OREGON
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Gregory Wacker
Watermaster
District 16

CWRE Training October 13th, 2026

OREGON WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Overview

- Watermaster Day to Day Duties
- Public Water
- Groundwater Restricted Areas
- Exempt Uses
- Stored Water
- Cancellation Letters
- Drought, Streamflow, Groundwater Levels

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Watermaster Duties

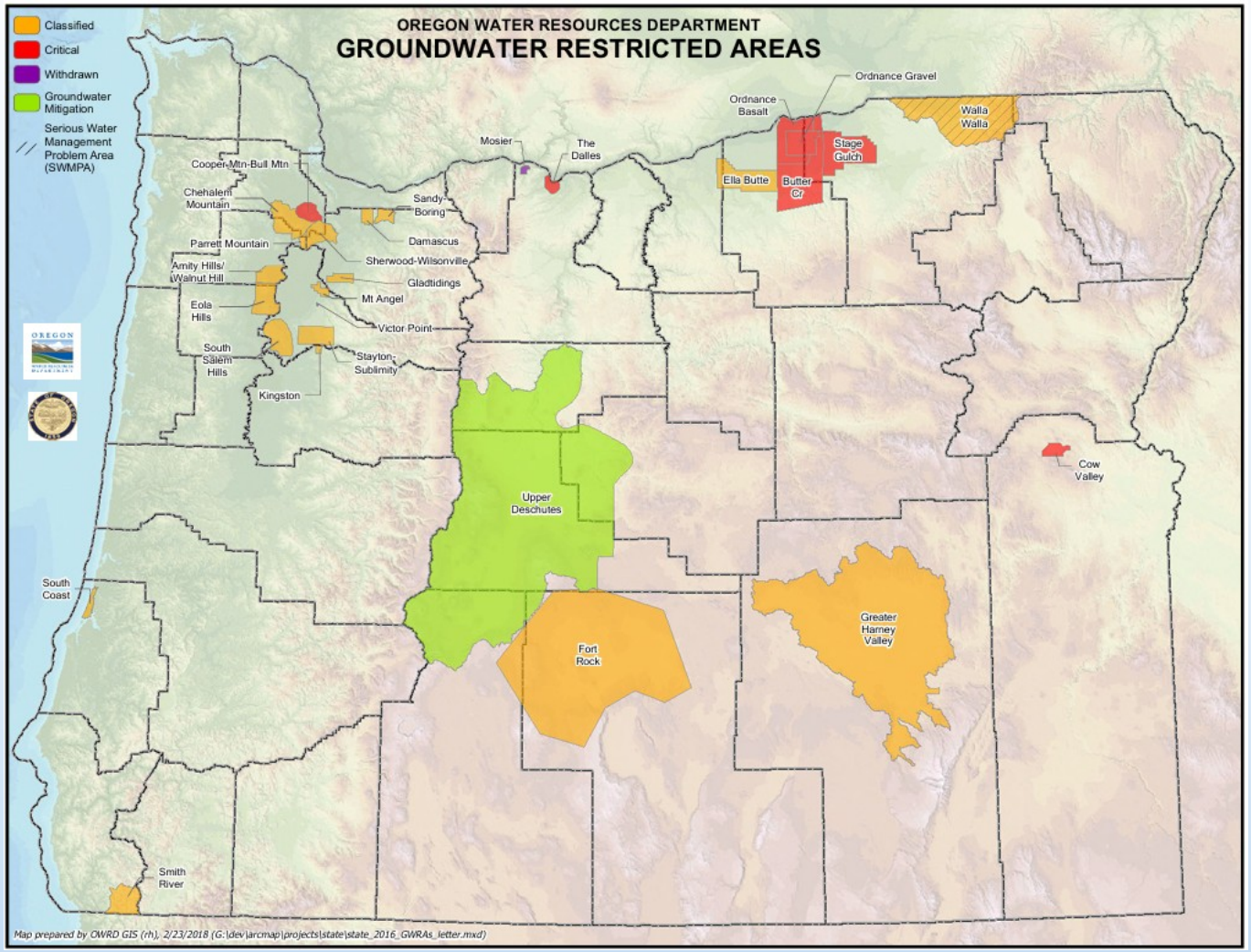
- Seasonally varying priorities:
  - Irrigation Distribution and Regulation (Mar-Oct)
  - Shutoff notices based on available streamflow
  - Regulation for Priority Date (Prior Appropriation)
  - Dam Safety Inspections (Assessment and Letters)
  - Groundwater Levels (Quarterly Well Net)
  - Streamflow Measurements and Gage Operation
  - Complaints and Water Use Dispute Resolution
  - Realtor Continued Education Credits

