

FAQ for Outstanding Resource Waters Rulemaking

What is an Outstanding Resource Water

An Outstanding Resource Water means a waterbody designated an outstanding state or national resource by the Environmental Quality Commission based on its extraordinary water quality or ecological values, or where special water quality protection is needed to maintain critical habitat. The designation is reserved for the most pristine waters of the United States and is part of the Clean Water Act's antidegradation policy.

How does the Outstanding Resource Waters designation impact recreational uses?

Both Waldo and Crater lakes are currently designated for recreational uses such as swimming and paddling. The national park and forest land surrounding the lakes are also managed for hiking, camping, scenic vistas and mountain biking. The Outstanding Resource Water designation will complement the current management goals to protect the lakes while providing recreational enjoyment for generations to come.

Will the designation limit access to Crater Lake in the future?

The exceptional recreational value of Crater Lake is one of the reasons for the Outstanding Resource Water designation. Current recreation activity is part of the baseline of the existing water quality to be protected. The National Park Service Organic Act (16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.) directs Crater Lake National Park to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the

enjoyment of future generations." This statutory direction is compatible with the Outstanding Resource Water designation.

With existing protections, is the designation redundant?

Existing protections for Crater and Waldo lakes focus on managing the landscape and activities that might impact the lakes. The Outstanding Resource Water designation complements these protections by adding a policy under the Clean Water Act to specifically protect the existing water quality within the lakes. In this respect it complimentary but not redundant.

Does the designation have economic impact on local businesses?

With the Advisory Committee's help, DEQ concluded that the proposed rules would not result in negative fiscal or economic impacts to businesses. Because the rules will help to protect the lake qualities that attract recreation users and tourists, they will support businesses that provide recreation and tourism services. The tourism industry is a significant contributor to the local economy, particularly at Crater Lake, which receives hundreds of thousands of visitors per year.

How will the rule impact permitted discharges to the lakes in the future?

There are no permitted discharges to Waldo or Crater lakes. The designation will prohibit new or expanded



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Water Quality Standards

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discharges to the lakes except construction stormwater permits for limited duration projects needed to maintain or improve roads or recreation facilities.

Who manages the activities on these lakes and in these watersheds?

Crater Lake, which is inside a volcanic caldera, is entirely within Crater Lake National Park. The activities and recreational facilities on Crater Lake and its perimeter and on Wizard Island are managed by the National Park Service.

Waldo Lake and its watershed are entirely on federal land in the Willamette National Forest. The lake, surrounding land and recreation facilities and activities are managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

Is there adequate monitoring of the water quality of these lakes?

Crater Lake National Park has a robust long term lake monitoring program. Waldo Lake is monitored periodically as part of the National Lakes Assessment. The U.S. Forest Service has a monitoring plan and additional monitoring may be done by the Portland State University Center for Lakes and Reservoirs and DEQ. Both lakes have been the subject of research by the USGS and university researchers.

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.



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