any health risks to homeowner that rely on well water. The DEQ will sample well water prior to any home treatment and filtration and then analyze the samples for chemicals that pose a potential health risk as well as several common water quality indicators shown below:

- Nitrate/nitrite
- Arsenic
- Pesticides and herbicides (current use)
- General hardness (ion concentrations)
- Selected Metals
- Pharmaceuticals and personal care products
- Bacteria



This study commenced in the fall of 2015 and will continue into the spring of 2016.

**The public is invited to participate** by contacting the groundwater monitoring program, as soon as possible, at (503) 693-5736 or by email: [Groundwater.Monitoring@deg.state.or.us](mailto:Groundwater.Monitoring@deg.state.or.us). The DEQ will send you a form with questions about your well. The DEQ will select participants based on location and well characteristics.



"Serving the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management."



### PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



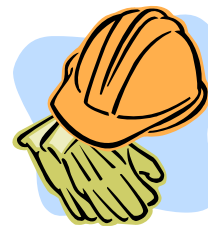
Water Well Installed within 10 feet of a black plastic sewer drain line.



Damaged Continuous Multichannel Tubing (CMT) monitoring well that was later decommissioned by over-drilling.



Water well affected by recent heavy rains in NW Oregon.



Drilling machine without license number or company name.





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## WELL SAID NEWSLETTER

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