

## Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Task Force

15. Are you aware of the work of the Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Task Force?  Yes  No

16. If yes, how did you learn of the Task Force?  Newspaper articles  
 Newspaper advertisements  
 Radio advertisements  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### About You (Optional – please provide this information if you wish to receive further updates on water planning activities in Umatilla County)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Thank you!

Please return your completed questionnaire by fax, mail or email by **March 26, 2008** to:

J.R. Cook, Assistant Planning Director  
Umatilla County Department of Resource Services and Development  
216 S.E. 4th Street; Pendleton, OR 97801  
Fax: 541-278-5480; jrcook@co.umatilla.or.us



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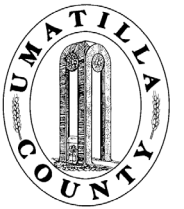
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# Draft Umatilla Sub-Basin 2050 Water Management Plan



## Questionnaire



### Introduction

The surface and ground water supplies of the Umatilla River Sub-basin (Sub-basin) are strained by the increasing demands of domestic, municipal, agricultural, environmental and tribal uses. The Sub-basin now encompasses four of six state designated Critical Groundwater Areas (CGAs). Development of new wells in the CGAs is no longer allowed, with the exception of those uses exempted by state law.

Limited federal, state, and tribal funding for water resources planning has prompted a community-based approach to groundwater management. The Umatilla County Critical Groundwater Task Force (Task Force) was formed to explore new approaches to manage the sustainability of groundwater and surface water resources through development of a plan that is technically possible and economically feasible. The Task Force is working toward an integrated water management and development plan that increases water supply, supports agriculture, protects treaty rights and enhances the environment.

The Task Force has prepared a draft Umatilla Sub-Basin 2050 Water Management Plan (2050 Plan) that proposes water development and alternative management approaches to assure adequate and sustainable water supplies to supply community and environmental needs through the year 2050. The plan emphasizes collaboration and cooperation among water users in the county. It proposes development of planning tools in collaboration with state, tribal, and municipal agencies. It provides recommendations on potential funding mechanisms needed to support projects and on-going water management programs. It also recognizes the need to find adequate funds for monitoring of water supplies and use and for conducting hydrologic research in the basin to clarify relationships among the various water resources.

The Task Force is interested in your understanding of the situation and your views on the draft 2050 Plan. **Please complete just one questionnaire per person.** To complete the questionnaire online, go to <http://www.co.umatilla.or.us/Groundwater.htm>.

A full copy of the draft 2050 Plan and additional copies of this questionnaire are available at the web address above or by contacting J.R. Cook, Assistant Planning Director, at 541-278-6251 or jrcook@co.umatilla.or.us.

### Your Water Use

1. Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_
2.  City resident  Rural resident
3. Water use (check all that apply):  Domestic  Irrigation  Municipal  Commercial/Industrial  
 Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you are an irrigator, how many acres do you irrigate?  Less than 1  1-10  11-100  
 101-500  More than 500
5. Are you located in a Critical Groundwater Area?  Yes  No  Not sure  
 If yes, which? \_\_\_\_\_

## Management Alternatives

Projects and actions proposed in the draft 2050 Plan include such measures as water conservation, aquifer recharge, new surface water storage facilities, changes in zoning, use of Columbia River water, water rights transfers and acquisition, and changes in laws and regulations. The 2050 Plan also identifies potential funding mechanisms, research needs and coordination activities. We are seeking your feedback on specific key components of the 2050 Plan's management alternatives.

### Taking No Action

Taking no action may or may not result in groundwater levels continuing to decline. If levels continue to decline, the Oregon Water Resources Department could initiate rule changes for the CGAs that include a moratorium on new exempt wells and/or further restrict water use in the Sub-basin.

6. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not agree, 5 = strongly agree), how strongly do you agree with the following statement?

