

### Harney Basin Groundwater Study Summary

#### OREGON









Jerry Grondin, OWRD Hydrogeologist
OAR 690-512 Rule Advisory Committee
Information Session
27 July 2023





#### Presentation Outline

- 1. Key Takeaways
- 2. Harney Basin groundwater study introduction and background
- 3. Water chemistry sampling, analyses, and results
- 4. Harney Basin groundwater levels and their relationship to basin geology
- 5. Harney Basin groundwater budget
- 6. Conclusion
- 7. References





### Groundwater Study Key Takeaways

#### **Key Takeaways**

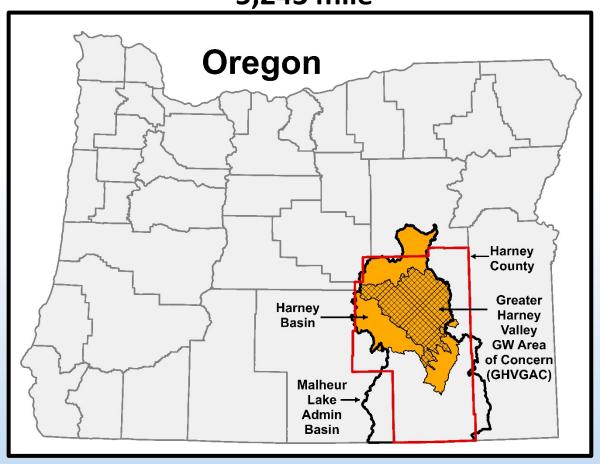
- Most Harney Basin groundwater is ancient (recharged 5,000 to 30,000 years ago), and modern groundwater (recharged after 1953) is limited to a thin, shallow zone beneath recharge areas
- 2. Geology (hydrostratigraphy) is a major key to understanding Harney Basin groundwater and finding solutions to groundwater problems
- 3. Harney Basin groundwater is a single, hydraulically connected system, a continuum
- 4. Harney Basin groundwater budget balances in the uplands; it does not balance in the lowlands (deficit of 110,000 acre-feet/year)



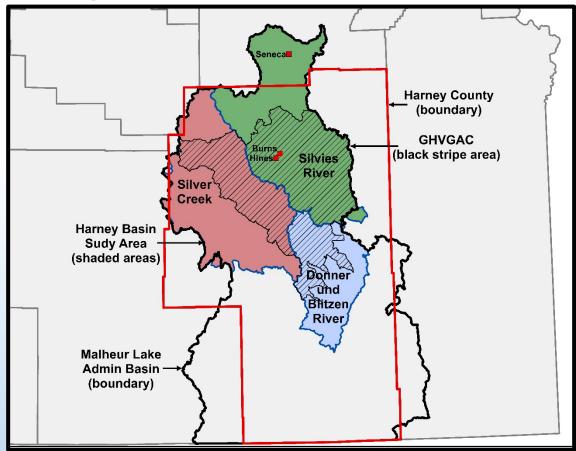


### Groundwater Study Area

### Harney Basin Groundwater Study Area 5,243 mile<sup>2</sup>



### Harney Basin Watersheds Oregon Water Resources Board (1967)

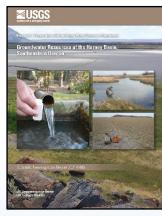






### **Groundwater Study Reports**

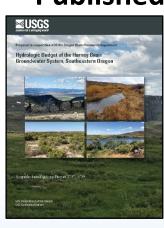
### **Groundwater Reports (6) & Fact Sheets (2) Published 2021-2022**



State or Dregor Water Resolution Sopermonn

0208-TLERGF0RT20210

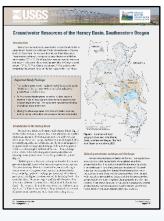
OF THE HARNEY BASIN

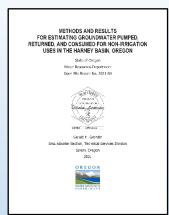


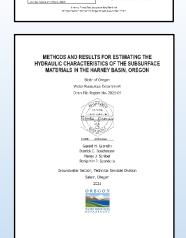
Historical Irrigation Water Use and

Harney Basin, Oregon, 1991-2018

Groundwater Pumpage Estimates in the

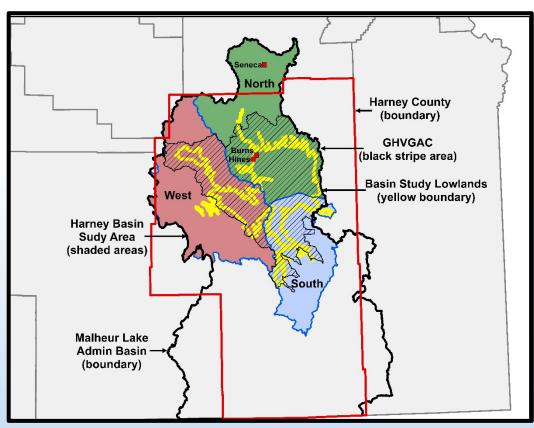


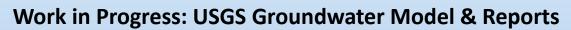




Harney Basin Groundwater Study

### Harney Basin Groundwater Study Area Water Budget Regions & Lowlands









### **Groundwater Study Authors**

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Ben Scandella





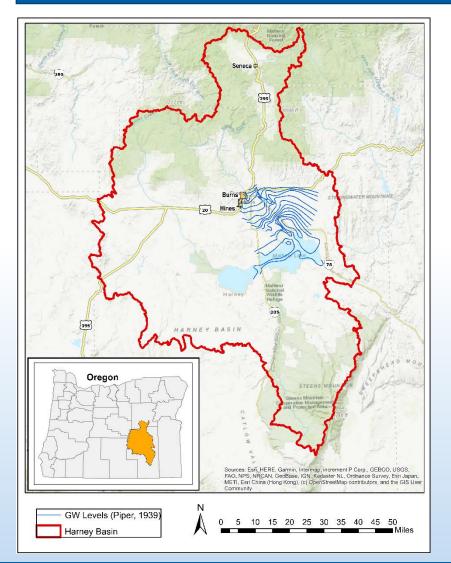
### Previous Hydrologic Studies

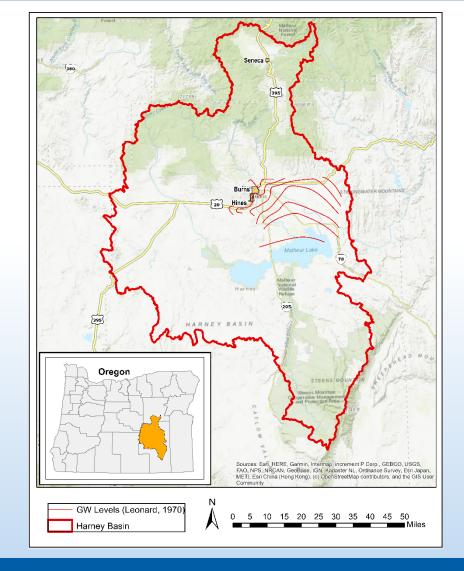
#### **Groundwater**

Piper, Robinson, &
Park (1939)
(blue contours)
&
Leonard (1970)
(red contours)

#### **Malheur Lake**

Hubbard (1975) (not shown)