Public Water

- Under Oregon Law, all water belongs to the public with some exemptions
- Generally speaking, landowners with water flowing past, through, or under their property do not automatically have the right to use that water without authorization from the Department

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Groundwater Restricted Areas



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Surface Water Exempt Uses



- Stock Watering
- Fire Control
- Forest Management
- Natural Springs
- Rainwater Collection from artificial impervious surface (like a roof with gutters capturing runoff)

Refer to ORS 537.141, 537.142, 537.800

Groundwater Exempt Uses

- Stock watering
- Fire Control (when actively burning)
- Lawn and garden irrigation 3,000 gpd

  not more than one-half acre in area

- Single or group domestic

  not exceeding 15,000 gallons per day

- Single industrial or commercial purposes not exceeding 5,000 gallons per day. ***Does not include irrigation or watering to promote plant growth***



Ponds & Reservoirs

- Does it have a water right?
- No size exemptions
- No exceptions
- Apply for right now
- Seasonal Fill Period
- Permit Conditions
- Final Proof

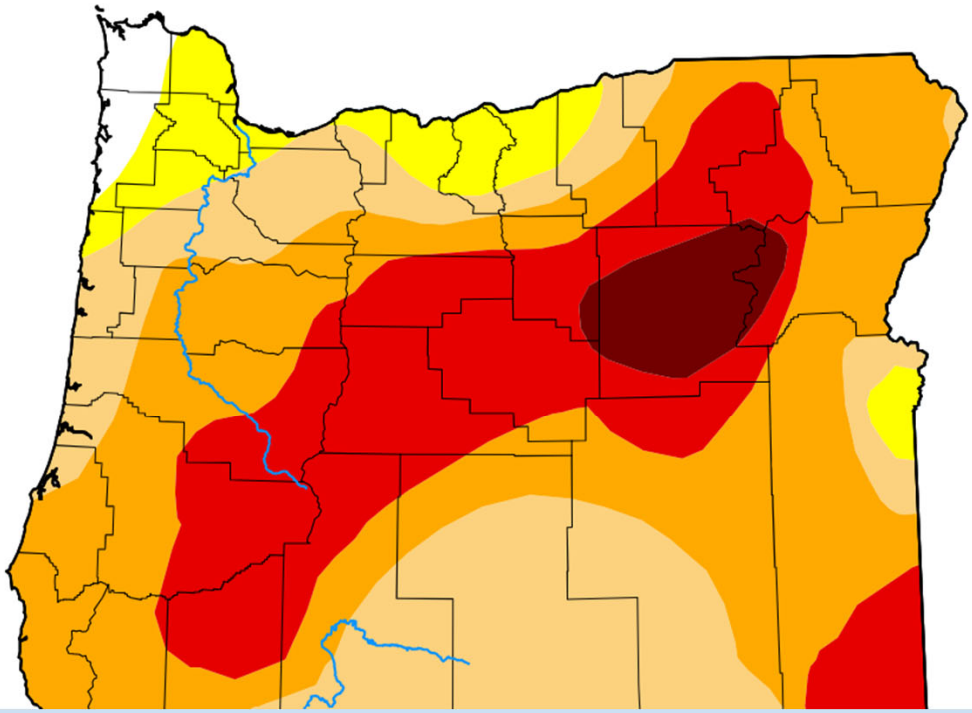


Cancellation Letters

- **OWRD-initiated cancellation:** The Department may send a **certified letter of intent to cancel** to the permittee, giving **60 days from the date of the letter** to respond.
- **No response** within that 60-day period results in automatic cancellation
- For certain cases, OWRD may also cancel after **60 days' notice by registered or certified mail** if the permit holder fails to prove completion of appropriation within three months of the required deadline

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Drought 2026



Map released: Thurs. September 3, 2026

Data valid: September 1, 2026 at 8 a.m. EDT

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Authors

United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):

