



# WATERWORKS

A bi-monthly update brought to you by Oregon Water Resources Congress

VOL. 1, ISSUE 2

10.27.2016

## Updates in this newsletter



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## Water Resources Commission



During September Legislative Days, the Oregon Senate appointed two new members to the Oregon Water Resources Commission. The new Commissioners are filling vacancies left in the North Central Region (previously Dennis Doherty) and West Side at Large (previously Jeannie LeJeune). Eric Quaempts, from Adams, Oregon, will be serving as Commissioner for the North Central Region. Commissioner Quaempts serves as the Director for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation's Department of Natural Resources, and has a Bachelor's of Science in Wildlife Science

from Oregon State University, and also completed graduate-level course work at Colorado State University in fire and land management. Meg Reeves, from Corvallis, Oregon, will be serving as the Commissioner for the West Side at Large. Commissioner Reeves has worked as General Counsel for Oregon State University, as well as working as Deputy Director of the Oregon Water Resources Department and as an Assistant Attorney General in the Natural Resources section of the Oregon Department of Justice. OWRC is looking forward to continuing to engage with the Oregon Water Resources Commission and welcomed both Commissioners at their first official meeting in Medford last week. The next Water Resources Commission meeting will be in Salem in January.

## Legislative Days



The Oregon Legislature held Legislative Days at the Oregon Capitol, September 21st-23rd. During their brief time in the Capitol, the Legislator approved executive appointments and held numerous information hearings in their committees. Notably, the Rural Communities, Land Use & Water committee held informational hearings on two water related topics: Creative Strategies for Financing Water Storage Projects, and Groundwater Management. The Financing Water Storage Projects panels included Director Byler from Water Resources Department (WRD), Jim Skalski and Melissa Downes from the Washington State Department of Ecology, Jonathan Trutt Executive Director of West Coast Infrastructure Exchange and J.R. Cook from Northeast Oregon Water Association. The Committee showed interest in the value of Public/Private Partnerships for Water Infrastructure Financing and this could serve as a great platform for discussion for OWRC moving forward. Later in the hearing, the Committee heard from Director Byler, Ivan Gall and Justin Iverson from WRD on groundwater management, a presentation that was requested after the Oregonian series of

articles “Draining Oregon.” We will continue to see the groundwater management issue come up during the 2017 legislative session and we anticipate seeing potential legislative concepts tied to groundwater. For more information on the Rural Communities, Land Use and Water Committee and the Oregon Legislature, please visit the Oregon Legislative Information System [here](#). The Oregon Legislature will be back in Salem for Legislative Days December 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>.

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## State Agency Update



There recently have been some changes to the leadership in a few of Oregon’s agencies. One of the longest serving agency heads, Katy Coba, former Director of Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) was appointed as state chief operating officer and director of the Department of Administrative Services in August. With Coba’s departure from ODA, Deputy Director Lisa Hanson is serving as interim director until Governor Brown appoints a permanent replacement. Many of Oregon’s agricultural organizations are advocating for Hanson’s permanent appointment to the position.

Hanson has a degree in agriculture and resource economics from Oregon State University and has been with ODA since 1996. OWRC will remain interested as the appointment process continues. Finally, Richard Whitman, former Natural Resources Policy Advisor for Governor Brown, is now serving as the interim director for the Department of Environmental Quality and his term will end once the Environmental Quality Commission completes their nationwide search for a permanent director. There currently is no definitive timeline for filling the permanent director position; however, the recruitment period is scheduled to end November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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## 2016 Annual Conference



Planning for OWRC’s 2016 Annual Conference is well underway and we are excited to see all of you in Hood River for a great program. We will begin in the afternoon on Monday November 28<sup>th</sup>, with a funding workshop including information about Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) WaterSMART programs. On Tuesday and Wednesday we will have speakers and panels addressing issues like: Marijuana, water & land use; ESA roundtable; groundwater; Federal policy, the Clean Water Partnership, Organic farming, perspectives on the Oregon Drought

Task Force and Integrated Water Resources Strategy update, and more. Throughout all the programming you will have numerous opportunities to network with a myriad of exhibitors and on Wednesday night you can join us for our annual banquet and raffle. Finally, our Districts will get to spend some time with Special Districts Association of Oregon at their Best Practices Workshop Thursday morning. Get excited and register now! You can find more information on OWRC’s website [here](#). We will see you in Hood River!

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Next edition: January 2017