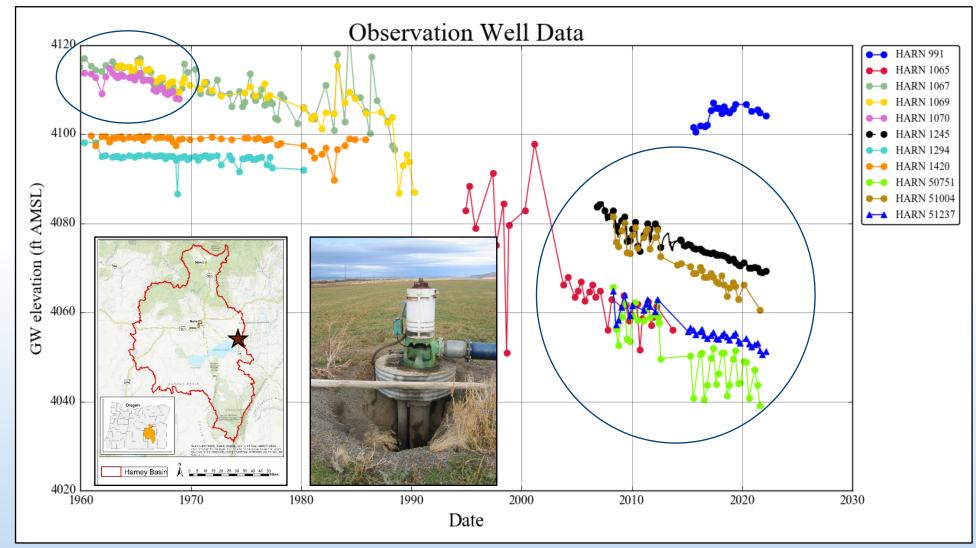




### Pre-Groundwater Study Background

#### **Crane Vicinity**

Well Interference
Complaint
&
Groundwater
Level Trend



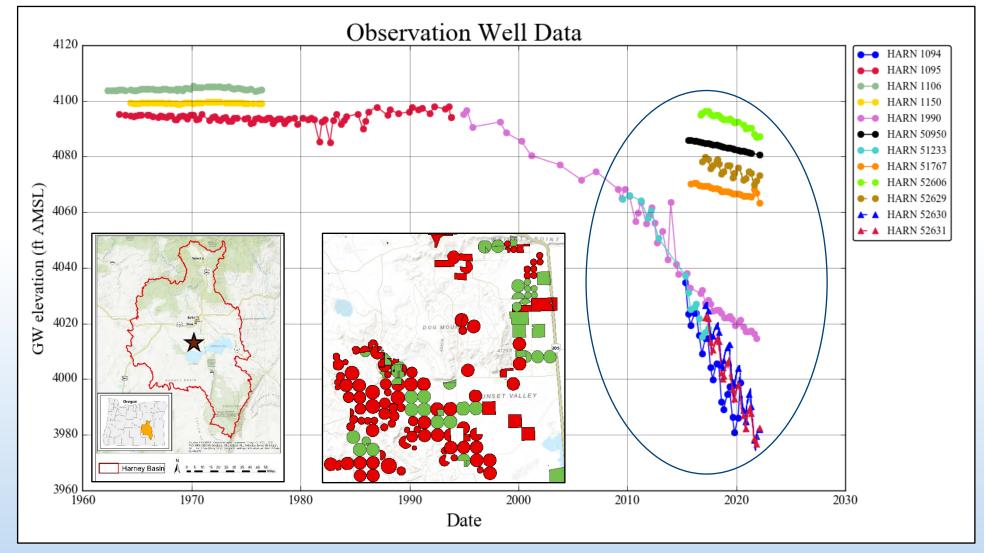




### Pre-Groundwater Study Background

### Weaver Springs Vicinity

Groundwater
Development
&
Groundwater
Level Trend







### Pre-Groundwater Study Background

OWRD Received

GW Permit Protests

(February 2014)

Analysis Conducted (2014-2015)

Groundwater
Budget
vs.
Permitted
Groundwater
Rights

Table 8: Comparison of the Harney Basin Groundwater Budget to the "Greater Harney Valley Area" Permitted Groundwater Use for Irrigation				
Area Fermitted G	Harney Basin Groundwater Budget			Permitted
Watershed	Groundwater Recharge (acre-feet) (Robison, 1968)	Groundwater Discharge (acre-feet) (OWRD)	Unaccounted Difference (acre-feet) (OWRD)	Groundwater Volume (acre-feet) (OWRD)
Silver Creek	60,000	30,793	29,207	66,921
Silvies River	100,000	18,756	81,244	212,253
Donner und Blitzen	100,000	39,625	60,375	7,875
Harney Basin	260,000	89,173	170,827	287,049

Note: The total unaccounted difference is 1 acre-foot more than the sum of the unaccounted difference for each watershed due to number rounding.

Note: The total annual groundwater volume permitted in acre-feet is for the "Greater Harney Valley Area" only, given that is the area of significant interest to OWRD.

Note: Only 138 permitted acres are outside the "Greater Harney Valley Area."

Table 8 of OWRD Memo Draft 07 dated 15 June 2015

**Draft Memo Title: "Harney Basin: Permitted Groundwater Rights and Groundwater Budget"** 





### **Groundwater Study Chronology**

2015 (May)	OWRD conducted Harney Basin groundwater open house meeting
2015 (Nov)	OWRD drafted a preliminary plan for a Harney Basin groundwater investigation
2015 to 2018	OWRD Salem staff increased Harney Basin well network for groundwater measuring
2016 to 2018	OWRD conducted quarterly and synoptic groundwater level measurements
2016 to 2019	Harney Basin Study Advisory Committee (SAC) organized, and 17 meetings conducted
2016 (April)	Oregon Water Resources Commission adopted OAR 690-512 for the Harney Basin
2016 (Dec)	OWRD conducted Harney Basin town hall water forum meeting
2016 (Dec)	USGS plan for USGS-OWRD Harney Basin groundwater investigation approved
2017 (Jan)	USGS plan for USGS-OWRD Harney Basin groundwater investigation public release
2017 to 2019	USGS and OWRD conducted data collection field work and began data analysis
2017 to present	Harney Basin Collaborative organized and meet monthly
2018 (Oct)	OWRD conducted Harney Basin town hall water forum meeting
2019 to present	OWRD Salem staff decreases Harney Basin well network for groundwater measuring
2019 (Dec)	USGS & OWRD presented initial data interpretations to Harney Basin SAC
2020 to 2021	OWRD and USGS write Harney Basin groundwater investigation reports
2021	OWRD releases 4 supplemental Harney Basin groundwater investigation reports
2022	USGS releases 2 primary Harney Basin groundwater investigation reports





### Study & DEQ Water Chemistry Data



Photo by Hank Johnson from Gingerich and others (2022)

### **Study (USGS) Water Chemistry Samples**

284 Study or Related Project Samples (2016-May 2019)

31 Historic Samples (1982-2015)

202 Wells/Springs 85 Streams/Rivers 22 Plant Tissue 6 Soil Water

Study Samples
Collected by

USGS, OWRD, PSU, ODEQ

### **Study Water Chemistry Analyses**

Tritium
Carbon-14
Stable Isotopes

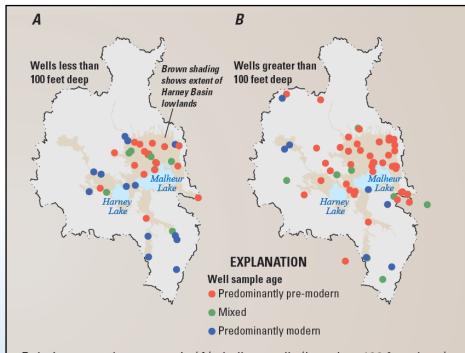
### Additional Data by DEQ (91 wells)

Field Parameters
Standard Parameters
Metals
Bacteria
Fungicides
Herbicides
Legacy Pesticides
Volatile Organic Compounds





### Study Takeaway #1



Relative groundwater age in (A) shallow wells (less than 100 feet deep) and (B) deep wells (greater than 100 feet deep) within and adjacent to the Harney Basin, southeastern Oregon. Relative age is based on the analysis of stable isotopes of hydrogen in water and its relation to tritium and carbon-14 age dates. Modified from Gingerich and others, 2022.

### Study Takeaway #1: Most Harney Basin groundwater is ancient

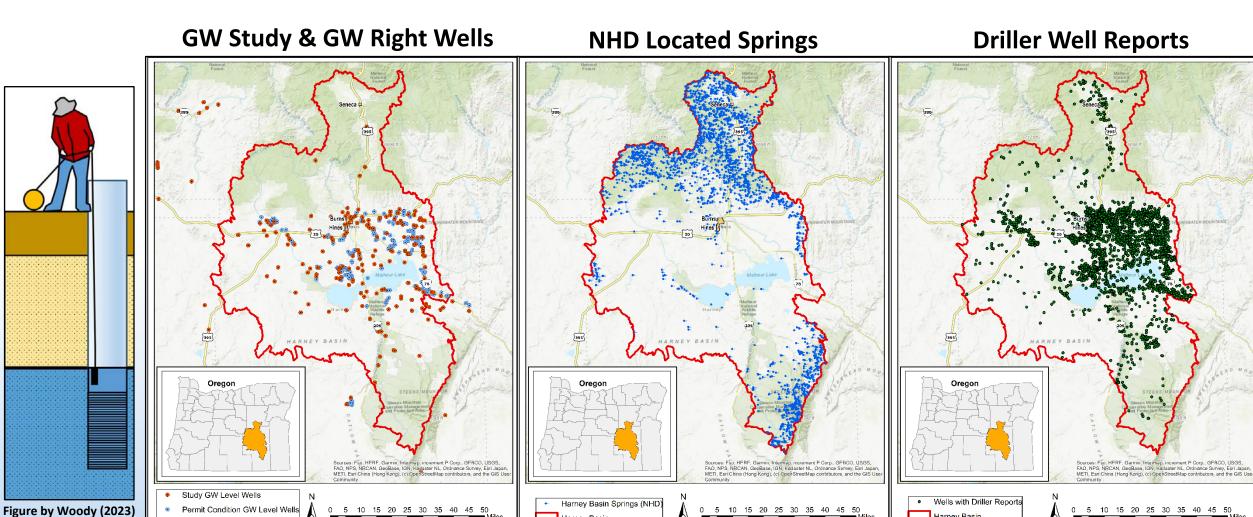
- Much of the deep upland groundwater and most of the lowland groundwater was recharged 5,000 to 30,000 years ago when conditions were cooler and wetter than today
- Modern groundwater (recharge after 1953) is mostly limited to a thin shallow zone beneath recharge areas

From USGS Fact Sheet (Gingerich and others, 2022)





### Study Groundwater Level Data







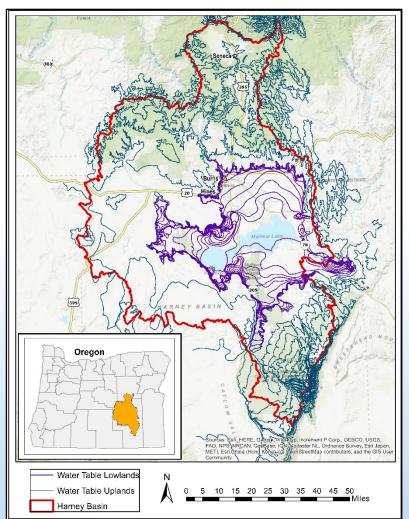
### Study Groundwater Level Maps

### **Groundwater Level Contour Maps**

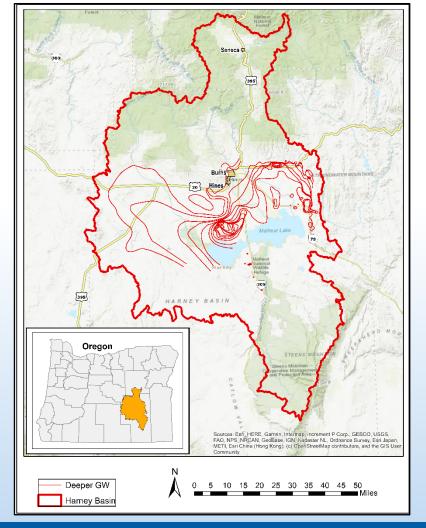
Water Table Map (groundwater top) (wells <150-ft deep) (uplands & lowlands)

