

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2, 2025
25-03

PRESS CONTACT

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OWRD Seeking Public Input on Proposed Harney Basin Groundwater Management Rule Changes in the Malheur Lake Administrative Basin

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) is seeking public comment on [proposed rules](#) relating to groundwater use within the Harney Basin, which is a portion of the Malheur Lake Administrative Basin.

OWRD is proposing the designation of the Harney Basin as a Critical Ground Water Area (CGWA) to address the overallocation of groundwater rights and severe groundwater declines within the basin. A CGWA designation allows the Department to reduce the allowed pumping for an existing permitted or certificated water right. OWRD is further proposing to designate areas within the Malheur Lake Administrative Basin as a Serious Water Management Problem Area (SWMPA), requiring groundwater rights holders throughout the SWMPA boundary to measure and report their groundwater use. Additionally, the proposed rules will expand the existing classification boundary to restrict new groundwater permits and allow for exempt uses and nonconsumptive geothermal uses only.

The public is invited to comment on the proposed rules from Monday, June 2, through 5 p.m. on Thursday, August 7. OWRD will host several information sessions and public hearings. Details on how to participate in these sessions are below. **Public comments will not be accepted during the information sessions; however, they will be accepted at the public hearings held directly following each information session.**

For more information, please see the OWRD Division 512 rulemaking website at <https://owrd.info/Division512>.

The public is encouraged to attend the informational sessions and provide comments on the rulemaking, either verbally at the scheduled public hearings or in writing no later than 5 p.m. on August 7, 2025.

Written comments can be submitted by email to WRD_DL_rule-coordinator@water.oregon.gov or by mail:

Kelly Mainz – Rulemaking Coordinator
Oregon Water Resources Department
725 Summer St. N.E. Suite A
Salem, OR 97301-1271

Details on Information Sessions and Public Hearings

BURNS AND VIRTUAL

Date: Monday, June 23, 2025

Information Session: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: 7-8 p.m.

Location: The Pine Room, 543 W. Monroe Street, Burns, OR 97220

Date: Wednesday, August 5, 2025

Public Hearings: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 5-7 p.m.

Location: Both in-person and virtual

In-person: Harney County Community Center, 478 N. Broadway Ave., Burns, OR 97220

Virtual: Registration links for both hearings will be available on our website at

<http://owrd.info/Division512>. You may also email **WRD_DL_rule-coordinator@water.oregon.gov** no later than **12 p.m.** on August 4, 2025, to receive the passcode via email for either of the two public hearings on August 5, 2025. In your email, please specify which hearing(s) (morning, evening, or both) you are interested in joining virtually.

CRANE

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Information Session: 10-11 a.m.

Public Hearing: 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Location: Crane Store and Cafe, Gas and RV Camping, 57466 OR-78, Crane, OR 97732

DIAMOND

Date: Tuesday, June 24, 2025

Information Session: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: 7-8 p.m.

Location: Hotel Diamond, 49130 Main Street, Diamond, OR 97722

RILEY

Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Information Session: 10-11 a.m.

Public Hearing: 11:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Location: Suntex Elementary School, 68178 Silver Creek Road, Riley, OR 97758

HINES

Date: Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Information Session: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: 7-8 p.m.

Location: Double O School, 66077 Double O Road, Hines, OR 97738

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SENECA

Date: Thursday, June 26, 2025

Information Session: 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Public Hearing: 7-8 p.m.

Location: Seneca Elementary School, 101 Park Avenue, Seneca, OR 97873

Date: Tuesday, August 4, 2025

Public Hearing: 5-6:30 p.m.

Location: Seneca Elementary School, 101 Park Avenue, Seneca, OR 97873

If you have questions or need to request accommodations in advance of a scheduled hearing, please get in touch with the rule coordinator by email at WRD_DL_rule-coordinator@water.oregon.gov or by phone at 971-720-0963.

The Oregon Water Resources Department is the state agency charged with studying, allocating, and distributing water in Oregon. Visit www.oregon.gov/owrd.

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