



SD/NK Groundwater Recommendations: Path Forward

WELCOME



Wednesday, December 4, 2013
La Pine High School Auditorium



SD/NK Groundwater Recommendations: Path Forward

How we got here: Steering Committee

- Residents sought local options and local control
- Volunteers spent 3 ½ years studying the problem
- The steering committee approved 9 recommendations

Members agreed that we have a problem and that something needs to be done to protect groundwater now and for the future.



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Recommendation #1:

Seek an exception to state land use laws that would allow community sewers in the area

Path Forward:

DEQ is coordinating with DLCD and Deschutes and Klamath Counties in developing a Goal 11 Exception for the area of concern. DEQ will support the effort through technical assistance and health risk findings.



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Recommendation #2:

Request that DEQ conduct and pursue funding for ongoing groundwater monitoring in the study area.

Path Forward

DEQ is confident that shallow groundwater in the area is at risk, mainly from individual on-site septic system discharge. However, DEQ supports additional monitoring of all potential contamination sources, as it would allow better tracking of overall contamination trends. DEQ will consider adding a monitoring program to our funding proposal as part of the 2015-17 budget, and will seek funding from EPA, USGS, OWRD, OHA and others.



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Recommendation #3:

Form a sanitation authority to protect ground water and explore financing options to pay for community septic systems

Path Forward

DEQ believes the area is best served by the creation of a governance entity -- such as a sanitation authority – even though the agency would not be directly involved in this effort. Establishment of a governance entity would allow DEQ to provide low interest loans for wastewater infrastructure.



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Recommendation #4:

Encourage Deschutes County to pass an ordinance limiting the number of livestock per acre to reduce groundwater contamination

Path Forward

DEQ supports the adoption of local ordinances to protect groundwater, including ones limiting livestock. DEQ also believes the study area is well served by the livestock ordinance currently in place in Klamath County. Deschutes County currently is considering this as part of its comprehensive planning.



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Recommendation #5:

Consider establishing a permitting and/or monitoring program for such sources as golf courses, RV/mobile home parks and plant nurseries

Path Forward

DEQ is analyzing the local contamination risk posed by such sources. Based on those results, DEQ could request additional monitoring of those sources in the upcoming budget.



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Recommendation #6:

DEQ should suspend for 5 years the current ATT requirement while progress is made toward an area-wide Goal 11 exception and creation of some type of governance entity such as a sanitation authority and special service districts

Path Forward

DEQ staff have recommended that a special rule be adopted that limits ATT requirements for a 5-year period while pursuit of an area-wide Goal 11 exception and some form of governance entity proceed.



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Recommendation #7:

DEQ should research the approach other states have taken and offer solutions for economically-disadvantaged small communities

Path Forward

DEQ has contacted other states to define the approaches they take regarding economically-disadvantaged small communities. DEQ has also better defined all potential funding that could be made available to the region. DEQ will provide a full update on this recommendation to the state legislature in February.



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Recommendation #8:

DEQ should seek local volunteers to continue outreach and education efforts concerning the area-wide groundwater contamination

Path Forward

DEQ agrees with the steering committee that ongoing community education is critical to addressing this issue over both the short and long term. DEQ is seeking citizen volunteers to continue the outreach efforts started by the steering committee. DEQ intends to support these volunteers and partner with Deschutes and Klamath counties to further educate the community about groundwater contamination.



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Recommendation #9:

DEQ should encourage the use of composting toilets and keep permits affordable for this and other “green” solutions

Path Forward

DEQ is open to the use of “green solutions”, which generally mean alternatives to a septic system, such as composting toilets. However, those alternatives come with some inherent public health risks in the more densely sub-divided areas, or when not properly used or maintained. DEQ is considering what potential rule changes and additional precautions may be needed to allow more of these options. DEQ is also working with an intern to specifically address this issue.



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In Summary

- ❑ This is a difficult, challenging problem with short and long-term ramifications
- ❑ The committee recommendations outline a viable plan
- ❑ Solutions will likely include a range of options
- ❑ The community will be a key part of any solution, including forming some type of governance authority



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Contacts & Information

More information is available at the DEQ Website:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/onsite/sdesch-nklam.htm>

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- Questions?