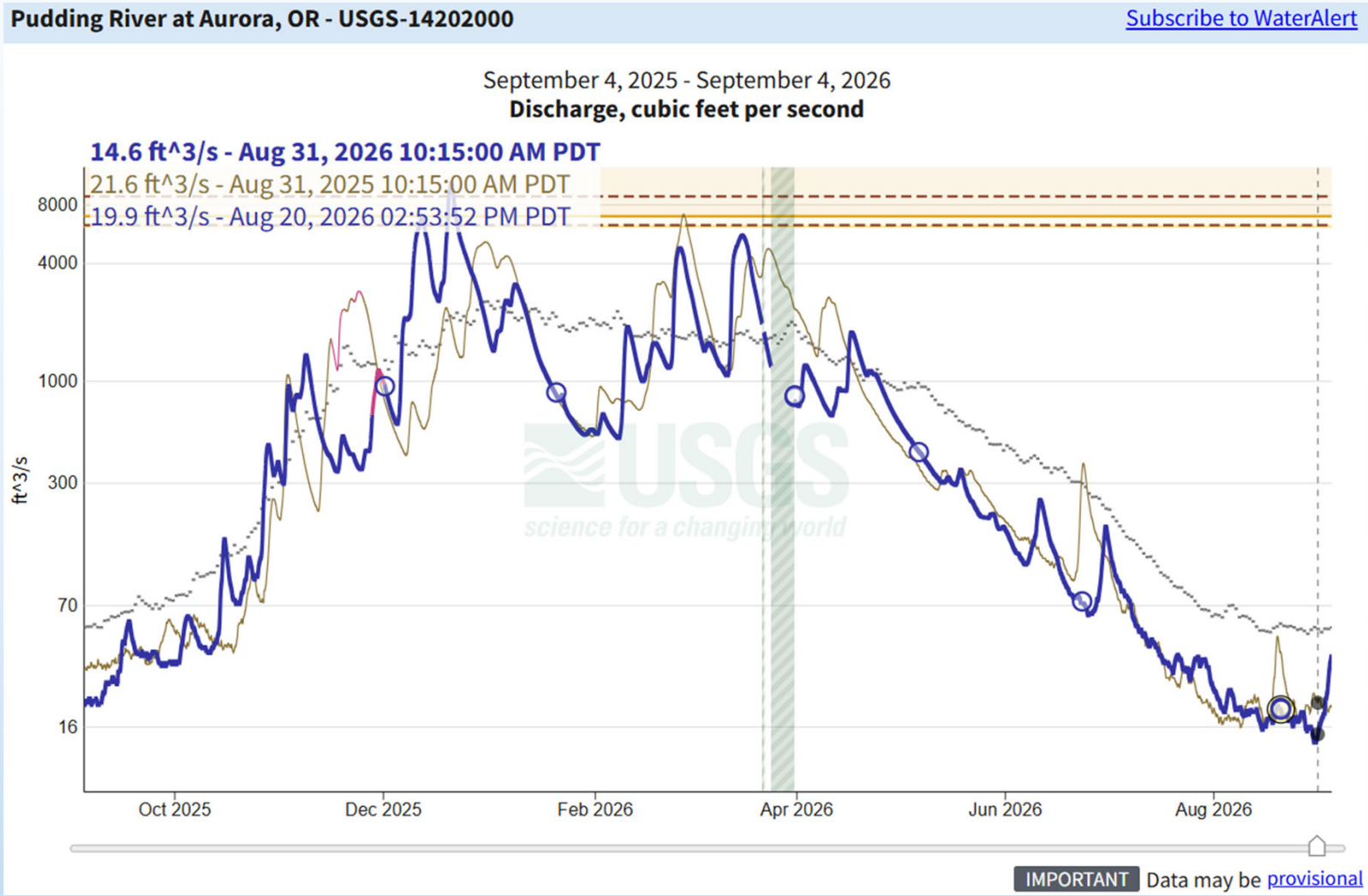
Curtis Riganti, National Drought Mitigation Center

Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):

