

## Harney Basin Groundwater Rules Update (Division 512) Community Conversations Recap

### Background

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) staff met with local community members and attended local meetings in Burns March 7 - 9, 2023. The goals of these meetings were to 1) talk about engagement opportunities for the upcoming update to the Harney Basin specific rules (Division 512), 2) collect nominations for the Rules Advisory Committee (RAC), 3) seek input for future outreach efforts, and 4) answer questions about rulemaking. Thank you to the local community members who took the time to email, call or come in for drop-in hours to share your input with OWRD staff. We look forward to continuing to coordinate with work local organizations and community members to try and ensure community voices are heard and reflected in this rulemaking process.

### Opportunities to Engage

OWRD staff shared information about opportunities to engage in the rulemaking process and asked who should be invited to serve on the RAC. Community members suggested that Harney Basin Groundwater Study Advisory Committee members, Harney Community-Based Water Planning Collaborative members, Burns Paiute Tribal members, big groundwater irrigators and City Planners be invited. In response, OWRD staff reached out to members of these groups and invited them to serve on the RAC.

### Recommendations from the Community

OWRD staff asked community members what we could do to prepare for a successful rulemaking. They said at the first RAC meeting we need to 1) share the scope of the rulemaking, 2) assure them that the rules being written will be enforced, and 3) explain how they will be enforced. A suggested rule update that came up often was to require meters on wells. These topics will be discussed at the first RAC meeting. Some community members noted value in OWRD sharing information about Oregon water law, reasons why wells can fail, and what programs are out there that can help groundwater users. These items fall outside of the scope of rulemaking, but OWRD can make the information available for future groundwater management conversations. Community members also asked if transfers and Harney Basin Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) limited licenses will be covered in the rulemaking. They will not.

OWRD staff asked community members for recommendations on future outreach. The community suggested an information kiosk at the Burns library, flyers on community boards in local businesses, live radio, newspaper updates, partnering with local organizations to share information using their Facebook pages and listservs. It was also recommended to attend Town Halls hosted by Representative Mark Owens and City Council meetings to give updates to larger groups. It was also suggested to create process maps or flowcharts to explain complex information in a way that all audiences can understand. OWRD has pursued some of these suggestions and will continue to consider them throughout the rulemaking.