

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



MEET LISA GRAHAM

The Oregon Water Resources Department is proud to introduce Ms. Lisa Graham. Lisa is a Water Rights Caseworker in the Water Rights Division of WRD. She spends her work days processing new allocations of water from initial application through the completion of the Water Right Permit. Lisa started with the Department in 2008, and has worked in several sections including Administrative Services, Information Services, Water Rights, and Well Construction and Compliance. Lisa is passionate about the environment and finding ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle. She is also very enthusiastic about her participation on the Department's Green Team.

Lisa's education includes a Masters of Fine Art degree, majoring in Wood, and minoring in Fibers, from the Oregon College of Art and Craft. When Lisa has free time, she uses her creative side to refinish furniture and create crafts using repurposed items. Most importantly, she enjoys spending time with her family — especially watching her children play sports.

If you have questions regarding water rights, please contact the Department at (503) 986-0900.

BRAND-NEW LOOK FOR WEBSITE

This Fall, expect to see a brand-new look and functionality on the Water Resources Department's website! The site is moving "from clutter to customer service." We're eager for you to see the new pages and features we have planned. Stay tuned.



STAFF UPDATES

Promotion - The Well Construction and Compliance Section is happy to announce that Buffy Gillis has been promoted into the Well Licensing Program Specialist position. Buffy started her new position on May 1 and hit the ground running with the processing of this year's well constructor license renewals and bond increase. Buffy's knowledge and experience working with the well constructor community will serve her well in her new role. Please feel free to contact Buffy with licensing or continuing education questions at (503) 986-0856 or by e-mail at Buffy.M.Gillis@oregon.gov.

SW Region Well Inspector - The Department would like to take this opportunity to remind well constructors in the Southwest part of the State (Jackson, Josephine, Douglas, Coos, Curry Counties) that due to budget constraints, the Medford Office is currently without a well inspector. Well constructors in the area with questions or concerns are encouraged to contact Joel Jeffery out of the Salem Office for assistance. Joel can be reached at (503) 986-0852 or by e-mail at Joel.W.Jeffery@oregon.gov.

2018 LICENSE RENEWALS



This year, 231 water supply and monitoring well constructors were due to renew their licenses by the June 30 deadline. Of those, 187 completed the process and received their updated licenses. Another 129 well constructor licenses will expire on June 30, 2019. As a reminder:

- A minimum of 14 continuing education credits (CECs) are required per licensing cycle.
- If you do not meet the minimum requirement for CECs at the time of renewal, you may still send in the renewal payment prior to June 30 to avoid the \$100 late fee.
- If you are currently bonded, and wish to remain bonded, please have your surety company send in a rider/stipulation showing that your bond has been increased from **\$10,000** to **\$20,000** during the 2019 renewal period, as required by ORS 537.753.

For questions related to licensing or continuing education, please contact Buffy Gillis at (503) 986-0856 or by e-mail at Buffy.M.Gillis@oregon.gov.

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MOSIER SPECIAL AREA STANDARDS UPDATE

Since the Water Resources Commission adopted the Mosier Special Area Standards in 2015, well construction and repair activity in the Mosier Creek Watershed has had significant Department oversight. This oversight blends consultation, scientific investigation, current statutes and rules, and Department expertise in order to determine the most appropriate sealing depths in a basin that has experienced more than 150 feet of water level declines since the late 1980s due to a combination of commingling wells and over pumping of the groundwater resource.

In an effort to combat the commingling of aquifers in the Mosier Creek Watershed, the Oregon Water Resources Department has been collaborating with the Mosier Watershed Council, the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District, and GSI Water Solutions, to repair, or decommission and replace, actively commingling wells in a designated priority area within the boundary of the Watershed. To date, this project has successfully replaced two domestic wells and three permitted irrigation wells. In addition, one combined irrigation and domestic well has been repaired and the project is on track to replace another seven to ten wells before June 30, 2019, the project funding cutoff date.



Drilling a New Well in Mosier Area

Well construction in the Mosier Watershed is complex. The primary production aquifer system is located within the Columbia River Basalt Group, presenting significant challenges to contractors and Department staff during the construction and repair of water supply wells.

