



STATE OF OREGON
Office of the Governor
TINA KOTEK

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor Kotek Appoints New Directors for Oregon Water Resources Department, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

Oregon Senate will take up confirmation during May legislative days

Salem, OR — Today, Governor Tina Kotek announced that she has appointed new directors for the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) and the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

Ivan Gall, who most recently served as the interim deputy director of water management for the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), has been appointed to lead the agency. Sara O'Brien, who most recently served as Executive Director of Willamette Partnership, has been appointed to lead the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

"Our state must prioritize policies that will build resiliency for Oregon's natural and working landscapes in the face of accelerating impacts from a changing climate," Governor Kotek said. "Oregonians deserve leaders who can chart a proactive path to protect and improve management of our state's limited water resources for the benefit of healthy ecosystems, thriving communities, and a strong economy."

"These two new directors I am appointing are ready to take this charge head on. I expect them to work collaboratively with Oregon's federally recognized Tribal nations, local communities, water users, and other natural resource partners to prepare our state for the future of water resource management."



Ivan Gall (he/him) has been a member of the OWRD team for nearly three decades. During his time with the state agency, Gall has served as a hydrogeologist, region and section manager, and administrator, before most recently serving as interim deputy director. Gall supported OWRD in the transition from a focus on water allocation to one of balancing instream and out-of-stream uses, and most recently working to reduce groundwater uses to stabilize over-allocated aquifers.



Sara O'Brien (she/her) brings 24 years of experience building and sustaining collaborative conservation partnerships to her new role at OWEB. As its executive director, O'Brien led the nonprofit Willamette Partnership through a strategic transformation to build organizational capacity and better support community partners. Prior to her time with Willamette Partnership, O'Brien worked at Defenders of Wildlife as director of conservation strategies and at the University of Arizona as a scientist, researching and evaluating natural resource policy alternatives in the US/Mexico borderlands, with a focus on climate, drought, and wildland fire.

The Oregon Senate will take up their confirmations during May legislative days, which span from May 29 through May 31, 2024.

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