

Testimony of Jerry Schmidt
HB 5547
Oregon Ground Water Association
Before
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee
On Natural Resources

Oregon Water Resources Department
State Observation Well Network

History

The current Water Resources Department's State Observation well network began in the late 50's or early 60's. At this point it was a series of wells scattered around Oregon that were being studied by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Sometime in the 60's the network was taken over by the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) and by 1973 there were over 800 wells in the system. By the late 70's the State Observation Well Network was overhauled and the number was reduced to the neighborhood of 350 active sites.¹ The reasons given for the reduction were; (1) wells on the network were giving duplicate data, (2) some wells did not have good documentation and (3) because of budgetary problems resulting in maintaining the larger database. Most of the wells that were originally put on the system were there because of a perceived problem or because the OWRD had received a request from another agency or from citizens in the area. After the reduction of the program in the late 70's the number appears to remain fairly stable through the 1980's. The 1987-88 Biennial report² of the Water Resources Department showed the program with approximately 350 wells in the network. Wording in the 1987 report (and later reports) indicate in the narrative that the OWRD possibly had further data on a larger number. By the early 90's³ the Department had begun a statewide assessment of groundwater conditions. They said that central to the effort was an overhaul of the statewide observation well network and that the Department intended to screen the existing State

¹ Deposition of Fred Lissner 10/30/97, Head of the Ground Water Section WRD, Jackson Co Circuit Court case No. 95-5149-E-2

² Biennial Report Water Resources Dept. January 87 to December 88, Figure 9, page 40.

³ Biennial Report Water Resources Dept. January 89 to December 90, page 15.

Observation Well inventory and then enter new wells into the program where coverage was inadequate. Despite the call for increasing the inventory as of the date of the last Biennial Report⁴ in 1995 the Department still was quoted as maintaining a network of 350 observation wells. Budget documents from that period indicate that the Department was shifting its focus from using long term hydrographs (compiled through the State Observation Well Network) to computer modeling. The Department had repeated requests to the legislature throughout the 90's and into the next century for funding of these studies.

In the 2007-09 Governor's recommended budget the Department identified the bench mark for maintaining the State Observation Well Network at 350 wells. The budget document goes on to state that "as wells are dropped from the well network, they should be replaced with other monitoring locations..."

Current Activities

When looking at the Department's current website (under the ground water section) a down load could be made of all the existing water level data to find over 3,000 listed observations wells. Within this inventory are the current observation wells in the active State Well Net program which the Water Resources Department has identified in the Key Performance Measure #5 as 363. While this number is listed as the active wells in the program not all of these wells are current and some lack data entry for a variety of reasons. The wells in the State Well net program are monitored by Oregon Water Resource Department personnel and their staff has indicated that they also take water level measurements on additional wells that are not in the State Observation Well Network.

The Department also indicated about 1/3 of the wells listed on their web page have a condition on the water right that require water level measurement (usually by persons other than OWRD staff) and that the information is required to be submitted to the Department .

⁴ Biennial Report Water Resources Dept. January 93 to December 95, page 40.



Oregon Water Resources Department

Ground Water



Oregon Water Resources Department hydrograph for UMAT 1574 (4.00N / 27.00E - 27DAD)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Well Location	4.00N/27.00E-27DAD
OWRD Logid	UMAT 1574
OWRD Well Tag (Well ID)	-----
OWRD State Observation Well Number	832
Total well depth (feet below land surface)	844
Land surface elevation (feet above mean sea level)	603
Primary use of well	IRRIGATION
Primary aquifer system	Late Tertiary Basalt Aquifers