Since the adoption of the Mosier Special Area Standards, the Department has been able to work cooperatively with well construction professionals to repair, or decommission and replace, wells in the Mosier area in a manner that is protective of the groundwater resource.

Questions about constructing wells in the Mosier area should be directed to Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852, or by e-mail at Joel.W.Jeffery@oregon.gov or Erik Thomasser at (541) 278-5456 or by e-mail at Erik.A.Thomasser@oregon.gov.

DEWATERING WELL PROJECTS

In various parts of the state with shallow groundwater, general contractors have found the need to perform dewatering work as part of construction projects. One high profile example is the dewatering work taking place outside the state capitol building in Salem. What some of these contractors are not aware of, however, is the need for the work to be performed by a licensed well construction professional. During this busy season, the Water Resources Department has been jumping from job to job making sure that general contractors are complying with requirements. Unfortunately, there have been several projects where the contractors were not knowledgeable regarding the well construction standards and needed to be brought into compliance. Although Department staff instructs contractors at the sites that we discover, there may be sites that we are not aware of.



Individuals who notice current dewatering projects, and have questions, are encouraged to contact the Department so that we can answer your questions, and provide guidance to contractors who may not be familiar with well construction standards. Often times a site visit and information are all that is required to resolve these issues.

Questions about dewatering wells should be directed to Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852 or by e-mail at Joel.W.Jeffery@oregon.gov.

WELL SAID NEWSLETTER

Available on the web at 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@oregon.gov

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



WHEN IS START CARD FEE DUE?



This year has been very busy for Oregon's well construction professionals and we have noticed more cases where well constructors have been late submitting required Start Cards, fees, and well reports. In order to help well constructors stay in compliance with well construction standards, the Department would like to remind all bonded drillers that Start Cards are required to be submitted prior to beginning work regardless of whether the filing is electronic or on a paper form. If a Start Card is submitted on time, then the fee is required to be submitted within five days of receipt of the Start Card. For electronically filed Start Cards, the fees are paid at the time of submittal. If the Start Card is late, and the fee is submitted with the Start Card, then the fee is also considered late and the well constructor is in jeopardy of being assessed a civil penalty, license suspension, or both.

Well construction professionals who have questions about the Start Card, fee, or well report requirements, should contact Joel Jeffery at (503) 986-0852 or by e-mail at: Joel.W.Jeffery@oregon.gov.



COMMISSION APPROVES TEMPORARY EMERGENCY RULES

During a special meeting on April 13, the Oregon Water Resources Commission voted to approve temporary emergency rules granting a preference to water rights for human consumption use in Klamath County and water rights for stock water use in the Williamson River Basin within Klamath County.

The rules allow holders of water rights for human consumption uses in Klamath County and for stock water in the Williamson River Basin – that would otherwise be shutoff during regulation to get water to a senior water right holder – to continue use of that water for those purposes provided that they meet certain requirements.

The Commission previously granted similar preferences in 2013, 2014, and 2015. Water right holders seeking to exercise the preference should be aware of new requirements that minimize the impacts of the preference on senior water rights.

"Since regulation is relatively new in the Klamath Basin, the preference is a short-term option to help water users make it through a difficult water year. However, given that it reduces water available to senior water right holders, it is not a desirable solution for long-term water management," said Director Tom Byler.

The Department has been working with water users in the basin to transition to alternative methods for meeting their stock water and human consumption water needs, so that a preference will not be needed in the future. "I am pleased by the progress that has been made, but I strongly encourage water users to complete efforts to develop more permanent solutions to their needs through alternative sources," said Byler. "Our staff can help explain those options to water right holders."

The Commission is authorized to grant a preference for these uses of water during a drought declaration by the Governor. On March 13, 2018, Governor Kate Brown declared a drought emergency in Klamath County under Executive Order No. 18-02. By law, temporary rules cannot be in effect longer than 180 days and may not be extended. Therefore, unless the Governor's drought declaration is rescinded, the rules will be in effect through October 13, 2018.