Potentiometric
Surface Map
(groundwater at depth)
(wells >150-ft deep)
(lowlands only)

#### **Water-Table**



#### **Potentiometric Surface**

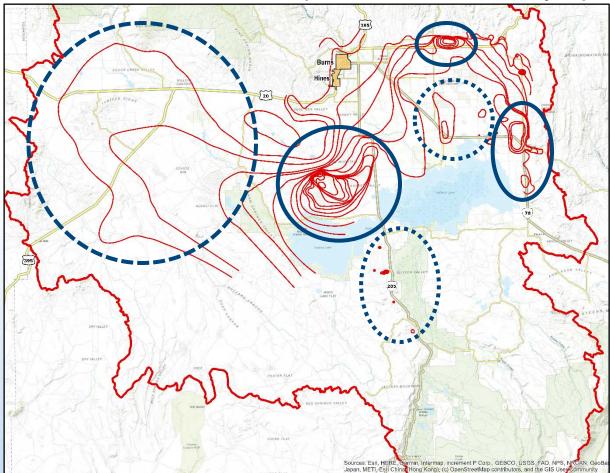






#### Water-Table (wells <150-ft total depth)

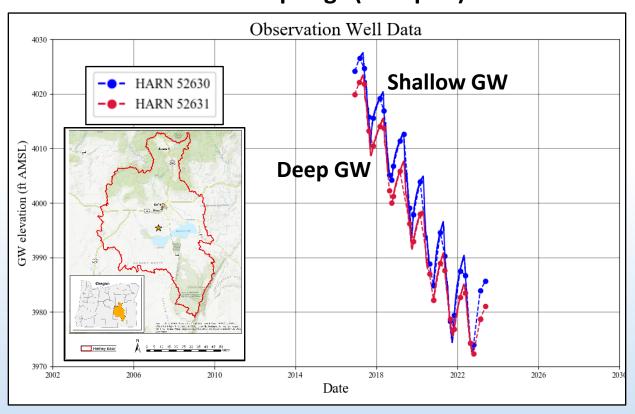
#### Potentiometric Surface (wells >150-ft total depth)



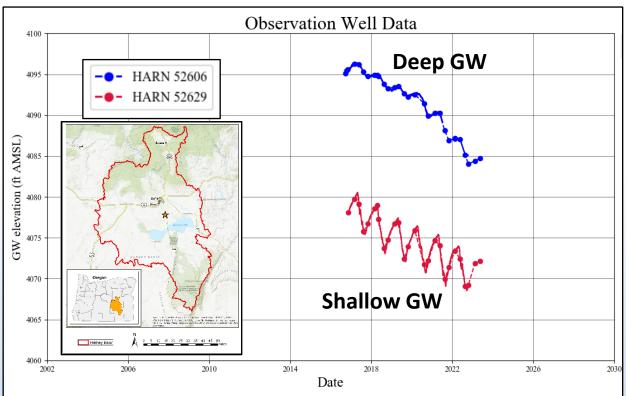




#### **Weaver Springs (well pair)**



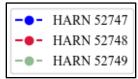
#### Dog Mountain (well pair)