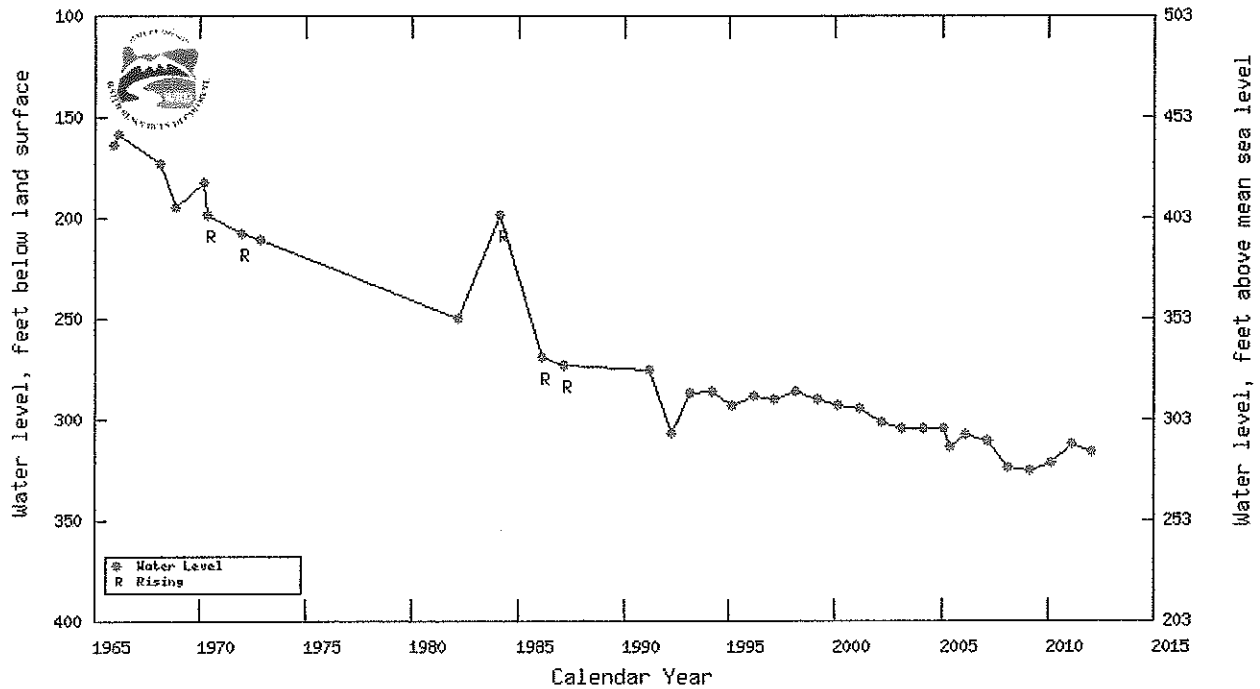


Table showing water-level data for UMAT 1574



Oregon Water Resources Department

Ground Water



Oregon Water Resources Department hydrograph for LANE 20028 (19.00S / 2.00W - 7DDA)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Well Location	19.00S/2.00W-7DDA
OWRD Logid	LANE 20028
OWRD Well Tag (Well ID)	----
OWRD State Observation Well Number	475
Total well depth (feet below land surface)	148
Land surface elevation (feet above mean sea level)	555
Primary use of well	IRRIGATION
Primary aquifer system	----