Tsegaye Tadesse, National Drought Mitigation Center

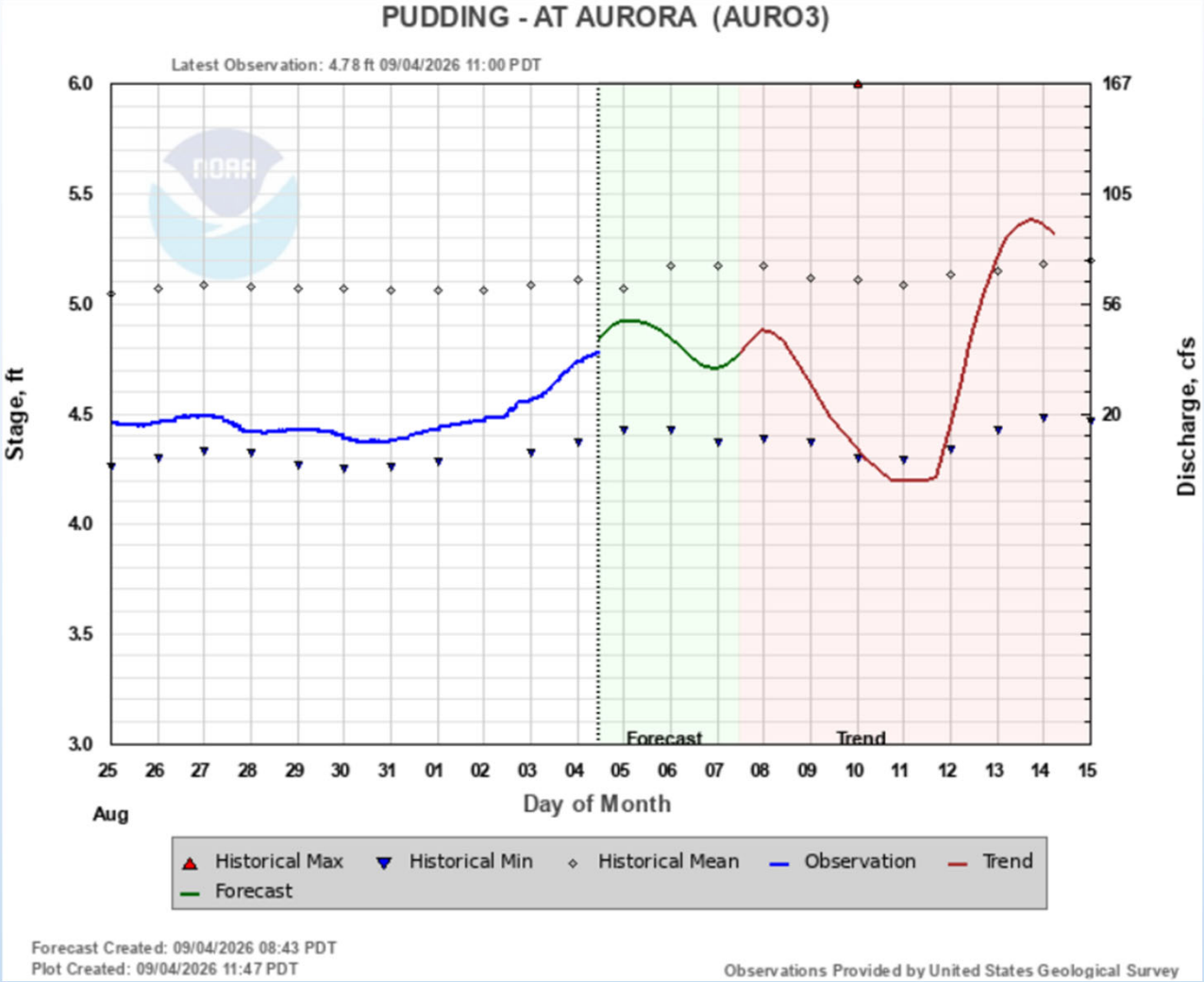
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U.S. Geological Survey Gage



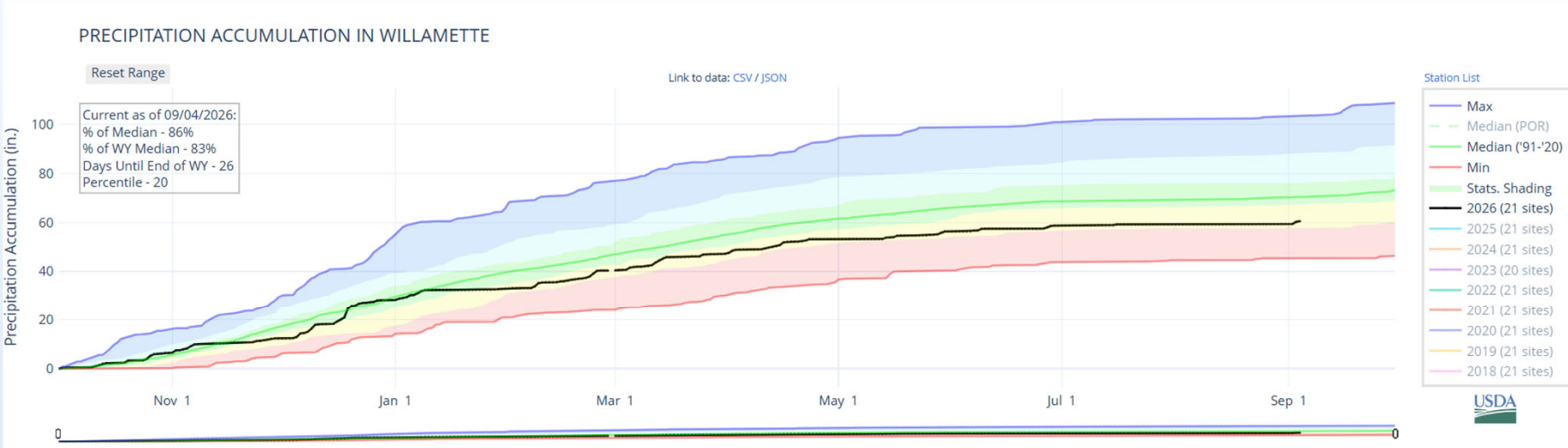
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Forecasting for Regulation