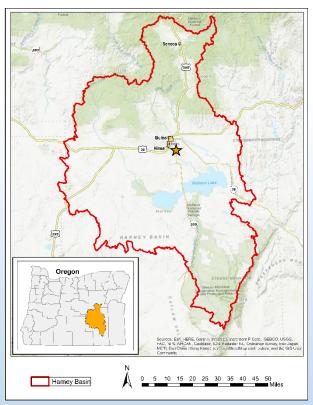


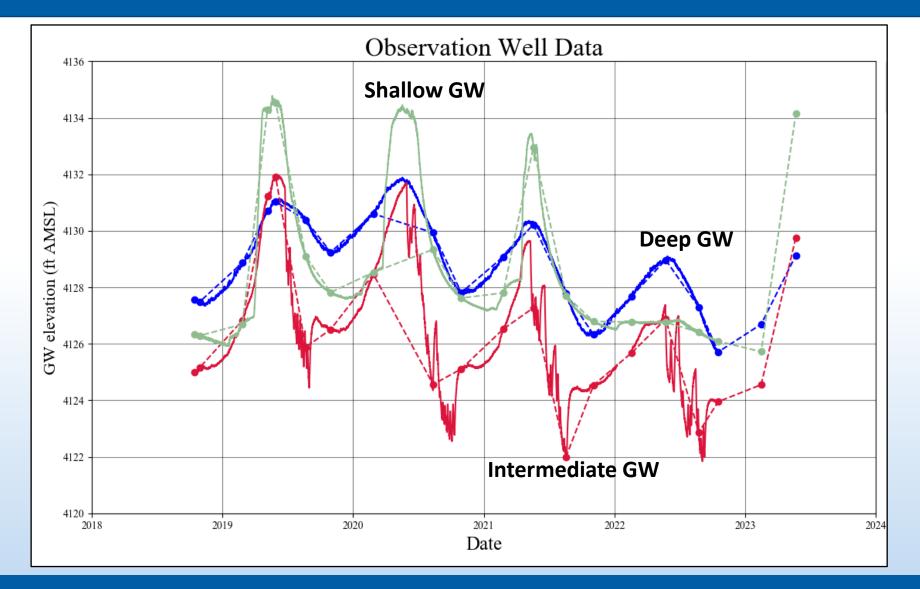




#### **EOARC** (triple wells)



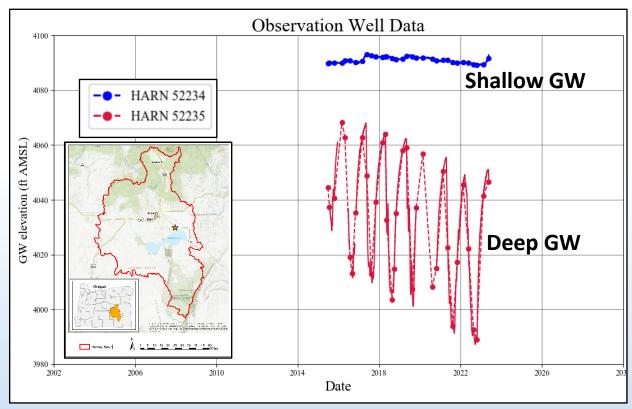




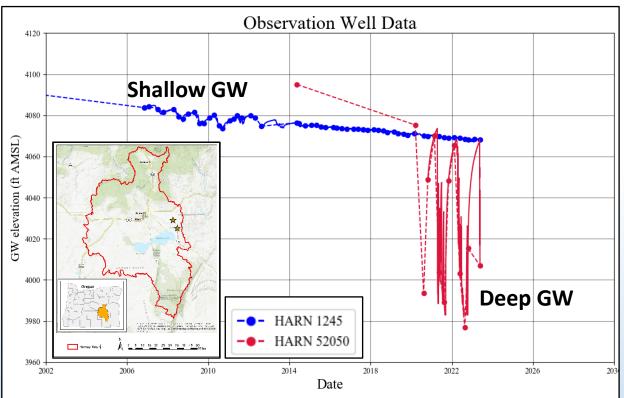




#### Lawen (well pair)



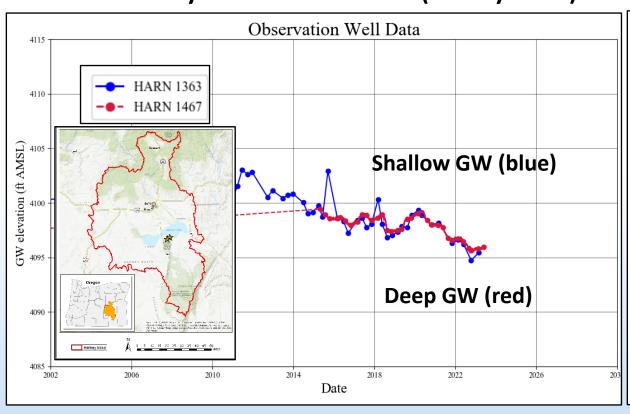
#### **Crane Vicinity (nearby wells)**



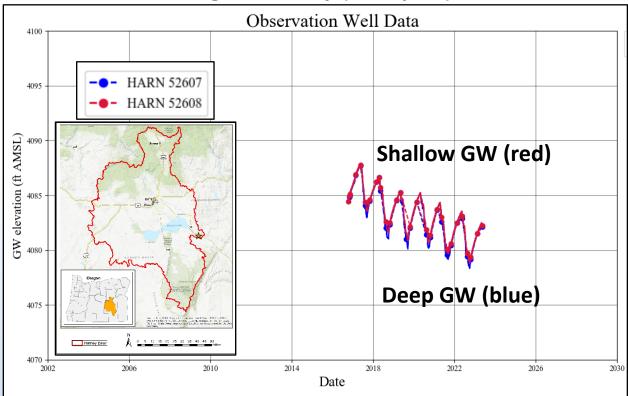




#### **Blitzen Valley Near Malheur Lake (nearby wells)**



#### Virginia Valley (well pair)

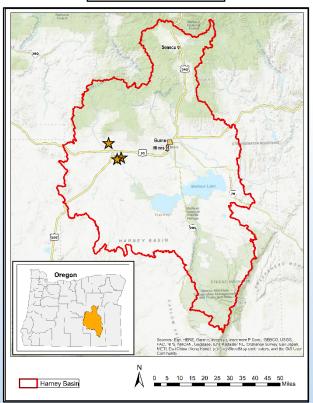


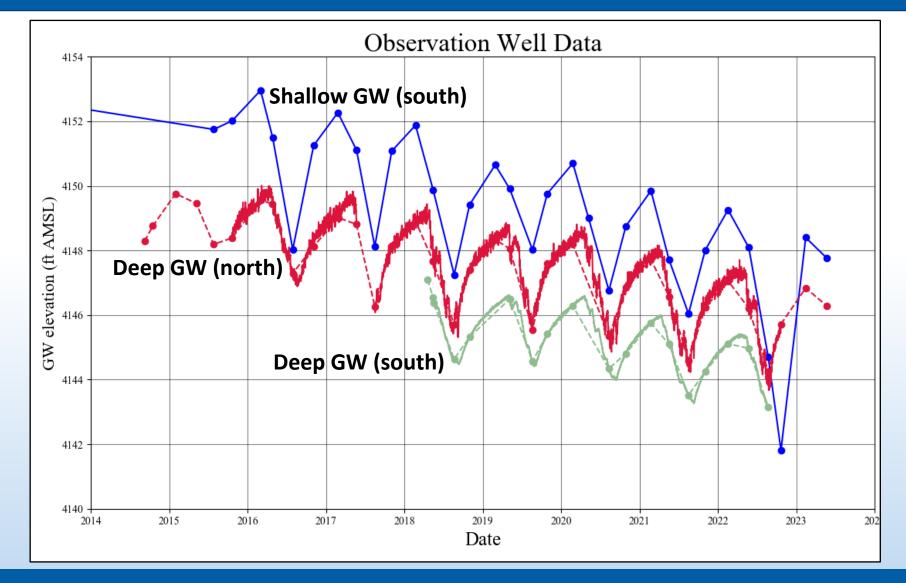




#### **Riley Vicinity Wells**











### Study Needed to Answer...Why?

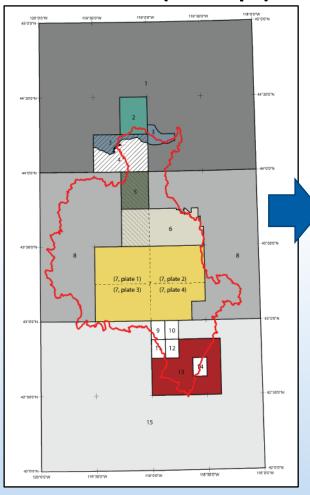
- Cones of depression:
  - O Why do cones of depression occur in some areas & flat gradient decline occur in other areas?
  - Why do cones of depression occur shallow & deep some areas, but deep only other areas?
- GW levels: For a given location, why is...
  - The shallow & deep elevations, annual trend, & seasonal amplitude similar in some areas?
  - The shallow & deep annual trend the same but the seasonal amplitude differs in some areas?
  - The shallow & deep annual trend and the seasonal amplitude different in some areas?
  - The highest GW elevation shallow GW in some areas & deeper GW in other areas?
  - The larger seasonal amplitude shallow GW in some areas & deeper GW in other areas?
  - The steeper annual trend (decline) shallow GW in some areas & deeper GW in other areas?
- Needed to explore:
  - hydraulic property relationship to geology
  - hydraulic property control on GW flow and response to GW development



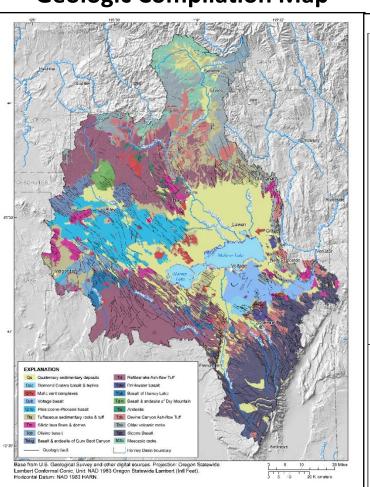


### Study Area Geology

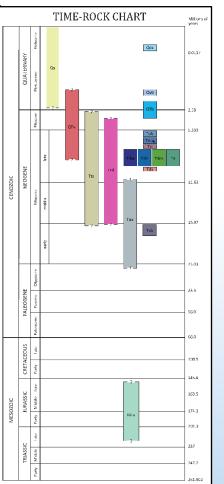
#### **Data Source (15 Maps)**



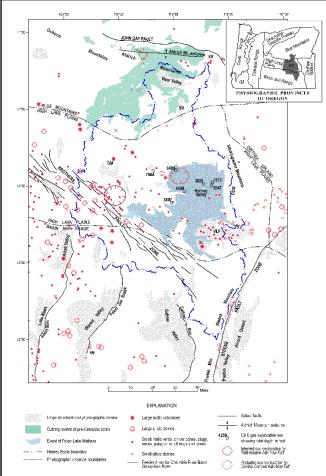
#### **Geologic Compilation Map**



#### **Time-Rock Chart**



#### **Tectonic Overview Map**



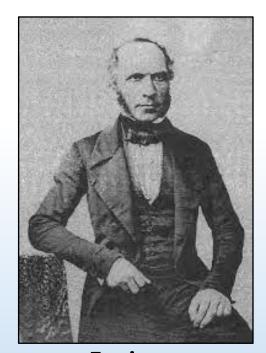
All figures and maps as displayed or redisplayed from Boschmann (2021)





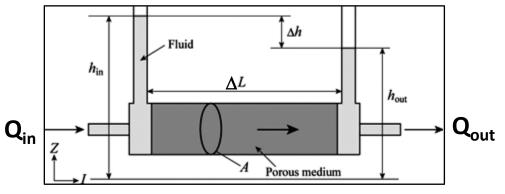
#### Geology & Groundwater Flow

#### Henry Darcy **1803-1858**

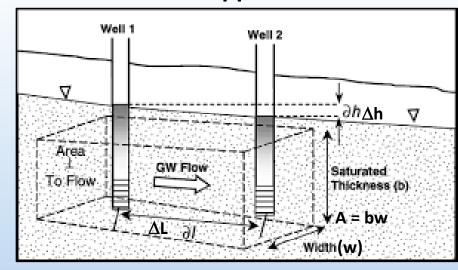


**Engineer Dijon, France** 

#### **Laboratory Experiment**



#### **Field Application**



#### **Darcy's Law**

$$Q = KA (\Delta h / \Delta L)$$

**Q** = volumetric flow rate

**K = hydraulic conductivity** 

A = cross-sectional area at right angles to the fluid flow direction = bw

$$(\Delta h / \Delta L)$$
 = hydraulic gradient  
=  $[(h_{out} - h_{in}) / (L_{out} - L_{in})]$ 

$$Q = Tw (\Delta h / \Delta L)$$

T = transmissivity = Kb

K = hydraulic conductivity

b = cross-sectional area height

w = cross-sectional area width





#### Geology & Groundwater Drawdown

#### **Radial Flow to a Well**

#### **Theis Equation**

$$T = [Q/(4\Pi s)]W(u)$$
 
$$S = (4Ttu)/r^2$$

#### T = transmissivity

Q = volumetric flow rate

 $\Pi = pi = 3.141592654$ 

#### s = drawdown

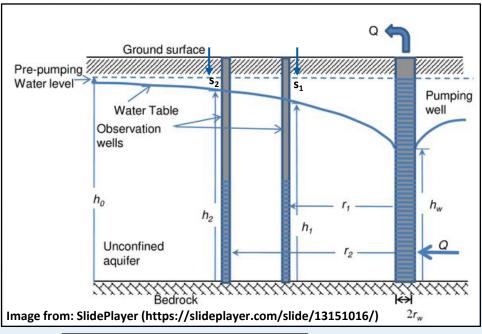
W(u) = well function =  $(-\ln u)-(0.5772157)+(u/1*1!)-(u^2/2*2!)+(u^3/3*3!)-(u^4/4*4!)+...$ 

#### S = storage coefficient

t = elapsed time since pumping began

r = radial distance from pumping well

 $u = r^2S/4Tt$ 



Idealized
Time
Drawdown
& Recovery
Graph

#### **Cooper-Jacob Equation**

 $T = [2.303Q/(4\Pi s)] [log_{10} (2.25Tt/r^2S)]$ or  $T = (2.303Q)/(4\Pi\Delta s)$   $S = (2.25Tt_o)/r^2$ 

T = transmissivity

Q = volumetric flow rate

 $\Pi = pi = 3.141592654$ 

s = drawdown

 $\Delta s = drawdown for one log cycle of time$ 

S = storage coefficient

t = elapsed time since pumping began

t<sub>o</sub> = time intercept, time where the drawdown line intercepts the zero-drawdown line