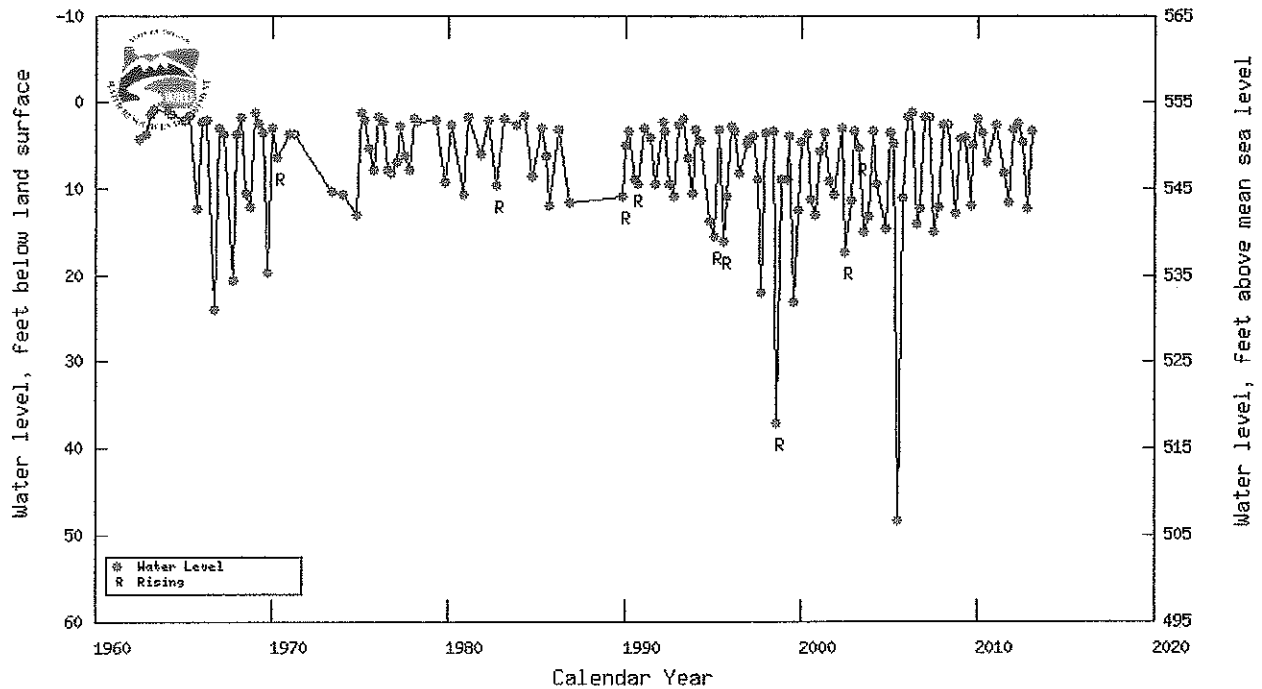


Table showing water-level data for LANE 20028



Oregon Water Resources Department

Ground Water



Oregon Water Resources Department hydrograph for DOUG 9303 (30.00S / 5.00W - 21ACX)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Well Location	30.00S/5.00W-21ACX
OWRD Logid	DOUG 9303
OWRD Well Tag (Well ID)	---
OWRD State Observation Well Number	130
Total well depth (feet below land surface)	90
Land surface elevation (feet above mean sea level)	750
Primary use of well	UNUSED
Primary aquifer system	---

