

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2019
19-10

PRESS CONTACT

Racquel Rancier
Desk 503-986-0828 | Cell 503-302-9235
WRD_dl_mediaquiries@oregon.gov

Oregon Water Resources Department to Host Open House on Groundwater Management for Senior Surface Water Rights

(Chiloquin, OR) – The Oregon Water Resources Department is holding an open house on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, at the Chiloquin Community Center located at 140 South 1st Avenue in Chiloquin from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The purpose of the open house is primarily to exchange information and engage water users in a conversation about the management of groundwater rights in the basin; however, there will also be informational booths on other aspects of water quantity management.

More specifically, the open house will be an opportunity to visit with Water Resources Department staff to get general information on water rights and regulation of water use, as well as to share ideas on future water management options. There will be opportunities to learn about and discuss the Department's understanding of groundwater and surface water in the basin, and how their connection has resulted in control of wells to protect senior surface water rights. The Department will share information and solicit ideas on future water management and rulemaking for control of wells to meet the needs of senior surface water rights.

Water users will also be able to find out more information about how to access funding for water measurement devices through the water measurement cost share program, as well as funding sources for water projects. Other topics will include information on constructing a well, water rights, and water right regulation to meet the call of users with senior water rights and determined claims.

Other organizations, including Klamath Soil and Water, Klamath Watershed Partnership, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, will also host informational tables.

Comment cards will also be provided to submit ideas and feedback to the Department.

For questions about the open house, please contact Watermaster Dani Watson at Danette.M.Watson@oregon.gov, or by phone at 541-883-4182.

Individuals interested in attending are encouraged, but not required, to RSVP to Dani for planning purposes.

Background on Groundwater Management: Rules governing the management of wells to protect senior surface water rights in the Upper Klamath Basin were adopted in 2015 to be consistent with the Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement. Three years later, due to the termination of the Upper Klamath Basin Comprehensive Agreement, the rules expired and reverted to the Division 9 rules for the purposes of regulating wells to fulfill calls by senior surface water rights. In April 2019, the Water Resources Commission adopted interim Division 25 rules that prescribe how wells will be regulated for surface water during the 2019 and 2020 irrigation seasons. The rules were intended as an interim approach to regulation while the Department works with the basin to develop longer-term water management solutions. The Department is currently gathering input and information on ideas for future long-term water management options within the Upper Klamath Basin to inform development of permanent rules.

About the Oregon Water Resources Department: With some exceptions, a water right is required in order to use water in Oregon. The Oregon Water Resources Department is the state agency charged with allocating and distributing water. The Department's watermasters and other field staff provide the public with technical assistance on water rights and water laws, measure streamflows, inspect wells and dams to protect public safety, and distribute water according to water rights on record with the Department.

###