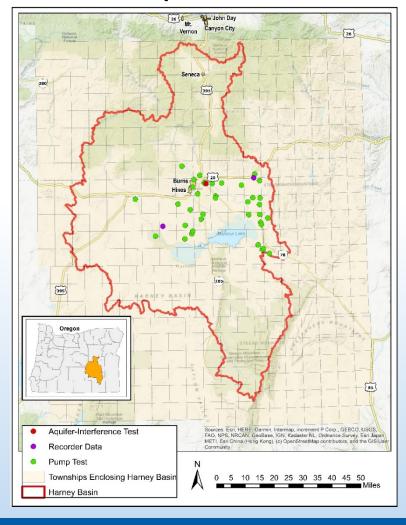
r = radial distance from pumping well



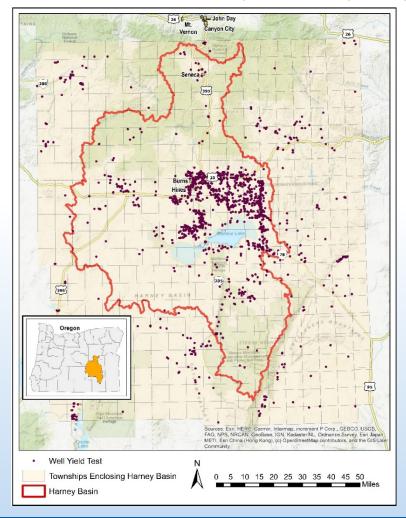


### Transmissivity Data Sources

#### **44 Aquifer Tests**



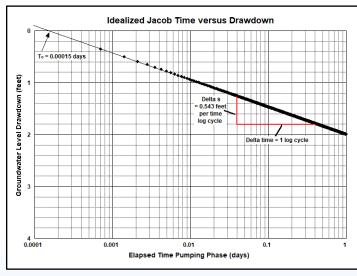
#### 1,451 Well Yield Tests (Specific Capacity)



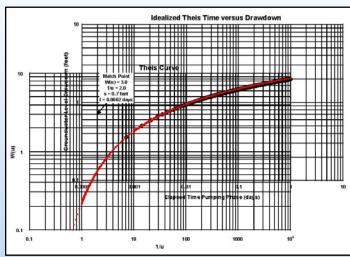




### Transmissivity Calculations

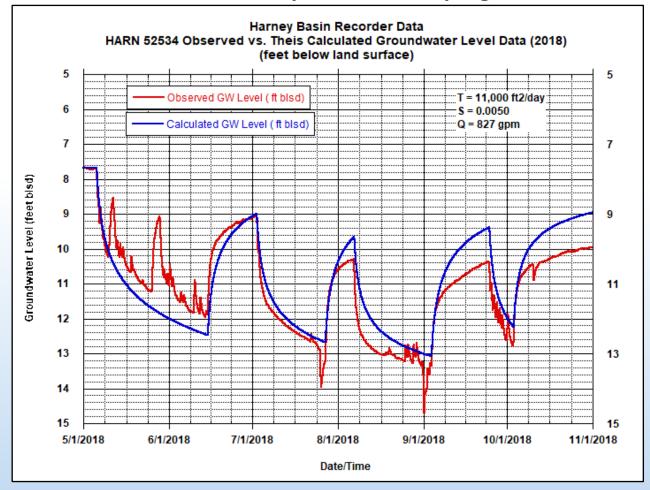


Cooper-Jacob Semi-Log Graphical Analysis



Theis
Log-Log
Graphical
Analysis

### Test of Analysis Results: Compare Observed vs. Calculated Groundwater Level Response to Pumping & Shutoffs

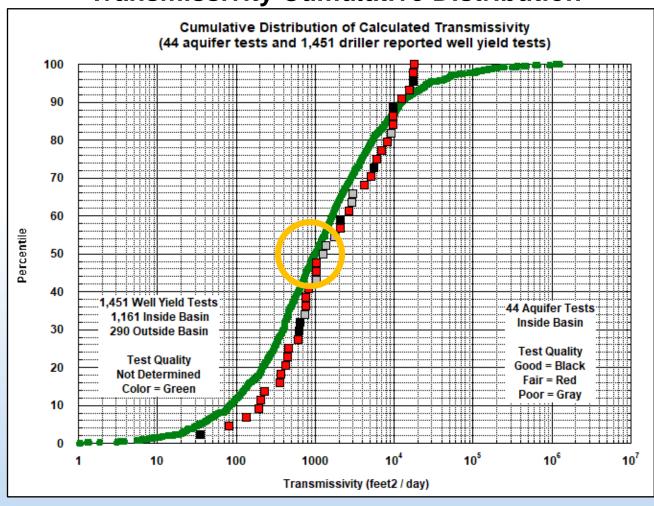




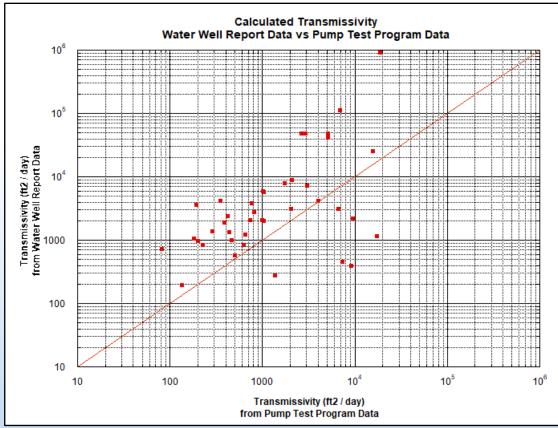


### Calculated Transmissivity Range

#### **Transmissivity Cumulative Distribution**



## Transmissivity Compare Well Yield (Specific Capacity)Test vs. Aquifer Test





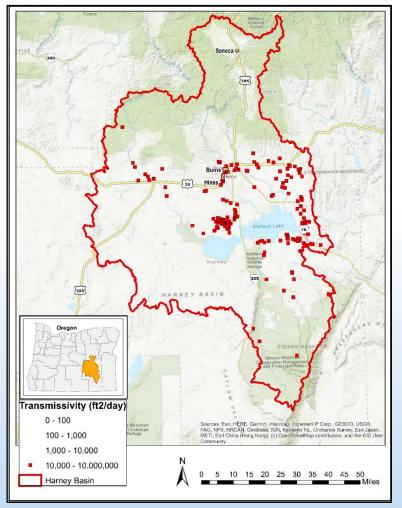


#### Transmissivity Spatial Distribution

#### **All Transmissivity**

# ransmissivity (ft2/day FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan 10.000 - 10.000.000

#### **Largest Transmissivity**



#### **Smaller Transmissivity**

- Found entire basin
- Even mixed with large transmissivity

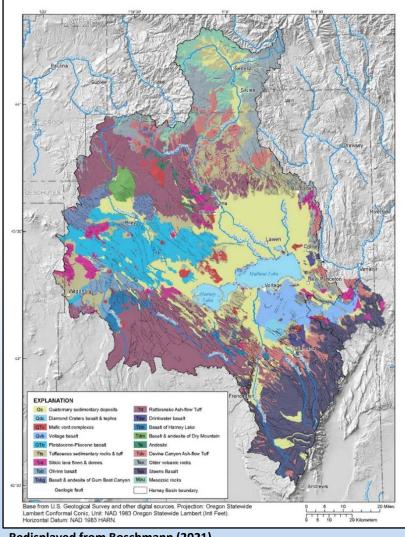
#### **Largest Transmissivity**

- Limited distribution
- Harney Valley margin
- Upper Silver Creek



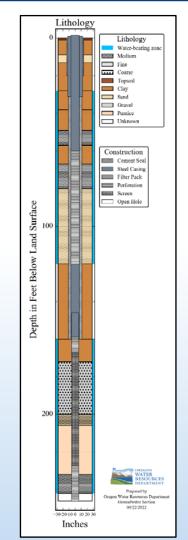


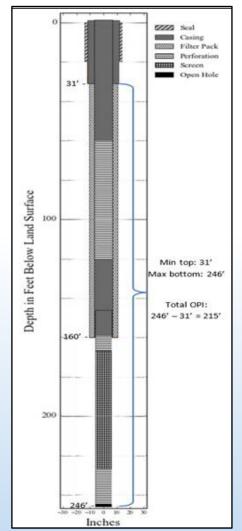
### Transmissivity Tied to Geologic Units



Stratigraphic Unit Map (18 Units)

Well
Lithology
Construction
Open Interval





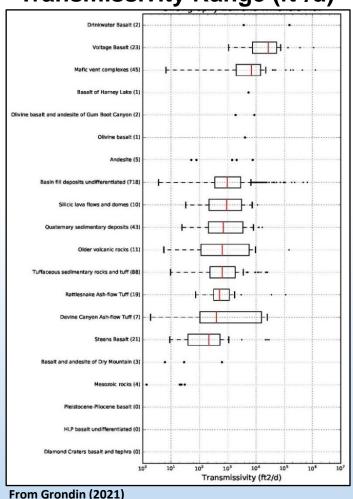
Redisplayed from Boschmann (2021)





### Stratigraphic to Hydrostratigraphic Units

#### 18 Stratigraphic Units Transmissivity Range (ft²/d)



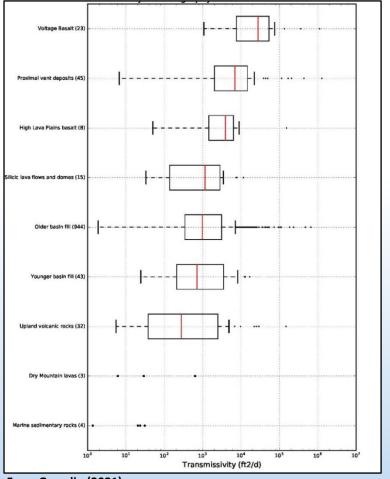
Group
Stratigraphic
Units to
Hydrostratigraphic
Units



Similar Hydraulic Properties

Similar Geologic Properties

#### 9 Hydrostratigraphic Units Transmissivity Range (ft²/d)



From Grondin (2021)