**Current programs and actions are adequate to assure the sustainability of groundwater and surface water resources (inside and outside designated CGAs).**

1            2            3            4            5

### Reducing Groundwater Deficits

In CGAs, new groundwater use permits are not being issued and many existing permits are not allocated their full quantity of water. To meet current water right demands, the draft 2050 Plan proposes to utilize Columbia River water to replace groundwater rights within CGAs.

7. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 5 = strongly support), how strongly do you support the following statement?

**Develop projects to obtain water from the Columbia River during available months and store for use during the irrigation season to replace use of existing groundwater rights within designated Critical Groundwater Areas.**

1            2            3            4            5

The draft 2050 Plan addresses a federal project to quantify water rights for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and complete Phase III of the Umatilla Basin Project. One component includes the assessment and quantification of Tribal water claims for on-reservation domestic and irrigation needs and in-stream uses for fish and wildlife. The other component includes an exchange of water from the Columbia River for water in McKay Reservoir and the Umatilla River. The intent is to satisfy Tribal water claims and provide a more consistent water supply to the Westland Irrigation District and other small irrigators.

8. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 5 = strongly support), how strongly do you support the following statement?

**Exchange Columbia River water for McKay Reservoir and Umatilla River water to satisfy Tribal water claims.**

1            2            3            4            5

### Coordinating Water Management

There are a variety of demands on ground and surface water supplies, as well as numerous ways water is provided, that need to be managed and coordinated to ensure long-term water availability in the Sub-basin. Creation of county-wide or regional water management boards is proposed to coordinate the implementation of the draft 2050 Plan.

9. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 5 = strongly support), how strongly do you support the following statement?

**Form one or more Umatilla Water Management Boards to fund and build new infrastructure to supply water into Critical Groundwater Areas and serve as the local coordinating entity for management of water supplies in the Sub-basin.**

1            2            3            4            5

9a. Which option do you prefer?  County-wide  Regional (e.g. West County, etc.)

## Regulating Water Uses

Since 1985, withdrawals from the Umatilla River and its tributaries have been restricted, but groundwater permits are still issued outside of CGAs when water is determined to be available. To avoid over-appropriation of remaining water resources, additional information is needed to identify the amount of groundwater in storage and the connection between groundwater and surface water. The draft 2050 Plan proposes to temporarily curtail new non-exempt groundwater withdrawals until these studies are complete.

10. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 5 = strongly support), how strongly do you support the following statement?

**Curtail issuance of new primary groundwater rights for as many years as needed to complete studies on the amount of groundwater available and the connection between groundwater, and surface water, and until a scientifically-based water budget is prepared.**

1            2            3            4            5

Some wells are "exempt" from the requirement to obtain a water right and are currently allowed in all areas of the Sub-basin, including CGAs. It is estimated that there are approximately 3,900 exempt wells in the Sub-basin and 5,500 county-wide (including the Walla Walla Sub-basin). The draft 2050 Plan does not propose curtailment of new exempt wells in the county.

11. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 5 = strongly support), how strongly do you support the following statement?

**Continue to allow exempt domestic wells, including those within Critical Groundwater Areas, as long as they are allowed by state water law.**

1            2            3            4            5

## Funding Local Solutions

There is a lack of resources and financial commitment from local, state and federal governments to implement the management alternatives proposed in the draft 2050 Plan. Local funding commitments are necessary to secure matching federal and state funds. The draft 2050 Plan proposes a well head or alternative annual fee, paid by Sub-basin water users, to provide long-term funding for groundwater studies, supply and restoration projects, operation, maintenance and monitoring. New state legislation is needed to allow the County to implement such a fee program without impacting the current level of service of other County programs.

12. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = do not support, 5 = strongly support), how strongly do you support the following statement?

**Create regional fundraising authorities to implement some or all of the projects proposed by the draft 2050 Plan, which could include charging an annual fee for every well head.**

1            2            3            4            5

12a. Which option do you prefer?  County-wide  Regional (e.g. West County, etc.)

## Other Comments

13. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not at all well, 5 = very well), how well do you feel these management alternatives address the County's water needs?

1            2            3            4            5

14. Is there anything else we should consider? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Please continue to back side)