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Precipitation Accumulation

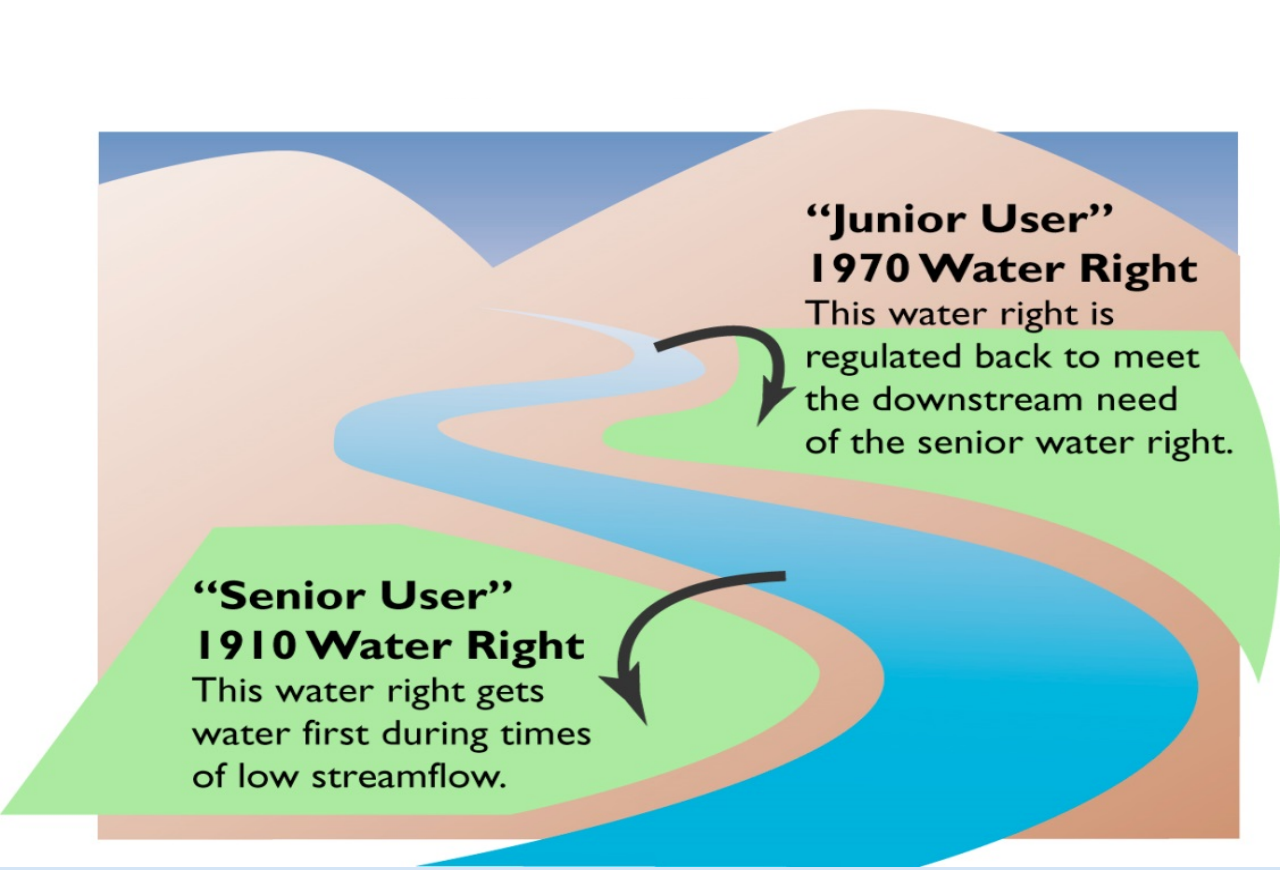


Statistical shading percentiles are calculated from period of record (POR) data, excluding the current water year. Percentile categories range from: minimum to 10th percentile , 10th - 30th , 30th - 70th , 70th - 90th , and 90th - maximum.

