

BEFORE THE WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION
OF THE
STATE OF OREGON

IN THE MATTER OF THE WITHDRAWAL) RULE FOR A
FROM FURTHER APPROPRIATION OF) WITHDRAWAL ORDER
UNAPPROPRIATED WATER OF THE)
PRIEST RAPIDS AQUIFER NEAR MOSIER)

The Priest Rapids aquifer near Mosier includes all water contained within the Priest Rapids Member of the Columbia River Basalt and the overlying sedimentary interbed. Spring water level altitudes in wells open only to this aquifer are approximately 400 feet above mean sea level at present. The spring water level in these wells currently declines approximately 3.3 feet per year, and the water level seasonally fluctuates more than 10 feet. The external boundaries of the proposed withdrawal area are mostly unseen geological features. For administrative purposes, precise boundaries have been designated to approximate the irregular natural boundaries. The precise boundaries are all within Wasco County and are described as follows:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the SW quarter of 2N/11E-12, then south to the southwest corner of the NW quarter of 2N/11E-24, then east to the southeast corner of the NW quarter of 2N/12E-19, then north to the northeast corner of the NW quarter of 2N/12E-19, then east to the northeast corner of 2N/12E-19, then north to the southwest corner of the NW quarter of the NW quarter of 2N/12E-17, then east to the southeast corner of the NW quarter of the NW quarter of 2N/12E-17, then north to the northeast corner of the NW quarter of the NW quarter of 2N/12E-17, then east to the northeast corner of 2N/12E-17, then north to the southeast corner of the NE quarter of the NE quarter of 2N/12E-8, then west to the southwest corner of the NE quarter of the NE quarter of 2N/12E-8, then north to the northwest corner of the NE quarter of the NE quarter of 2N/12E-8, then west to the northwest corner of the NE quarter of 2N/12E-8, then north to the northeast corner of the SE quarter of the SW quarter of 2N/12E-5, then west to the northeast corner of the SW quarter of the SW quarter of 2N/12E-6, then south to the northeast corner of the SE quarter of the SW quarter of the SW quarter of 2N/12E-6, then west to the northwest corner of the SE quarter of the SW quarter of the SE quarter of 2N/11E-1, then south to the southwest corner of the SE quarter of the SW quarter of the SE quarter of 2N/11E-1, then west to the northwest corner of the NE quarter of 2N/11E-12, then south to the southeast corner of the NE quarter of the NW quarter of 2N/11E-12, then west to the southwest corner of the NE quarter of the NW quarter of 2N/11E-12, then south to the southeast corner of the SW quarter of the NW quarter of 2N/11E-12, then west to the northwest corner of the SW quarter of 2N/11E-12 to close the boundary.

FINDINGS

1. The Priest Rapids aquifer near Mosier is a primary source of ground water in that area.
2. Irrigation and municipal supplies are the primary uses of the Priest Rapids aquifer.
3. Water levels in observation wells are currently declining approximately 3.3 feet per year.
4. The water level in a state observation well declined approximately 3.3 feet per year from 1974 to 1986.
5. Estimated total annual discharge from the Priest Rapids aquifer is 623 acre-feet.
6. Estimated total annual recharge to the Priest Rapids aquifer is 548 acre-feet.
7. Approximately 153 acre-feet is lost annually to other aquifers through interconnecting wells.
8. Reconstructing wells interconnecting the Priest Rapids aquifer with other aquifers may arrest the decline and save enough water for current users and Pomona aquifer appropriators who decide to deepen their wells.
9. In view of the current land use plan within the proposed withdrawal area, some new exempt water uses (ORS 537.545) could be allowed.
10. The proposed withdrawal is consistent with the purposes and standards as provided in Sections 3 and 6(d) of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, P.L. 99-663, and the interim guidelines or the scenic area management plan.

CONCLUSION

Recharge to the Priest Rapids aquifer may be sufficient to support current users and current Pomona appropriators who deepen into the Priest Rapids aquifer after necessary well reconstruction is accomplished. The issuance of additional ground water rights would allow expanded pumpage and possible overdraft of the Priest Rapids aquifer. Withdrawal of the Priest Rapids aquifer from further appropriation near Mosier is necessary to meet the statutory water resource policies to:

- a. Protect existing rights to appropriate ground water;
- b. Limit beneficial use to the capacity of available sources;
- c. Assure adequate and safe supplies of ground water for human consumption;
- d. Prevent overdrawing of ground water supplies while conserving maximum supplies of ground water for agricultural, commercial, industrial, recreational and other beneficial uses.

RULE

1. The unappropriated waters of the Priest Rapids aquifer near Mosier are withdrawn from further appropriation except as specified in sections (2) and (3) of this rule.
2. Future appropriation of waters of the Priest Rapids aquifer near Mosier for the following uses is not subject to this withdrawal:
 - a. Stockwatering purposes;
 - b. Watering any lawn or non-commercial garden not exceeding one-half acre in area;
 - c. All pending ground water permit applications received by the close of business on May 13, 1988;
 - d. Single or group domestic purposes not exceeding 15,000 gallons a day;
 - e. Down-hole heat exchange purposes;
 - f. Industrial or commercial purposes not exceeding 5,000 gallons a day;
3. Permit or certificate holders presently identified as appropriating water from the Pomona aquifer are not subject to this withdrawal, if they:
 - a. File a primary water right for Priest Rapids aquifer water by May 13, 1990, that does not exceed their current water right for Pomona aquifer water, and
 - b. Alter their source of water to the Priest Rapids aquifer, and
 - c. Abandon their water right for Pomona aquifer water.

OR

- a. File a supplemental water right for Priest Rapids aquifer water by May 13, 1990, that does not exceed their current water right for Pomona aquifer water, and
 - b. Develop a source of water in the Priest Rapids aquifer, and
 - c. Exercise the primary water right for Pomona aquifer water only once every five years.
4. This withdrawal shall be in effect until this rule is modified or revoked by the Commission.

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

William H. Young

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