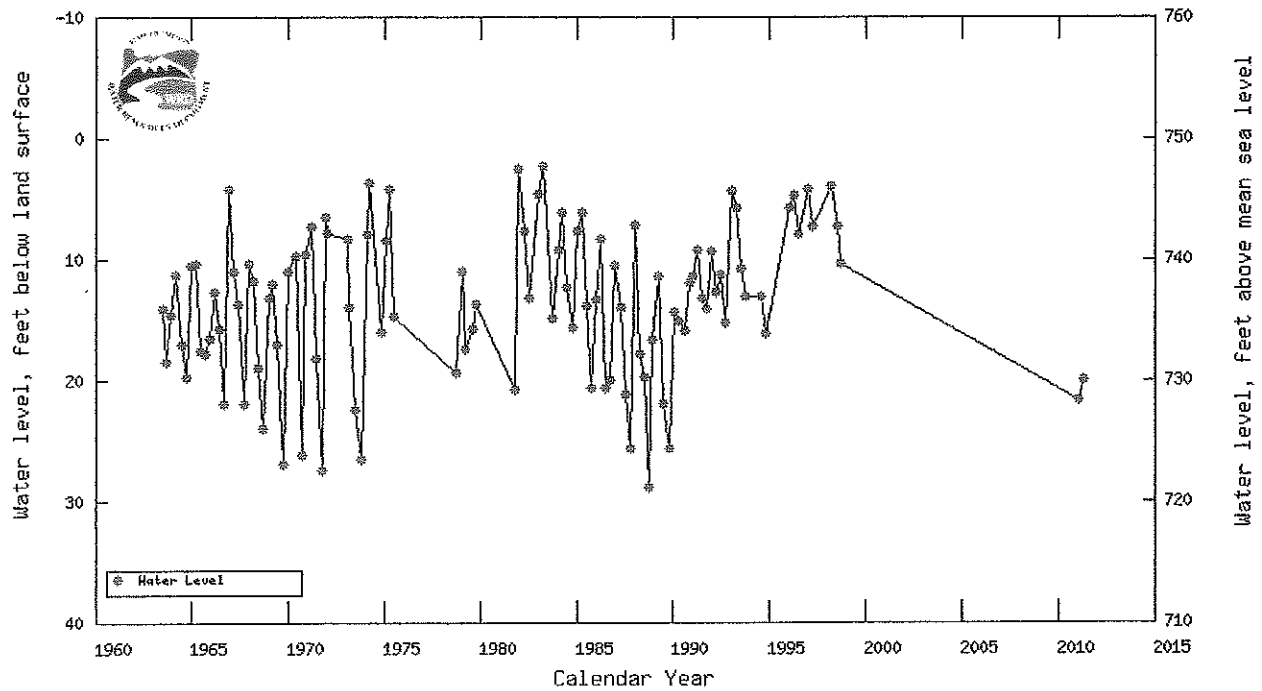


Table showing water-level data for DOUG 9303



Oregon Water Resources Department

Ground Water



Oregon Water Resources Department hydrograph for MULT 2164 (1.00S / 3.00E - 10CCA)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Well Location	1.00S/3.00E-10CCA
OWRD Logid	MULT 2164
OWRD Well Tag (Well ID)	---
OWRD State Observation Well Number	743
Total well depth (feet below land surface)	715
Land surface elevation (feet above mean sea level)	355
Primary use of well	IRRIGATION
Primary aquifer system	Quaternary-Late Tertiary Sediment Aquifers