For more information visit: 30-Year Hydroclimatic Normals

Updated: Friday, Sep 04, 2026 01:23 PM CT

Regulation of Water Rights



Junior water rights are regulated to meet the entitlement of senior water rights.

prior appropriation:
"first in time, first in right"

Totalizing Flow Meters

- An irrigation flow meter is a device installed in an irrigation line to measure real-time water flow rate and total water volume.
- Mechanical (Propeller, Turbine, Paddlewheel)
- Magnetic (Mag) Meters
- Ultrasonic (Transit-Time or Doppler)

Flow Meter Functions

- Measures **instantaneous flow rate** (e.g., GPM, CFS).
- Tracks **total water volume delivered**, essential for water-use reporting and system diagnostics.
- Helps detect **leaks, clogs, pump issues**, and improves irrigation efficiency.
- Supports compliance with **permit conditions**

Real Estate Transactions

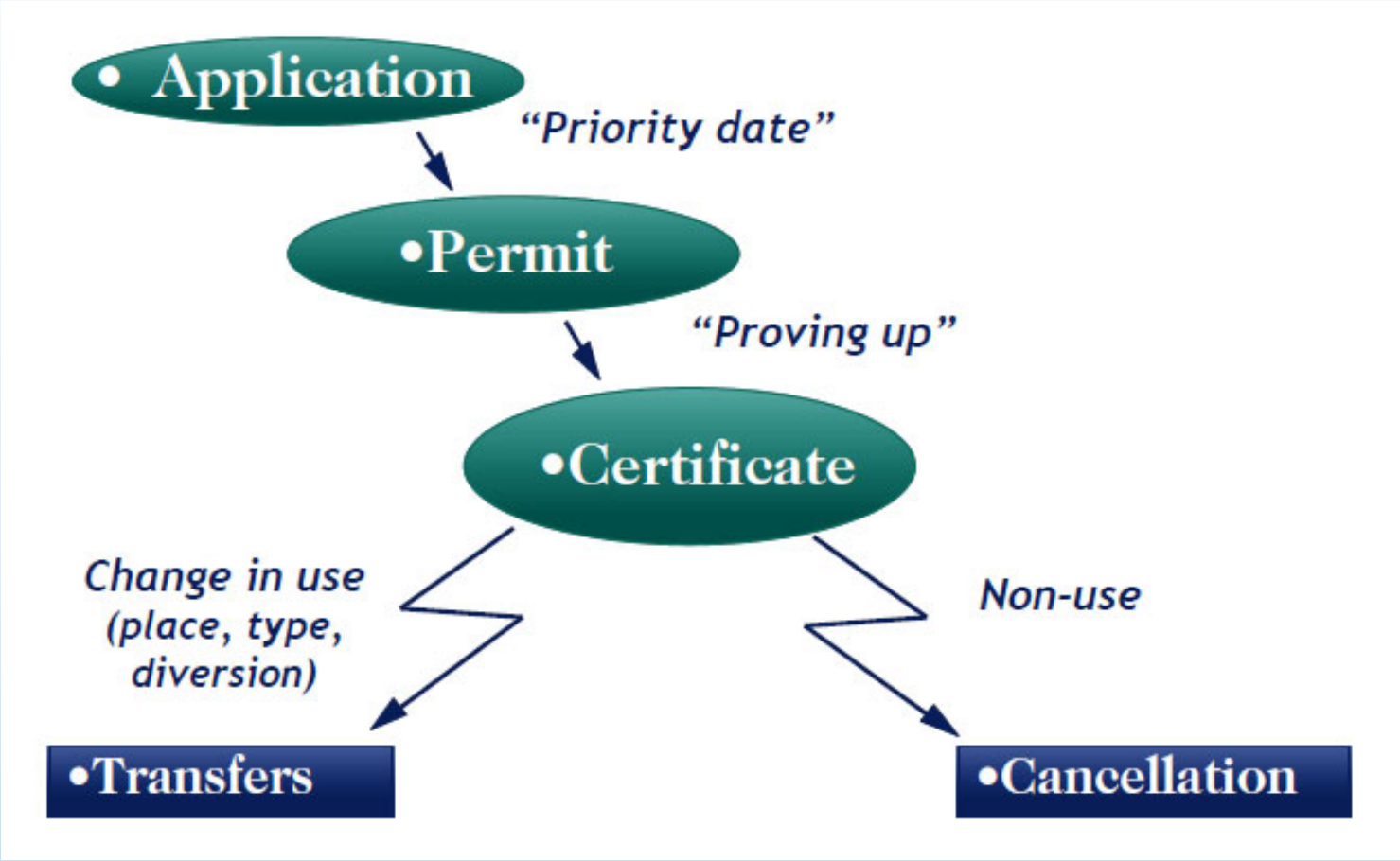
- Water Quality Test
- Review well log – gallons per minute
- Pump Test with Static Water Level Measurements
- Shared Wells
- Easements (check deed)