Younger
Units
Larger
Transmissivity



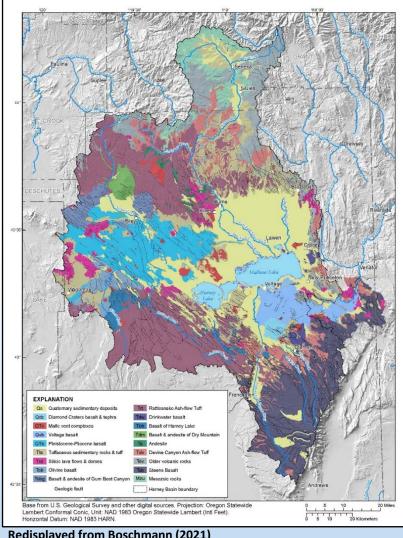
Older Units Smaller Transmissivity

Tom Grondin (20





### Stratigraphic to Hydrostratigraphic Units

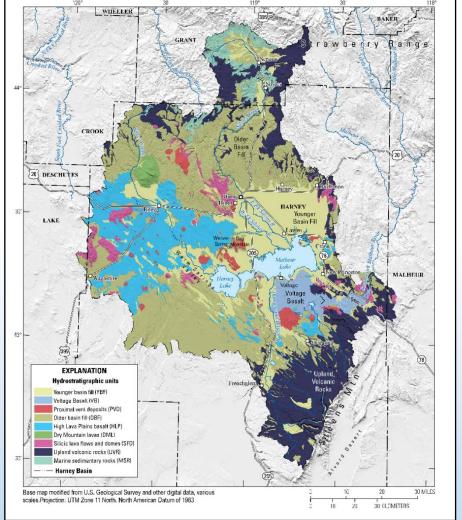


Group 18 Stratigraphic **Units to** 9 Hydrostratigraphic **Units** 



**Similar Hydraulic Properties** 

Similar **Geologic Properties** 

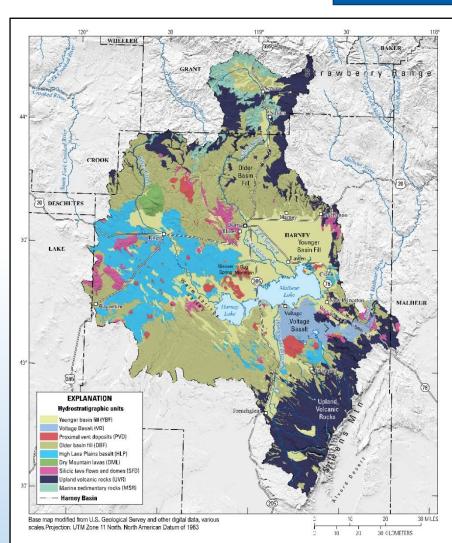


From Grondin (2021)





### Study Takeaway #2



# Study Takeaway #2: Hydrostratigraphy is a major key to understanding Harney Basin groundwater and finding solutions to

**Hydrostratigraphy & related transmissivity informs:** 

groundwater problems

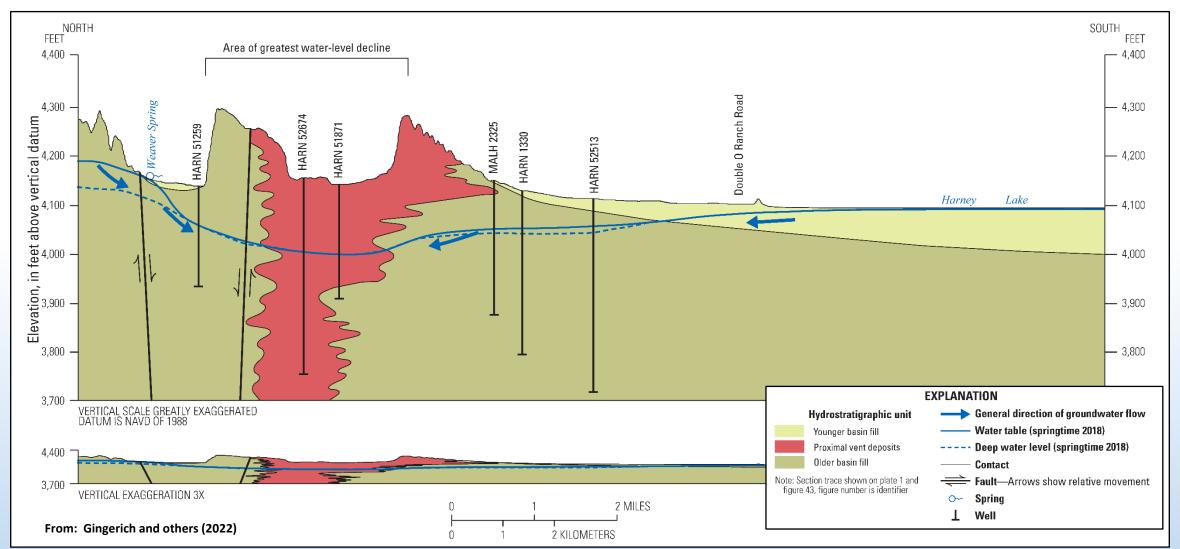
- Understanding groundwater flow within the basin
  - Flat gradient vs. steeper gradient areas
- Understanding groundwater response to pumping
  - Cones of depression vs. area-wide decline
- Water budget within the basin
  - Controls on recharge and discharge

From Grondin (2021)





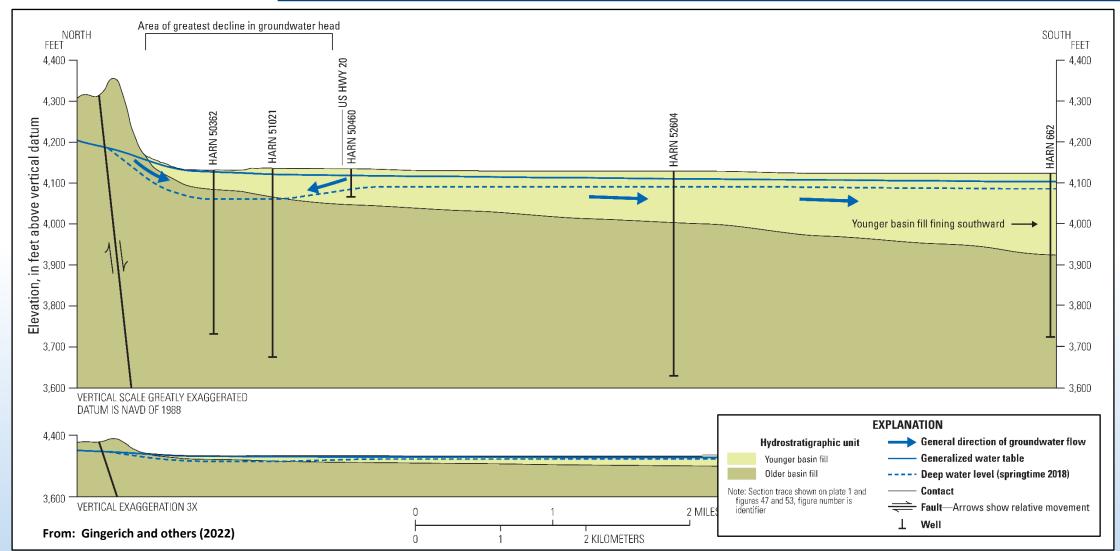
### Hydrostratigraphy: Weaver Springs







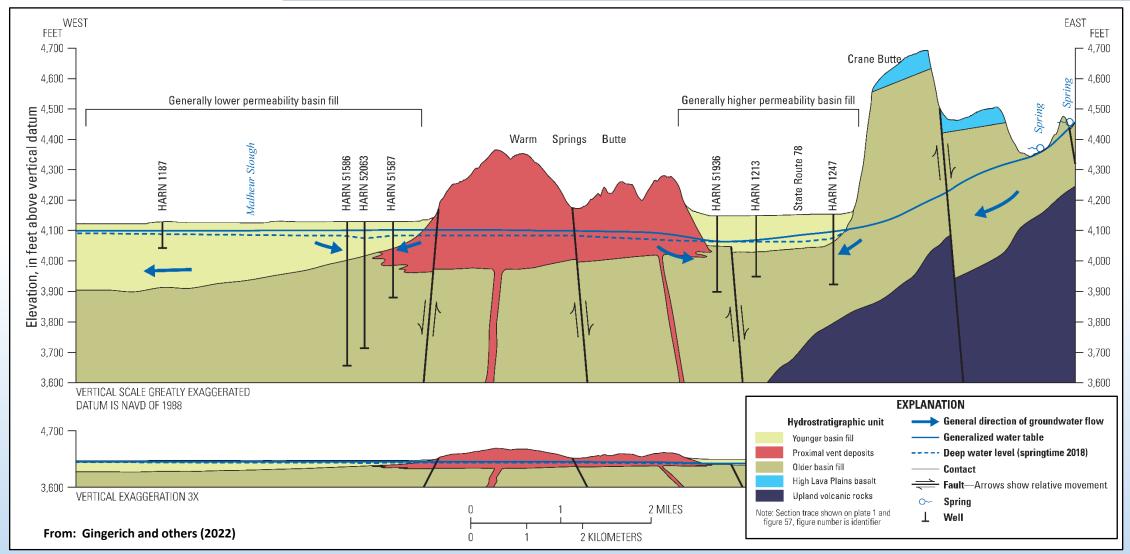
### Hydrostratigraphy: North Harney Valley