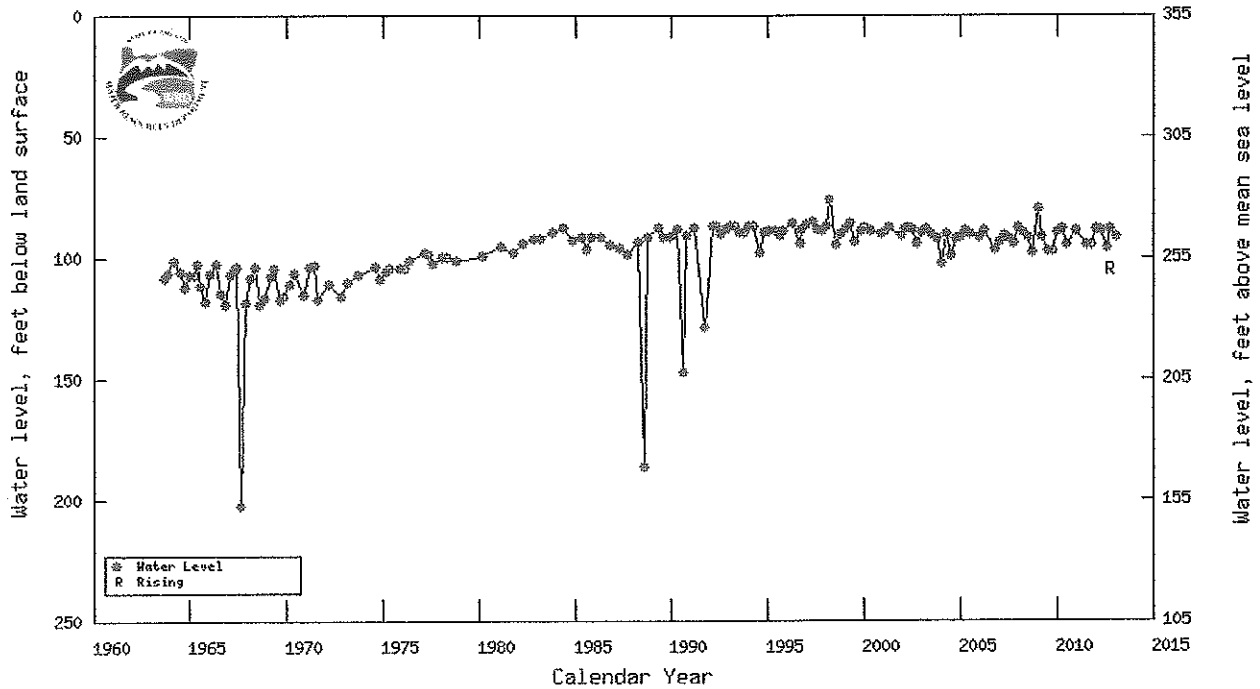


Table showing water-level data for MULT 2164



Oregon Water Resources Department

Ground Water



Oregon Water Resources Department hydrograph for HOOD 372 (2.00N / 10.00E - 4DBB)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Well Location	2.00N/10.00E-40BB
OWRD Logid	HOOD 372
OWRD Well Tag (Well ID)	---
OWRD State Observation Well Number	225
Total well depth (feet below land surface)	111
Land surface elevation (feet above mean sea level)	---
Primary use of well	---
Primary aquifer system	---