Prior to exercising the preference, the water right holder must submit a form to the District 17 watermaster. The forms and requirements for exercising the preference are online at: <http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/Pages/Klamath-Water-Use-Preference.aspx>.

Water right holders seeking to use the preference can direct questions to the District 17 Watermaster Office located at 305 Main Street in Klamath Falls, or by phone at (541) 883-4182, or via email at Klamath_Drought_2018@wrd.state.or.us.



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



DROUGHT IN OREGON COUNTIES

So far in 2018, Governor Kate Brown has announced a drought emergency in seven counties due to low snowpack, lack of precipitation, low streamflows, and warming temperatures.

Drought conditions and unusually high temperatures could have serious impacts on the State's economy, as well as natural resources, livestock, and fisheries. To minimize these impacts and provide support to the community, Governor Brown has directed state agencies to work with local and federal partners to provide assistance to counties affected by drought.

The counties that have declared drought this year include: Wheeler, Klamath, Grant, Harney, Lake, Baker, and Douglas. A governor's drought declaration provides an opportunity for the county and its partners to message the importance of planning and implementing water efficiency measures. It is an opportunity to document, for the record, the impacts that drought has on the county's economy, natural resources, and public health. A governor's drought declaration also unlocks a number of drought-related emergency tools for water users. For more information about these tools, check with your local watermaster or visit the Oregon Water Resources Department homepage, under Drought Information.

Oregon's state agencies will continue to work with local governments and other partners to coordinate efforts and mobilize actions to address drought-related issues. The Governor's drought declarations authorize state agencies to expedite water management tools to which users would not otherwise have access. As state and local officials coordinate with federal partners, conditions will be closely monitored by the state's natural resource and public safety agencies, including the Oregon Water Resources Department and the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.



PREVENT HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS FOR WORKERS

Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) encourages employers and workers to be attentive to physical symptoms when temperatures are on the rise. This is especially important in Oregon, where workers are used to working in mild weather and are generally not acclimated to the high heat that accompanies summer months.

The following tips are meant to help prevent heat-related illness:

- Perform the heaviest, most labor intensive work during the coolest part of the day.
- Use the buddy system (work in pairs) to monitor the heat.
- Drink plenty of cool water.
- Wear light, loose fitting, and breathable clothing
- Avoid caffeine and alcoholic beverages, to avoid dehydration.

To help those suffering from heat exhaustion:

- Move them to a cool shaded area.
- Do not leave them alone.
- Loosen and remove heavy clothing.
- Provide a limited amount of cool water if they are not feeling sick to their stomach.
- Try to cool them down by fanning them or spraying with misted water.
- If they do not feel better in a few minutes, call 911 for emergency services.

Oregon OSHA has a booklet available in both English and Spanish that includes information about the risks of exposure to warm temperatures and high humidity. For more information contact OSHA at (503) 378-3272.

RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA STANDARDS

According to OSHA, approximately 2.3 million workers are exposed to crystalline silica on the job. Simply being near sand or other silica-containing materials is not hazardous. The hazard exists when specific activities create respirable dust that is released into the air.

Respirable crystalline silica – very small particles 100 times smaller than ordinary sand found on beaches or playgrounds – is generated by high-energy operations like cutting, sanding, sawing, grinding, drilling and crushing stone, rock, concrete, brick, ceramic products, block and mortar; or when blasting with industrial sand.

Workers who inhale these very small crystalline silica particles are at increased risk of developing serious silica-related diseases, including:

- Silicosis, an incurable lung disease that can lead to disability and death
- Lung cancer
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Kidney disease

In order to assess and define the exposure to 18 common construction tasks, and the equipment used that create high levels of silica dust, please refer to the Oregon OSHA publication "Understanding Table 1 and the specific exposure control methods for silica dust".

This guide can be found online at:

<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/5381.pdf>.

For more information contact OSHA at (503) 378-3272.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Dangerous hand dug well observed by a well inspector.

Dug well that is located ten feet from a drainfield.



NC Region well inspector using geophysical tools to examine a Mosier area well.



Placing an annular seal in a Mosier area well.



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