Obtaining Water Rights

- Groundwater Rights – authorizing use from a well
- Surface Water Rights – authorizing use from a stream
- Storage Water Right – construction of a reservoir
- Appropriation of Stored Water from Reservoir
- Transferring Existing Water Rights

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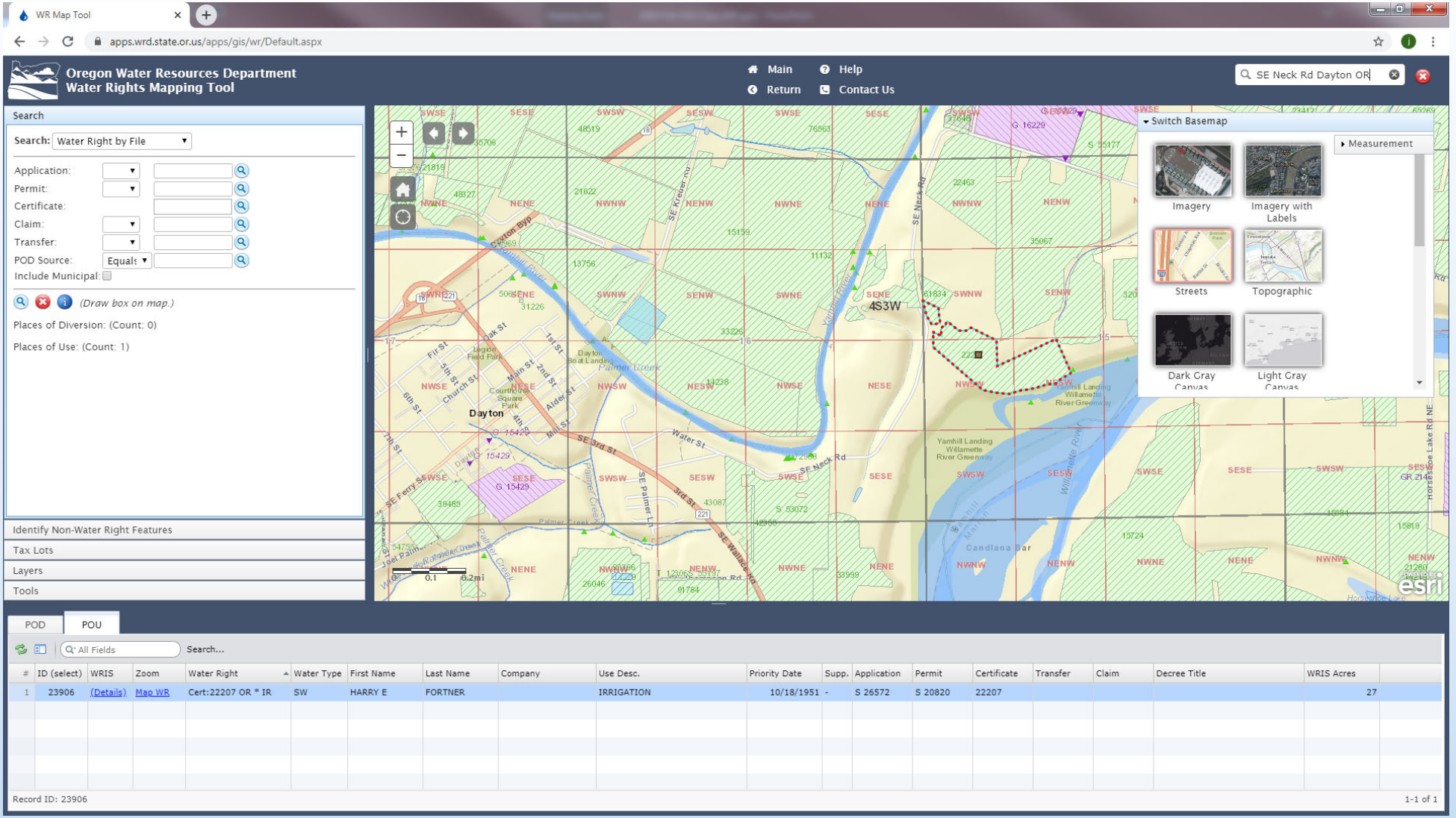
New Water Rights



Property Transactions

- Certificate of Water Right or Claim – stays with the land
- Permit Water Right – must be assigned to new owner of property
- Transfer – must be assigned to new owner of property
- Read the entire water right document, if you have questions call 503-986-0900

Water Right Research



- https://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/gis/wr/Default.aspx