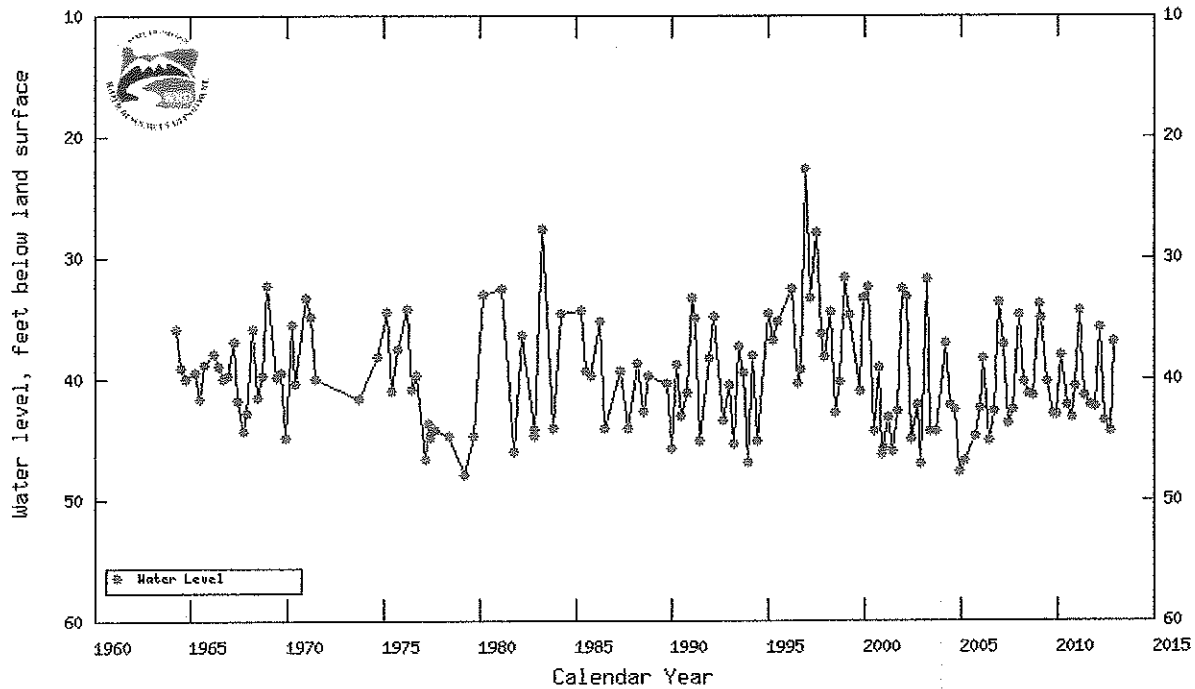


Table showing water-level data for HOOD 372



Oregon Water Resources Department

Ground Water



Oregon Water Resources Department hydrograph for WASH 10309 (1.00S / 3.00W - 27CBB)

Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) Well Location	1.00S/3.00W-27CBB
OWRD Logid	WASH 10309
OWRD Well Tag (Well ID)	---
OWRD State Observation Well Number	1232
Total well depth (feet below land surface)	335
Land surface elevation (feet above mean sea level)	600
Primary use of well	DOMESTIC
Primary aquifer system	Late Tertiary Basalt Aquifers

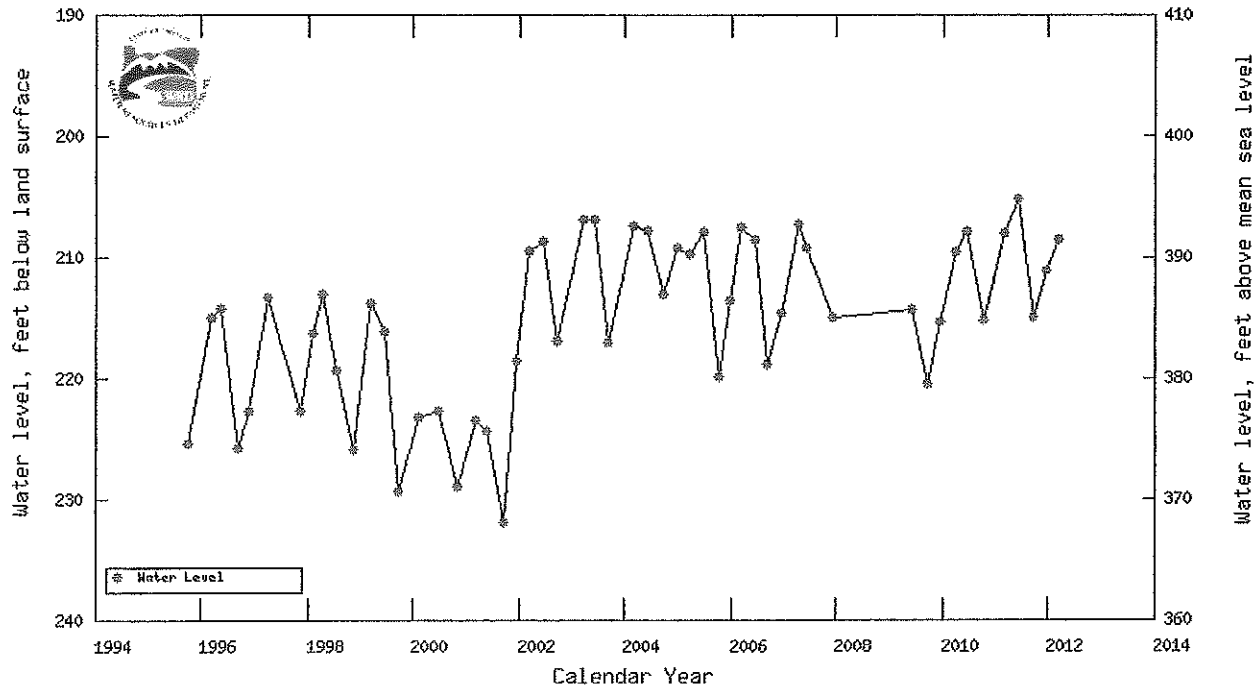


Table showing water-level data for WASH 10309