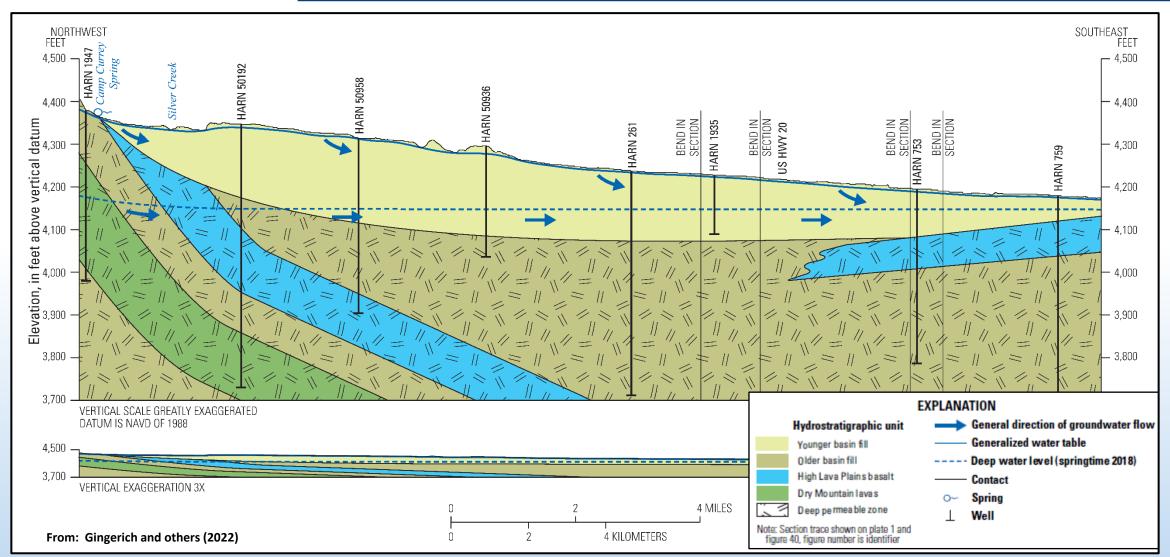
### Hydrostratigraphy: Crane Vicinity







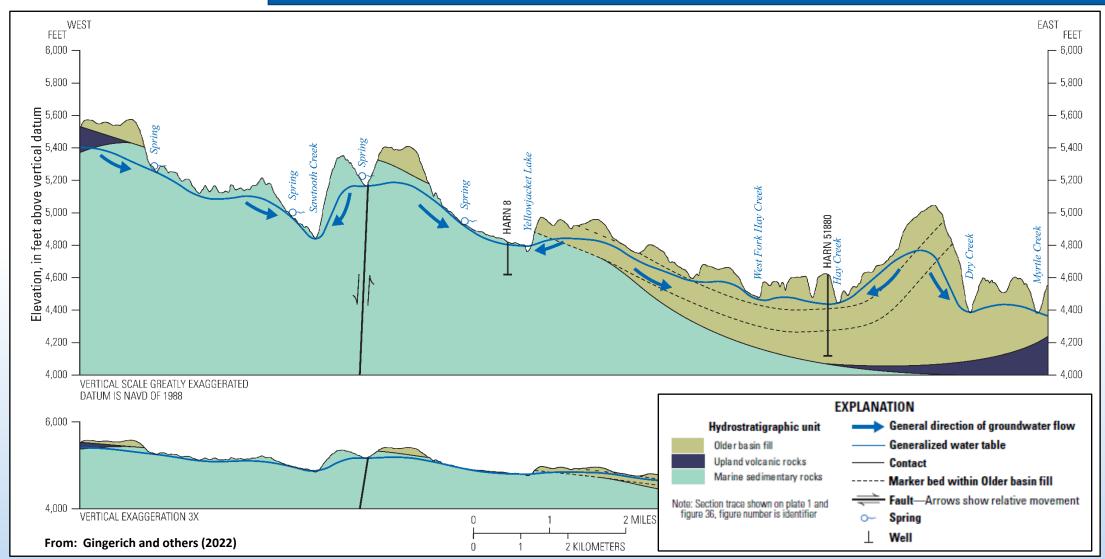
## Hydrostratigraphy: Silver Creek







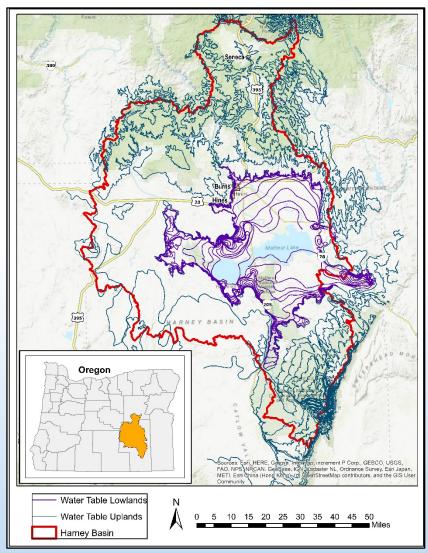
## Hydrostratigraphy: North Uplands







## Study Takeaway #3



# Study Takeaway #3: Harney Basin groundwater is a single, hydraulically connected system, a continuum

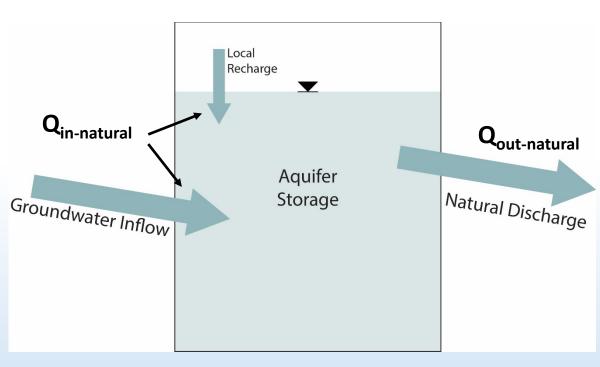
- Groundwater generally flows toward Harney and Malheur Lakes from the surrounding uplands
- Groundwater from land surface to depth is hydraulically connected even when static water levels and water level trends differ
- Groundwater from location to location is hydraulically connected even when groundwater source and flowpaths differ
- Hydrostratigraphy is the predominant control on groundwater flow and response to development
- Water chemistry data supports this finding. Chemical changes with depth and/or location have logical explanations including but not limited to mixing and chemical processes





## **Groundwater Budget Concepts**

#### **Pre-Development**



$$Q_{in-natural} = Q_{out-natural}$$

#### **Pre-Development**

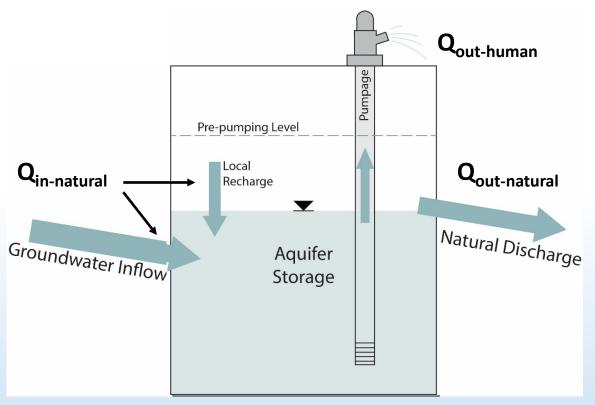
- Dynamic equilibrium (inflow = outflow)
- Natural inflow to groundwater includes:
  - Precipitation
  - Surface water loss to subsurface
  - Groundwater inflow from neighbor area
- Natural groundwater outflow includes:
  - Groundwater outflow to surface water
  - Evaporation
  - Plant transpiration
  - Groundwater outflow to neighbor area
- Groundwater levels are steady long-term but can have short-term variability
- "Stored" water is not static but moves from inflow to outflow





## Groundwater Budget Concepts

#### **Post-Development**



$$\begin{aligned} \mathbf{Q}_{\text{in-natural}} &= \mathbf{Q}_{\text{out-natural}} + \mathbf{Q}_{\text{out-human}} \text{ (new equilibrium)} \\ & \quad \text{or} \\ \mathbf{Q}_{\text{in-natural}} &< \mathbf{Q}_{\text{out-natural}} + \mathbf{Q}_{\text{out-human}} \text{ (disequilibrium)} \end{aligned}$$

#### **Post-Development**

- Human groundwater development causes changes
  - Human outflow added to groundwater system
  - Natural groundwater inflow may increase
  - Natural groundwater outflow often decreases
  - Groundwater "storage" often changes seen as new lower stable groundwater levels or ongoing groundwater level decline
- New equilibrium:
  - When inflow and new total outflow equal
  - Possibly new lower, stable groundwater levels
  - Possibly new lower natural groundwater outflow
- Disequilibrium:
  - When new total outflow exceeds inflow
  - Possibly ongoing decrease in groundwater level and/or decrease in natural groundwater outflow



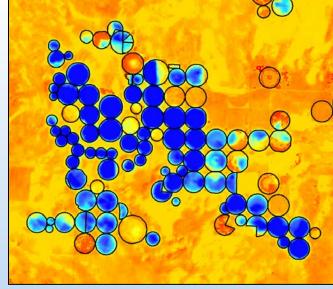


## Harney Basin Water Budget Data Sources



Eddy Covariance Station

#### Satellite Imagery



#### **Harney Basin Water Budget Data Sources**

- Climate data (multiple sources)
- Soil data
- Land cover data
- Satellite imagery and Eddy covariance stations
- Flow measurements (published, unpublished, study)
- Water and plant chemistry (study sampling-analyses)
- OWRD water right data
- OHA community (public facility) water system data
- OWRD well construction data
- Water use (pumpage) reported to OWRD
- Published water use indices (various uses & sources)

