



MEETING SUMMARY  
GROUNDWATER ADVISORY COMMITTEE (GWAC)  
March 13, 2018  
Rogue Conference Room, Third Floor  
North Mall Office Building,  
725 Summer St. N.E., Ste. A  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**GWAC Members Present/Phone**

Scott Kruger  
Chad Courtney  
Chris Hyatt (Phone)  
Mark Owens (Phone)  
Tom Pattee  
John Stadel  
Marshall Gannett (Phone)

**Staff and Public Members Present**

Justin Iverson, GW Manager  
Brenda Bateman, TSD Administrator  
Samantha Phillips, TSD Administrative Assistant  
Kris Byrd, Well Construction & Compliance Manager  
Racquel Rancier, Sr. Policy And Legislative Coord.  
Lisa Snyder, Administrative Services Administrator  
Ivan Gall, Field Services Administrator  
Genoa Ingram, OGWA

- **Call to Order** – Justin Iverson called meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.
- **Introductions** – A brief introduction was made by each committee member. Welcome to Marshall Gannett, newly appointed GWAC member.
- **Officer Election** – John Stadel – was nominated as Chair and Tom Pattee as Vice Chair. Committee vote was unanimous in both cases. No opposition. No abstentions 7-0-0
- **Approval of Minutes** – Minutes were reviewed from the October 13, 2017 meeting. Tom Pattee requested his name spelling be corrected. Tom motioned to approve the minutes after the correction is made; Chad Courtney seconded the motion. Committee vote was unanimous. No opposition. No abstentions. 7-0-0
- **Legislative Update** – Racquel Rancier, Senior Policy and Legislative Coordinator, provided an overview of the 2018 special legislative session. The Department ultimately submitted two budget proposals for the 2018 Legislative Session. Neither proposal was moved forward.

A Groundwater Study Package requested approximately \$1.3M in General Fund dollars, including eight positions, to increase the Department's capacity to conduct basin studies to better characterize Oregon's groundwater resources, while also improving capacity to work with communities on water

management solutions, and collect and process groundwater and surface water data. The Department expects to resubmit this package in the 2019-2021 Agency Requested Budget.

A Litigation Package requested approximately \$1.3M in General Fund dollars for the 2017-2019 biennium to address increased litigation expenses, including litigation related to groundwater regulation in the Klamath Basin. The Oregon Water Resources Department has a budget of approximately \$800,000 to cover the costs of legal services provided by Oregon Department of Justice (DOJ) for the 2017-2019 biennium. For the months of July 2017 through January 2018, the Department's DOJ billings totaled approximately \$600,000. Based on projections, the estimated total cost for DOJ billings this biennium will be approximately \$2.1M, which is about \$1.3M over the Department's current budget for legal expenses. Given that this package didn't move forward in the 2018 short session, the Department expects to request this additional funding from the Emergency Board at a later date; however, it is likely the Department will also need to achieve some savings administratively by holding vacant positions open.

- **Start Card Fee Update** – Lisa Snyder, Administrative Services Administrator provided an overview of the annual Start Card fee update to the committee. The Start Card revenue is 1.5% of the budget and supports 8-11 staff. The expenditure break out according to ORS 537.763 (4) is that no more than 5% may cover administrative expenses, no more than 20% should be expended on technical expenses and no less than 75% should be expended for field and enforcement expenses. The Start Card project revenue for 2017-2019 is approximately \$1.5M. Projected expenditures from the start card fee for the 2017-2019 biennium are approximately \$1.7M, which will reduce the carry-over balance in the fund to approximately \$32,000, significantly less than the desired carry-over amount. The Department intends to include a policy option package for the 2019-21 agency request budget that, if approved, would shift the funding for the hydrogeologist position that is currently funded by start card fees to the general fund. This change is in response to requests made by members of the OGWA.
- **Well Construction and Compliance Section Update** – Kris Byrd, Well Construction and Compliance Section Manager presented information regarding the number of well construction inspections in 2017. The presentation included the following:

Well Inspectors:

- Northwest Region covers 16,841 sq. miles. There is one well inspector out of Salem – 474 wells were inspected in 2017.
- North Central Region covers 10,738 sq. miles. There is one well inspector out of Pendleton - 171 wells were inspected in 2017.
- East Region covers 34,260 sq. miles. There is one well inspector out of Baker City – 211 wells were inspected in 2017.
- South Central Region, covers 21,920 sq. miles. There is one inspector out of Bend – 347 wells were inspected in 2017.
- Southwest Region, Covers 13,101 sq. miles. There is one well inspector out of Medford (this position currently vacant). – 238 wells were inspected in 2017.

Watermasters continue to support well inspectors with their duties as needed.

- **Critical Groundwater Area Update**, - Justin Iverson, Groundwater Section Manager presented updates on water level conditions in the State's Critical Groundwater Areas (CGWAs). The presentation emphasized challenges faced in Columbia River Basalt (CRB) aquifers. The wells in the CRB often produce at high rates but have a relatively small storage capacity, limited to the interflow zones which make up a small portion of total rock volume. In addition, interflow zones can be compartmentalized by faults and folds, further limiting the storage capacity of a particular compartment.

Justin shared information about three specific areas in in the CRB:

Positive CGWA management outcomes to date are associated with the availability of alternate water sources, coupled with significant artificial recharge projects. The department recommends maintaining existing CGWA controls and re-evaluating controls in area where groundwater levels continue to decline, as resources allow. Future recommendations include encouraging voluntary agreements and defining success by a specified water level decline rate at specified representative wells (as opposed to a defined SAY), with additional controls automatically imposed when targets are not met.

- **Groundwater Update**, - Justin Iverson, Groundwater Section Manager, shared that groundwater section staff are currently in the field collecting data from across the state. The data for most of the wells in Umatilla (including Walla Walla) and Harney County have been collected for this spring. The Mosier well replacement project managed by the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District has replaced or repaired 3 of 15 identified priority comingling wells, with work continuing.

- **Committee Members Update**

**Chad Courtney** reported that his company is drilling observation wells in Washington. He noted that inspectors are rarely on the scene he sees a big difference in the two state philosophies.

**Scott Kruger** reported that they have been awarded a small grant funded by OHA to test 30 home wells. The wells being targeted are from the vulnerable population.

**Mark Owens** suggested that for the next meeting we have a presentation from the Nature Conservancy regarding their work to prioritize basin studies across the state to address groundwater dependent ecosystems.

**J. Public Meeting Comments** – No public comments.

Meeting Adjourned 1:15 p.m. Next meeting dates: June 12, September 4 and November 13