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Understanding a Water Right

STATE OF OREGON

COUNTY OF YAMHILL

CERTIFICATE OF WATER RIGHT

This Is to Certify, *That* HARRY E. FORTNER

of Route 1, Dayton *, State of* Oregon *, has made proof to the satisfaction of the STATE ENGINEER of Oregon, of a right to the use of the waters of* backwater of Willamette River *a tributary of for the purpose of* irrigation *under Permit No.* 20820 *of the State Engineer, and that said right to the use of said waters has been perfected in accordance with the laws of Oregon; that the priority of the right hereby confirmed dates from* October 18, 1951 *;*

that the amount of water to which such right is entitled and hereby confirmed, for the purposes aforesaid, is limited to an amount actually beneficially used for said purposes, and shall not exceed 0.34 cubic foot per second

or its equivalent in case of rotation, measured at the point of diversion from the stream. The point of diversion is located in the NE¼SW¼, as projected within Cary DLC #75, Section 15, Township 4 South, Range 3 West, W. M.

conform to such reasonable rotation system as may be ordered by the proper state officer.

A description of the place of use under the right hereby confirmed, and to which such right is appurtenant, is as follows:

0.8 acres in the SE¼NE¼
Section 16
4.2 acres in the SW¼NW¼
0.1 acres in the SE¼NW¼
13.6 acres in the NW¼SW¼
8.3 acres in the NE¼SW¼
Section 15
all as projected within Cary DLC #75
Township 4 South, Range 3 West, W. M.

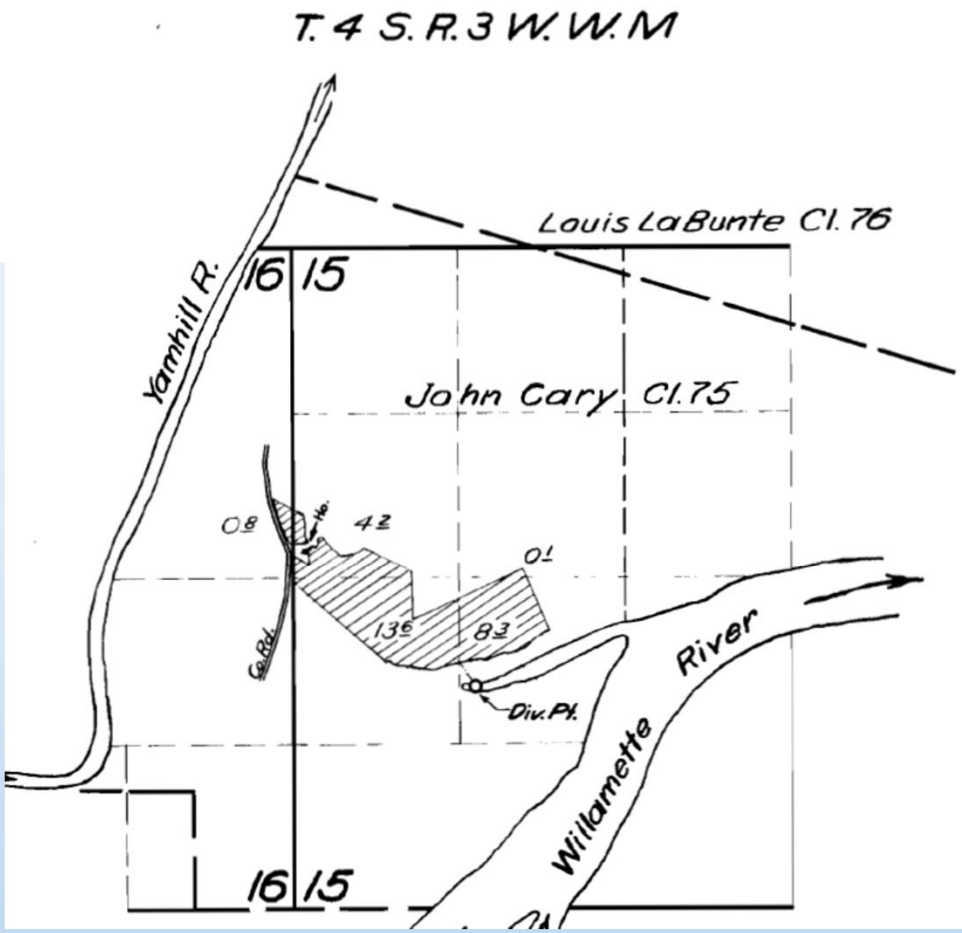
The right to the use of the water for the purposes aforesaid is restricted to the lands or place of use herein described.

WITNESS the signature of the State Engineer, affixed

this 7th *day of* March , *19* 57 .

LEWIS A. STANLEY
State Engineer

Recorded in State Record of Water Right Certificates, Volume 16 *, page* 22207.



Questions

Greg Wacker

Watermaster, District 16

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971-719-6262

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Thank you!

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