#### Data Sources, Analyses, and Results Detailed in

- Beamer and Hoskinson (2021), Grondin (2021)
- Garcia and others (2022), Gingerich and others (2022)





## Harney Basin Upland GW Budget

#### **Upland Groundwater Recharge & Discharge (acre-feet/year)**

Adapted from: Garcia and others (2022)

Component	Annual mean by region (acre-feet)			
	North	South	West	<b>Harney Basin</b>
Upland Recharge				
Precipitation and snowmelt	86,000	157,000	45,000	288,000
Total Upland Recharge	86,000	157,000	45,000	288,000
Upland Discharge				
Stream base flow	75,000	125,000	25,000	225,000
Springs <sup>1</sup>	2,000	12,000	22	14,000
Groundwater flow to lowlands	9,000	20,000	20,000	49,000
Total Upland Discharge	86,000	157,000	45,000	288,000
Recharge minus Discharge	0	0	0	d

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Estimates represent discharges unaccounted for in base-flow estimates and include current and historical spring discharge measurements





## Harney Basin Lowland GW Recharge

#### Lowland Groundwater Recharge (acre-feet/year)

Adapted from: Garcia and others (2022)

Lowland Recharge	Mean annual recharge by region (acre-feet)			
	North	South	West	<b>Harney Basin</b>
Sources				
Groundwater inflow from uplands	9,000	20,000	20,000	49,000
Streams and floodwater (natural) 1,2	40,000	900	18,000	59,000
Malheur and Harney Lakes <sup>1</sup>	47	_	160	210
Surface water (irrigation) <sup>1</sup>	24,000	26,000	7,300	57,000
Sub-Total	73,000	47,000	45,000	165,000
Groundwater pumpage reinfiltration				
Groundwater irrigation and non-irrigation use <sup>3</sup>	4,800	1,200	2,200	8,200
Total Lowland Recharge (all sources)	78,000	48,000	47,000	173,000

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Includes a portion of upland runoff and base flow.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>In the southern region, recharge from streams and floodwater is mostly accounted for in irrigated areas, and channel losses are assumed to be equally offset by base-flow gains between Frenchglen and Diamond Lane.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Estimate is basin wide, but 99.9 percent occurs either within the lowland boundary or within two miles outside of the lowland boundary.





## Harney Basin Lowland GW Discharge

#### Lowland Groundwater Discharge (acre-feet/year)

Adapted from: Garcia and others (2022)

Lowland Discharge	Mean annual discharge by region (acre-feet)			
	North	South	West	<b>Harney Basin</b>
Natural Discharge				
Springs <sup>1</sup> , Evapotranspiration <sup>2</sup> , Seepage to lakes	64,000	28,900	35,000	127,900
Groundwater outflow to Malheur River Basin	NA	3,100	NA	3,100
Sub-Total (natural discharge)	64,000	32,000	35,000	131,000
Groundwater pumpage discharge				
Irrigation pumpage <sup>3</sup>	81,000	22,000	42,000	145,000
Non-irrigation pumpage <sup>3</sup>	6,100	470	400	7,000
Sub-Total (pumpage discharge)	87,000	22,000	43,000	152,000
Total Lowland Discharge (all components)	151,000	54,000	78,000	283,000
Total Lowland Recharge minus Discharge	-73.000	-6.000	-31.000	-110.000

Note: Summation discrepancies solely from rounding of component estimates

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Mean of measurements made during 1907–80

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>ET<sub>GW</sub> from non-irrigated areas and spring-irrigated agriculture. Includes ET<sub>GW</sub> of spring discharge

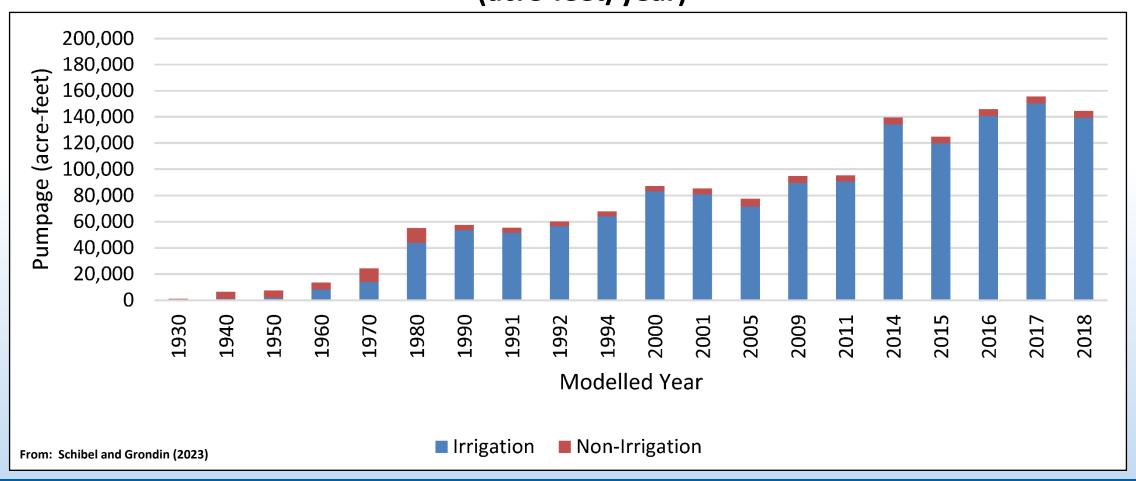
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>Estimate is basin wide, but 99.9 percent occurs either within the lowland boundary or within two miles outside of the lowland boundary.





## Harney Basin GW Pumpage

Estimated Groundwater Pumpage in the Harney Basin GHVGAC (1930-2018) (acre-feet/year)

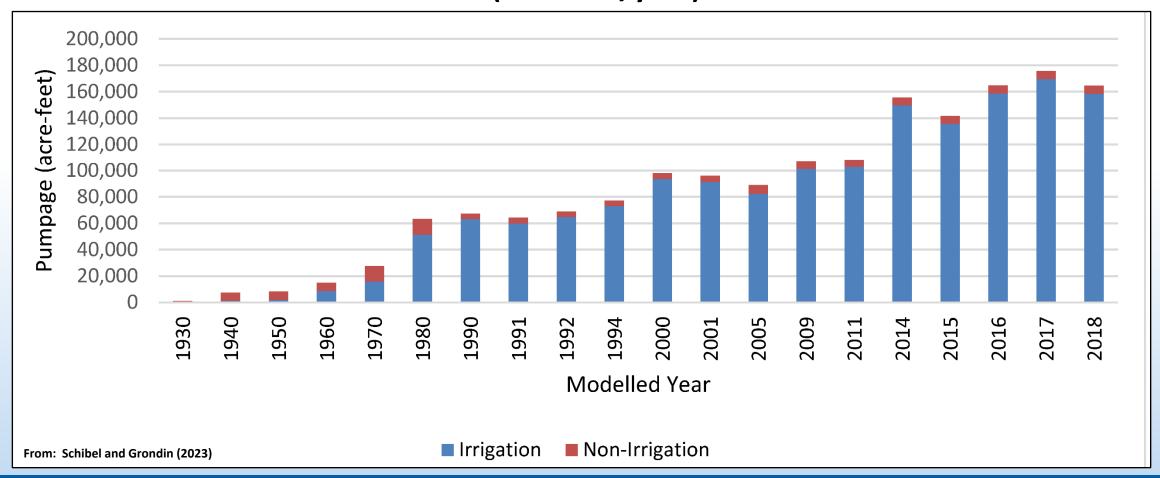






## Harney Basin GW Pumpage

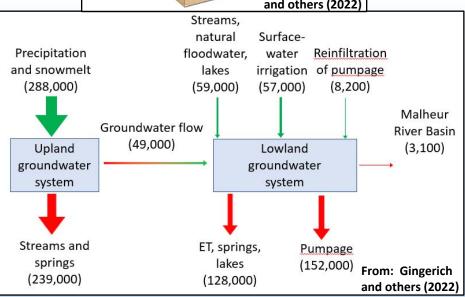
Estimated Groundwater Pumpage for the Entire GW Model Area (1930-2018) (acre-feet/year)







# Lowlands EXPLANATION Recharge (inflow) Discharge (outflow) Direction of water movement Yourser besin in vale and vale and vale and vale and vale and vale and others (2022)



## Study Takeaway #4

# Study Takeaway #4: Harney Basin Groundwater Budget Balances in the Uplands and Does Not Balance in the Lowlands

- Upland groundwater budget:
  - Minimally affected by groundwater development
  - Generally represents the natural system
- Lowland groundwater budget:
  - Accounts for most groundwater development
  - Is out of balance by about -110,000 acre-feet/year
  - Imbalance is primarily seen as groundwater removed from storage with declining groundwater levels
  - Capture of a small amount of natural discharge is likely
  - The largest deficit is in the north region where pumpage exceeds recharge





## Groundwater Study Key Takeaways

#### **Key Takeaways**

- Most Harney Basin groundwater is ancient (recharged 5,000 to 30,000 years ago), and modern groundwater (recharged after 1953) is limited to a thin, shallow zone beneath recharge areas
- 2. Geology (hydrostratigraphy) is a major key to understanding Harney Basin groundwater and finding solutions to groundwater problems
- 3. Harney Basin groundwater is a single, hydraulically connected system, a continuum
- 4. Harney Basin groundwater budget balances in the uplands; it does not balance in the lowlands (deficit of 110,000 acre-feet/year)





## Thank You







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