




MEMORANDUM

TO: Water Resources Commission

FROM: Thomas M. Byler, Director 

SUBJECT: Agenda Item F, November 21, 2019
Water Resources Commission Meeting

Commission Appointments to the Groundwater Advisory Committee

I. Introduction

During this agenda item, the Commission will be asked to appoint three candidates to the Groundwater Advisory Committee (GWAC).

II. Background

The Commission-appointed Groundwater Advisory Committee is a nine-member body charged with certain duties pursuant to ORS 536.090. These duties include: advice on all matters relating to: (1) rules for the development, securing, use, and protection of groundwater, and (2) licensing and examination of well constructors. In addition, GWAC reviews the proposed expenditures of start card fee revenue.

The rules under OAR Chapter 690, Division 235 provide a process to identify GWAC candidates, prescribe a range of categories of expertise that may be represented on GWAC, and allow appointments for up to three years. The rules result in the expiration of three appointments each year, thus staggering membership. Any mid-term vacancy is filled for the remainder of the term. Each year, staff seeks Commission action on GWAC appointments and/or reappointments. The Commission has directed that appointed members be limited to two terms (six years).

GWAC members represent a range of interests and expertise, including at least three members from the well drilling industry and the remainder representing interests in hydrogeology, irrigation, local government, Indian Tribes, environment, public health, industry, commerce, water project development, watershed enhancement, instream flow, agriculture, well pump installation, exempt ground water users, or any other category with a ground water interest (OAR 690-235-0005).

The current members of the committee are listed in the below table. The expiring positions are italicized and the Department thanks these Committee members for their service.

Member	Place of Residence	Category Represented	Term
Chair Marshall Gannett	Portland	Hydrogeologist	1st Term Expires 11/30/2020
Vice Chair John Stadel	Newberg	Monitoring/Water Well Industry	2nd Term Expires 11/30/2020
<i>Chad Courtney</i>	<i>Pendleton</i>	<i>Monitoring/Water Well Industry</i>	<i>1st Term Expires 11/30/2019</i>
<i>Chris Hyatt</i>	<i>Portland</i>	<i>Environmental</i>	<i>2nd Term Expires 11/30/2019</i>
Kenneth Masten	Bonanza	Groundwater Irrigator	1st Term Expires 11/30/2021
<i>Mark Owens</i>	<i>Crane</i>	<i>Groundwater Irrigator</i>	<i>1st Term Expires 11/30/2019</i>
Phil Brown	Beavercreek	Hydrogeologist	1st Term Expires 11/30/2021
Scott Kruger	Corvallis	Local Government	2nd Term Expires 11/30/2020
Trent Castner	Portland	Monitoring/Water Well Industry	1st Term Expires 11/30/2021

III. Discussion

The terms for Chad Courtney, Chris Hyatt, and Mark Owens expire on November 30, 2019. Mr. Hyatt is completing his second term and has reached his limitation of service on the committee. Mr. Courtney and Mr. Owens are completing their first terms and have submitted letters of interest to serve a second term with the committee.

In accordance with the rule process, GWAC has three open positions that must be filled. In order to comply with statute, one of the open positions must be filled by a person who is actively engaged in some aspect of the water supply or monitoring well drilling industry. The other two positions may represent other groundwater interests, expertise, or geography.

Notice of the recruitment was sent to individuals on the GWAC and Commission mailing lists on September 30, 2019, posted to the Department's webpage, and distributed to members of professional and trade organizations. The notices advised interested parties of the committee vacancies and asked that those wishing to be considered for a position on GWAC notify the Director by October 21, 2019 to ensure consideration for appointment in November 2019. The Director received 4 applications for membership by this date. The Department reached out to field staff and other local contacts to solicit references for the applicants.

The Department recommends Susan Baker, Chad Courtney, and Mark Owens for the open positions. These would be reappointments for Chad Courtney and Mark Owens, and the first term for Susan Baker. Terms for these three members would begin December 1, 2019 and continue through November 30, 2022.

Short biographies for the three recommended individuals are as follows:

Susan Baker is the Drinking Water Program Coordinator for Jackson County Health and Human Services, where she focuses on environmental public health. Ms. Baker oversees monitoring and compliance with public groundwater quality regulations for more than 200 groundwater-sourced public water systems in the county. Ms. Baker is especially interested in the impacts of the burgeoning hemp and marijuana industry on the groundwater resources of southwest Oregon.

Chad Courtney is a licensed water well driller with more than 21 years of experience. Mr. Courtney installs irrigation, community, domestic, and stock water wells in the Columbia River Basalt and alluvial aquifers of the Umatilla Basin. Mr. Courtney has become familiar with the laws and rules of OWRD and the Oregon Health Authority Drinking Water Program during the course of his work.

Mark Owens is an irrigator in the Harney Valley with over 12,000 irrigated acres under ownership, management, or contract harvest. Mr. Owens is a commissioner on the Harney County Court and is active on the Harney Basin Groundwater Study Advisory Committee and the Malheur Lake Basin Place Based Planning Partnership. Mr. Owens is very involved with and knowledgeable of local water issues and wishes to continue his involvement with groundwater issues at the State level.

IV. Alternatives

The Commission may consider the following alternatives:

1. Appoint Susan Baker, Chad Courtney, and Mark Owens to GWAC terms beginning December 1, 2019 through November 30, 2022.
2. Direct staff to return to the next Commission meeting with another slate of appointments, which reflects a different set of interest categories and/or geographic locations.

V. Recommendation

The Director recommends that the Commission select Alternative 1 and appoint the recommended slate of candidates for the stated term.

Justin Iverson
(503) 986-0933