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## WELL SAID NEWSLETTER

Available on the web at OWRD home page, under *Agency Spotlight > Well Said Newsletter.*

Please share with others at

your organization.

*Well Said* is a production of the OWRD 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) 991-2470 or email at [Kristopher.R.Byrd@oregon.gov](mailto:Kristopher.R.Byrd@oregon.gov)



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

## MEET RUSSELL KAZMIERCZAK

In the process of serving the public by practicing and promoting responsible water management, the Water Resources Department (WRD) often works with a number of other regulatory agencies and staff, including staff from Oregon Health Authority's (OHA) Drinking Water Services Program. This program administers and enforces drinking water quality standards for public water systems in Oregon.

Among the great people who work at OHA, is Russell Kazmierczak, who often collaborates with WRD in regard to well construction. Mr. Kazmierczak, whose main area of responsibility is Eastern Oregon, graduated from Southern Oregon University with a BS in Geology, and also has over 29 years of environmental related experience working in the public and private sectors. His extensive background has helped him with his current responsibilities, which include groundwater well and site plan reviews, implementation of drinking water protection, coordination of the Groundwater Under the Direct Influence of Surface Water (GWUDI) Program, and public water system regulation.

Questions for Mr. Kazmierczak regarding OHA Drinking Water Services should be directed to [Russell.A.Kazmierczak@state.or.us](mailto:Russell.A.Kazmierczak@state.or.us) or (971) 599-0121.



## IN THE NEXT ISSUE: LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Take Note!

Due to the timelines associated with publishing the newsletter, a recap of the 2021 legislative session will be included in the next issue. Keep an eye out for the next issue as it will include important information on legislation passed during the 2021 session.

## DROUGHT-RELATED INFORMATION

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, all of Oregon is experiencing drought-like conditions, with many parts of the state experiencing severe to extreme drought.

Thus far in 2021, 19 Oregon counties have received state drought declarations, while many more have received Crop Disaster designations by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Drought disaster designations on the state and federal level make water users eligible for a number of drought-related assistance programs. To see which counties have drought declarations, learn more about the drought declaration process and tools, and find tips on conserving water, please visit our drought website: [www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/climate/droughtwatch](http://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/climate/droughtwatch).

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## Drought-Related Information, cont'd

Although much of the attention is on surface water systems, groundwater and wells can be impacted by drought. Many aquifers received less than average recharge this winter, resulting in lower than average spring water levels at the beginning of the irrigation season. Further, groundwater use has increased in many areas of the state as irrigators, municipalities, and others turn to groundwater for supplemental water supplies as surface water sources become more limited.

Due to these impacts, some users or systems may experience increased hydraulic interference from neighboring wells. Well owners may file an interference complaint with the local Watermaster if the interference is caused by a junior groundwater user. Many will be required to lower their pumps or deepen their wells before the Department can take action on these interference requests.

Use the link below to view the memorandum which describes OWRD's process for receiving, investigating, and responding to groundwater well interference complaints:  
<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/GWWL/GW/Pages/interference.aspx>

## RARE IGNEOUS ROCK FOUND IN LAKE OSWEGO

During excavation work at the new Lakeridge High School project in Lake Oswego, a building superintendent noticed that one of the rocks his crew had dredged-up was not a typical looking rock, possessing a distinctive color and texture. Professor of geology at Portland State University and president of the Tualatin Ice Age Foundation, Scott Burns, would later identify the two-ton rock as rhyolite. Rhyolite is not typically found in Oregon and is believed to have been deposited in the Willamette Valley by the Glacial Lake Missoula Floods around 15,000 years ago, coming from Montana or farther north in Canada. Professor Burns states that the find is unique in his many years of research experience, calling it an ice-rafted glacial erratic, unlike any he has seen before. The chunk of rhyolite is described as mottled yellow, green and brown in color, roughly three feet by three feet by four feet in size.



To view a short video posted by the Tualatin Historical Society about the find, please see the following link:  
<https://youtu.be/tnjdwYwQsf0>.

## REMINDERS: ELECTRONIC SERVICE CHARGES & LICENSE RENEWALS

As noted in the previous edition of the *Well Said*, well constructors who electronically file Start Cards for new wells, deepenings, and conversions, or renew their license online, will be assessed a \$1.00 electronic transaction service charge by NICUSA Inc., the Department's third party vendor that provides the payment processing platform.

In order to save money on service charges for e-filed Start Cards, well constructors may want to consider purchasing more than one Start Card at a time, as the service charge is assessed per shopping cart transaction, and not per individual Start Card.

