



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Planning Commission

FROM: Kyle Collins, Associate Planner

DATE: February 16, 2022

SUBJECT: Deschutes County Water Resource Discussion Panel – Part 1

I. Background

Following the completion of a four-part Water Panel series in December 2018, the Planning Commission directed staff to create a report to summarize the dialogue and key issues in water management as presented by the panelists. On October 28, 2021, the Planning Commission (Commission) expressed interest in convening a second Water Panel series in preparation for the Comprehensive Plan Update (*Deschutes 2040*), which will be initiated in Spring 2022.

II. Purpose

The panels are intended to be broadly informational for Commissioners and citizens, and will allow for an open-ended discussion with working professionals and researchers regarding current water conditions, future trends and challenges, and stakeholder perspectives. Staff acknowledges that these panel discussions are not intended to be extensive and exhaustive, but are intended to provide a framework for more detailed conversations during the formal Comprehensive Plan Update.

To provide a manageable discussion framework, the Commission elected for a series of two (2) panels, based on the following discussion categories:

1. Current Water Resource Conditions and Impacts
2. User Group Perspectives and Challenges

Each of these discussions will allow the Commission to thoroughly understand the major water resource issues currently facing Central Oregon from a scientific, regulatory, and environmental perspective. It will also enable various user groups to provide more nuanced perspectives through ground-level details of how water resources are affecting the region and how the Comprehensive Plan update can address these issues in a 20-year policy document.

III. First Panel Composition

The first panel discussion is slated for February 24, 2022, and will consist of the following members:

- Kyle Gorman - Oregon Water Resource Department
- Bridget Moran - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Stephen B. Gingerich, Ph.D - U.S. Geological Survey Oregon Water Science Center

Each member will begin with brief presentations covering their respective professional careers, research findings, and perspectives on various water resource issues in the Central Oregon region. The panelists will then be available to answer questions from the Commission or various community members.

IV. Next Steps

A second water panel discussion is slated for the Planning Commission meeting on April 14, 2022. That panel will consist of the following members:

- Kate Fitzpatrick - Deschutes River Conservancy
- Matt Cyrus – Deschutes County Farm Bureau
- Michael Buettner – City of Bend Utility Department
- Craig Horrell – Central Oregon Irrigation District

Additionally, the Commission should be aware that the Comprehensive Plan Update will convene forums to allow residents and stakeholders to familiarize themselves with water resources among other land use issues. Any water related topics that aren't fully vetted during the initial water discussion panels can be revisited during the Comprehensive Plan Update process.