

# Oregon Water Utility Council (OWUC)

*SNER Committee Hearing – Wildfire, Water, and cyanoHABs*

Joel A. Cary  
OWUC Chair



American Water Works Association

**Pacific Northwest** Section

## Agenda:

1. Wildfire Impacts to Drinking Water Providers Across Oregon
2. Local response by Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU)
3. Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Blooms (cyanoHABs) and Wildfires
4. Key Takeaways and Long-Term Considerations



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# Medford Water Commission

- Serves nearly 150,000 customers
- Increased monitoring for contaminants, treatment considerations after South Obenchain Fire
- Partnering with local agencies for restoration
- Assisted neighboring communities with monitoring (e.g., VOCs from potentially damaged plastic pipes)







*Salem's Treatment Plant*



*Detroit Reservoir*

# City of Salem

- Serves 200,000 customers in Salem and surrounding area
- Lionshead and Beachie Creek Fires impacted most of watershed
- Increased monitoring for contaminants and treatment considerations
- Greater potential for cyanoHABs in Detroit Reservoir



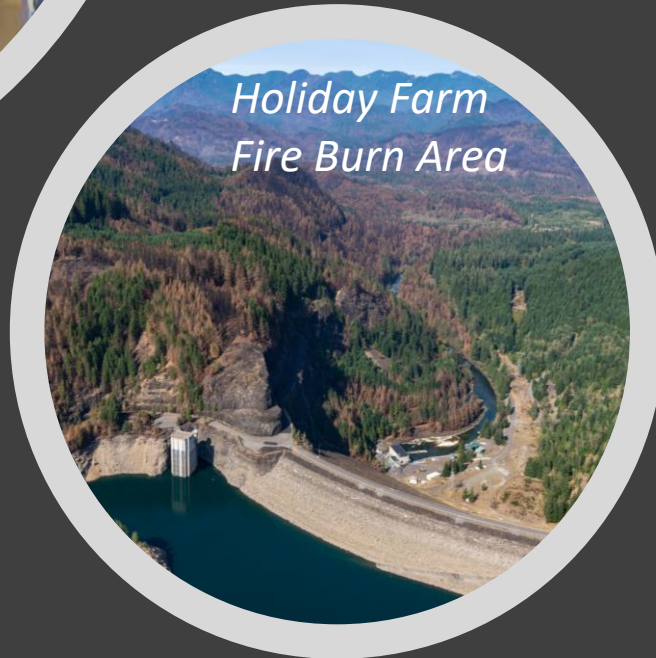
*Lionshead Fire*



*Analysis underway for  
plant adjustments*



*Holiday Farm  
Fire Burn Area*



*EWEB's Treatment  
Plant*



# Eugene Water and Electric

- Serves nearly 200,000 customers
- Water treatment plant adjustments made due to Holiday Farm fire
- Increased monitoring now and for the long-term
- Significant watershed restoration efforts underway with partners



# Clackamas River Water Providers



Riverside Fire occurred in drinking water source for more than 300,000 customers



Increased monitoring for contaminants and treatment consideration; restoration partnerships underway



Some indication that upstream reservoirs helping minimize downstream impacts



Riverside Fire



# City of Bend – August 5, 2020 Thunderstorm

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- Heavy precipitation impacts to sediment run-off
  - Partially due to lingering effects from 1979 Bridge Creek Fire
  - Infrastructure investments ongoing to deal with resiliency needs in the face of climate change
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# Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU)

- OAWU instrumental in providing assistance during and after the wildfires
- Critical updates to OEM
- ‘Boots on the ground’ for many utilities
- Post-fire monitoring (e.g., VOCs from plastic pipe) and treatment assistance



*Detroit Reservoir*



*VOC Sampling*



# House Committee on Water – HABs Workgroup

- Workgroup kicked off in 2019
- Diverse set of stakeholders – *State, regional, advocacy, academia, etc.*
- Potential for increase in cyanoHABs post-wildfire
- Recommendations for 2020 and 2021 Sessions



*Detroit Reservoir*

# Key Takeaways & Long-Term Considerations



Over 1 million people experienced wildfires in their drinking water source – safe water and public health protection is what we do, 365 days a year



We're stewards of the environment, working with various partners on restoration, protection, and shared issues (e.g., cyanoHABs)



Ongoing infrastructure investment (built and natural) and impacts to operational costs are critical, as well as local decision-making capability





Thank You!



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