Please direct your electronic Start Card or license renewal questions to Buffy Madrigal-Adams at (971) 287-8305 or [Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@oregon.gov](mailto:Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@oregon.gov).

## WILDFIRE ASSESSMENT: IMPACTS ON DOMESTIC WELLS



The Potable Water Resources Task Force, part of Oregon's state-led wildfire recovery effort, has launched a survey to learn how the 2020 wildfires have impacted private drinking water wells and systems that divert surface water from streams or reservoirs. This information will be used to help the state better support impacted Oregonians while also helping to inform statewide recovery efforts.

If you have repaired or will repair a domestic well damaged by wildfires, please take five minutes to complete this survey at: <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/Pages/Drinking-Water-Supply.aspx> or forward it along to the well owner. The responses will help the state understand and assess damage caused by or related to the 2020 wildfires.

Contact Bryn Hudson at [Bryn.Hudson@oregon.gov](mailto:Bryn.Hudson@oregon.gov) with any questions on the wildfire assessment or the state wildfire recovery efforts.

Current call tally to WRD from affected areas:

- Holiday Farm: 19
- Beachie Creek/Lionshead: 18
- Almeda Drive: 5
- Echo Mountain: 2
- Dowty Rd: 1
- Riverside: 1
- Archie Creek: 1
- Unidentified: 1

## COWS & LIVESTOCK WELLS

Although many people are fond of cows, they do have a way of damaging things, including livestock wells. Below is a picture of a livestock well drilled only one month earlier - the paint is already starting to wear off, and some of the hardware for the cap is already missing, and while cows are not the only creatures that can cause harm to your well, they are the most common example.



What can you do to protect your investment? Nylock nuts are harder to rub loose, lock washers and double stacked nuts can also provide protection, but the best protection is to create a physical barrier between livestock and your well. How much harm can cows cause? Eventually cows will rub against the well head enough to knock the cap off, causing the wiring to the pump to become exposed and potentially damaged; possibly even causing a brush fire due to sparks if wiring becomes grounded to the casing. Aside from the potential electrical issues, when the cows continue to rub against the casing after the cap has loosened and fallen off, they will eventually introduce dander and hair into the well, which has been observed by inspectors in the field. This hair can cause not only pump issues, but it also increases the potential for bacteria and other harmful substances to contaminate the water, creating further undue harm to your livestock.

When considering the potential damage to wells from cows, it is helpful to remember that an aquifer is a shared resource, meaning there is a potential for the harmful contaminants to be consumed by humans. Do your part to protect this shared resource: put hardware on wells that make it difficult for livestock to remove it, or construct a fence or protective posts to create a physical barrier between water wells and animals.

Questions or comments about damaged wells should be directed to Travis Kelly at (503) 302-8618 or [Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov](mailto:Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov).

## LANDOWNER CONSTRUCTED WELLS

The Department has received a number of questions from the industry this year about the requirements for landowners who wish to construct their own well on their own property, so information is being provided to clear up any misconceptions.

Although property owners have the ability to get a landowner permit to construct their own well, the Well Construction & Compliance Section recommends that landowners retain a licensed bonded well constructor to do the work instead. This is because most landowners do not have the knowledge or equipment necessary to construct a well to minimum standards. So, what are the requirements for a property owner to construct their own well?

Property owners are required to adhere to the same construction rules and statutes as licensed bonded well constructors, in addition to completing the following:

1. Obtain a surety bond in the amount of **\$10,000** per landowner permit.
2. Submit a completed Landowner Well Permit application form, containing:
  - Property owner's name, address & phone number
  - Surety company's name, address & phone number
  - Proposed location of the well
  - Proposed use of the water supply well
  - Type of work (new, alteration, deepening, abandonment)
  - Well design plan on form approved by the Department
3. Pay **\$500** permit fee.

In addition to the above, landowners are also required to complete a Start Card and submit the required **\$225** fee for all new construction, conversions, and deepenings. A well report also must be submitted within 30 days from the date of completion, and the **\$300** exempt groundwater use recording fee is also required, when appropriate. The total fees paid to the Department for a landowner constructed well are **\$1025**.

For questions related to Landowner Permits, please contact Buffy Madrigal-Adams at (971) 287-8305 or [Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@oregon.gov](mailto:Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@oregon.gov).

