

Public Hearing on Proposed Water Quality Standards for Canal set for Nov. 2 in Hermiston

Summary

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality proposes to revise water quality standards for the West Division Main Canal near the City of Hermiston.

The current standards for the canal are designed to protect its water for uses such as supplying domestic water, supporting red band trout, and fishing. However, the canal is not used and has never been used for these purposes.

DEQ's proposed revision will result in water quality standards based on the actual and feasible uses of the canal, primarily: irrigation, livestock watering and human contact. The current beneficial uses were designated broadly for the Umatilla subbasin, treating the canal as a natural stream.

The corrected standards will be less stringent. Under the new standards, the City of Hermiston will likely be able to discharge highly treated wastewater to the canal.

Why are the rule changes needed?

DEQ bases its water quality standards on how a particular body of water is likely to be used. The standards are designed to ensure that water quality is sufficient to protect these "beneficial uses."

Currently the canal's water quality standards include incorrect beneficial uses. The proposed revisions will correct the canal's uses to reflect its actual and feasible uses, and will revise the targets of the standards to protect the revised uses.

Who may be affected?

A number of small and large farms rely on the canal to supply their irrigation water. The revised water quality standards will protect water quality for irrigation and livestock watering uses, and will remove more stringent and unnecessary water quality standards.

How was this proposal developed?

DEQ researched the ways people actually use the canal and its possible future uses. This research included soliciting input from the local irrigation district and government agencies involved in managing the canal.

Based on this input and state and federal regulations, DEQ established a correct list of beneficial uses and designed criteria to protect those uses.

DEQ, the City of Hermiston, the West Extension Irrigation District and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation all implemented outreach associated with either this rule change or its side-benefit of providing for wastewater discharge to the canal. DEQ discussed the rule change with citizens, government agencies, environmental groups and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

How can I participate?

Attend the public hearing to learn about the standards revision, ask questions, and provide oral or written comments related to the proposed revisions. You can also submit written comments by mail, fax or email.

Hearing details

When: 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 2

Where: Good Shepherd Hospital
Conference Center 1
610 NW 11th Street
Hermiston, OR 97801

Send written comments by mail, fax or email to:

Don Butcher
DEQ Water Quality Division
700 SE Emigrant Ave., Suite 330
Pendleton, OR 97801
Fax: 541-278-0168
Email:
Waterqualitystandards@deq.state.or.us

Written comments are due by **6 p.m., Nov. 15.**

(Email comments will be acknowledged in a timely manner. Comments and attachments are limited to 10 MB. If you do not receive an automatic response, or your comments and attachments will exceed this limit, please contact the staff listed above.)

How can I get more information?

You can access an electronic version the full rule revision and supporting documents online at: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/regulations/proposedrules.htm>



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Water Quality Division
700 SE Emigrant, Suite 330
Pendleton, OR 97801
Phone: 541-278-4603
Fax: 541-278-0168
Contact: Don Butcher
Waterqualitystandards@deq.state.or.us

www.oregon.gov/DEQ/

DEQ and the EQC have the statutory authority to address this issue under ORS 468.020, 468B.030, 468B.035 & 468B.048. These rules implement ORS 468B.030, 468B.035 & 468B.048



The background and basis for this rule change are contained in a document titled *Water Quality Standards Revision, West Division Main Canal near Hermiston, Oregon*.

Additional materials available:

- Proposed Rule changes
- Statement of Need and Fiscal Impact
- Land Use Evaluation Statement
- Relationship to Federal Requirements

You can review hard copies of these documents at DEQ's offices at 811 S.W. Sixth Ave., Portland, and 700 SE Emigrant, Pendleton. To schedule an appointment in Portland, please call Debra Sturdevant at 503-229-6691. To schedule an appointment in Pendleton, call Don Butcher at 541-278-4603.

What happens next?

DEQ considers and responds to all comments received and may modify the proposed rules based on comments. DEQ then plans to recommend that the Oregon Environmental Quality Commission adopt the proposed rules at the February 2012 EQC meeting.

DEQ will directly notify people who submitted comments of the time and place of final EQC action and issue a general public notice.

Accessibility information

DEQ is committed to accommodating people with disabilities. Please notify DEQ of any special physical or language accommodations or if you need information in large print, Braille or another format. To make these arrangements, contact DEQ Communications and Outreach at 503-229-5696 or call toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011; fax to 503-229-6762; or email deqinfo@deq.state.or.us.

People with hearing impairments may call 711.