## DEEPENING OF WELLS

The Department would like to remind well constructors that special standards are required to deepen water supply wells unless the well is re-cased and resealed to meet current minimum well construction standards, or the constructor can provide a well report that describes the original construction of the well.

It is also recommended that drillers contact the Regional Well Inspector where the well is constructed, or the Well Construction Program Coordinator, prior to deepening to review and discuss the well report and the original well construction.

One thing to also keep in mind during the deepening process, is that if the well accesses a new aquifer, then all previous aquifers, including previous aquifers that have gone dry or are low producing, shall be cased and sealed off using the methods described in the well construction standards.

Water right permit conditions may also be affected by the deepening of a water supply well, and because of that, it is recommended that the associated water rights be reviewed.

For more information regarding deepening wells, please contact Travis Kelly, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at (503) 302-8618 or [Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov](mailto:Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov).

## WOMAN SURVIVES FALL cont'd

Because of the heroic efforts of both the neighbor and emergency personnel, the Department is happy to report that the woman is expected to make a full recovery. To ensure that the well is no longer a health and safety threat or source of possible groundwater contamination, OWRD is working with the landowner to properly abandon the well.

For questions or concerns regarding dug wells, please contact Travis Kelly, Well Construction Program Coordinator, at (503) 302-8618 or [Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov](mailto:Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov).

## OSHA HEAT SAFETY TOOL

The OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool is an app that allows employers to have vital safety information right on their mobile phone, which means that the information is available whenever they need it.

The app allows workers and supervisors to calculate the heat index for their worksite, and based on the heat index, displays a risk level to outdoor workers. Then, with a simple "click," they can get reminders about the protective measures that should be taken at that risk level to protect workers, including reminders about drinking enough fluids, and scheduling rest breaks. In addition, the application provides training on heat illness signs and symptoms, and monitoring each other for those signs and symptoms.

For more information about safety while working in the heat, see OSHA's heat illness webpage at:

[https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat\\_index/heat\\_app.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatillness/heat_index/heat_app.html)

## WOMAN SURVIVES FALL INTO DUG WELL



In the late morning hours of February 18, 2021, an elderly woman fell through the wooden lid of an old 55-foot stone-lined dug well outside of Scotts Mills, Oregon. When the Silverton Fire District arrived, they found the injured woman conscious, and very hypothermic. Fortunately, a neighbor who witnessed the fall was able to go down into the well using the property owner's rope and pulley, keeping the woman from becoming submerged in the frigid water until Salem Fire Department's Rope Rescue team was able to stabilize the patient and hoist both her and the neighbor to safety.

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# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



New well constructed near Lyons after devastating wildfires



Well inspection near Emigrant Lake



New deep well near Mosier



Newly constructed well



**WELL CONSTRUCTION & COMPLIANCE SECTION**  
**OREGON WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**  
725 SUMMER ST NE, SUITE A  
SALEM, OR 97301

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### Well Construction & Compliance Staff Directory

Kristopher Byrd, Manager  
[Kristopher.R.Byrd@oregon.gov](mailto:Kristopher.R.Byrd@oregon.gov)  
(503) 991-2470

Travis Kelly, Coordinator,  
Well Construction Program  
[Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov](mailto:Travis.N.Kelly@oregon.gov)  
(503) 302-8618

Ladeena Ashley, Well ID  
Program Coordinator  
[Ladeena.K.Ashley@oregon.gov](mailto:Ladeena.K.Ashley@oregon.gov)  
(971) 287-8218

Buffy Madrigal-Adams, License and  
Compliance Specialist  
[Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@oregon.gov](mailto:Buffy.M.Madrigal-Adams@oregon.gov)  
(971) 287-8305

Linda Walker, Well Log  
Review Coordinator  
[Linda.K.Walker@oregon.gov](mailto:Linda.K.Walker@oregon.gov)  
(971) 287-8201

Scott Kudlemyer, Exempt Use  
Program Coordinator  
[Scott.B.Kudlemyer@oregon.gov](mailto:Scott.B.Kudlemyer@oregon.gov)  
(971) 287-8360

Enforcement Section Fax  
(503) 986-0902

### Region Office Directory

Western  
Phone: (503) 986-0900  
Fax: (503) 986-0903

Southwest  
Phone: (541) 774-6880  
Fax: (541) 774-6187

South Central  
Phone: (541) 306-6885  
Fax: (541) 388-5101

North Central  
Phone: (541) 278-5456  
Fax: (541) 278-0287

Eastern  
Phone: (541) 523-8224 x231  
Fax: (541) 550-3898

