



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Planning Commission

FROM: Nicole Mardell, AICP, Principal Planner

DATE: March 12, 2026

SUBJECT: Water Presentations: "Water Year" and COID Operations & Piping Projects

I. BACKGROUND

On March 12, 2026, the Planning Commission will receive two presentations related to water management and planning. The Commission has hosted several water panels in past years to receive a more thorough overview of the state of water management and planning within the Deschutes Basin.

In 2018, four panels were held on the following topics:

- Hydrology of the Upper Deschutes Basin
- Environmental and Economic Impacts
- Agricultural Water Consumption and Efficiency
- Projections and Planning

A summary report is included as an attachment, including links to video recordings of the presentations.

In 2022, the Commission held two additional panels on a variety of topics with the following panelists. Presentations are also attached, and video recordings are linked below.

- Panel #1 – 2/24/2022: [Video Link](#)
 - Kyle Gorman, OWRD
 - Stephen Gingerich, UGSG
 - Bridge Moran, USFWS
- Panel #2 – 4/14/2022: [Video Link](#)
 - Mike Buettner, City of Bend
 - Matt Cyrus, Farm Bureau
 - Craig Horell, COID
 - Kate Fitzpatrick, Deschutes River Conservancy

II. 2026 WATER PRESENTATIONS

The Commission will receive two presentations on relevant topics in water management and planning in the following format.

- Brief introduction by staff (5 min)
- Presentation on the “Water Year” (30 min)
 - Oregon Water Resources Department - Carolyn Sufit, Central Region Manager - Field Services and Jeremy Giffin, Deschutes Basin Watermaster
- Presentation on COID District Operations & Piping Projects (20 min)
 - Central Oregon Irrigation District - Jon Skidmore, Deputy Managing Director (30 min)
- Q&A with Panelists (20 min)

Staff requested Commissioners provide any comments or preferred discussion topics to staff prior to the meeting. The following information was requested.

- General water law – rights vs permits, exemptions, limitations, use requirements.
- Water use by type in Deschutes County – agricultural irrigation, golf irrigation, domestic, lawns/landscape, etc.
- Groundwater recharge – Juniper barrier, piping, precipitation, etc.
- Aquifer – depth, availability, impacts from irrigation, domestic use, ditch/canal leakage, Juniper use, etc.?
- Water supply, current and trends, flow changes at the mouth of the Deschutes? Precipitation measurements over time?
- Spotted Frog HCP – Impacts on irrigators and water availability? Current status and compliance among parties?
- Piping – amount conserved? What happens to conserved water? How is the interruption of groundwater recharge balanced against harm to certificated groundwater permits?
- How much irrigation water is being leased in-stream, and what is the impact on junior right holders who would otherwise be entitled to that water?

III. NEXT STEPS

At the February 12, 2026, meeting, Commissioners requested additional presentations and panels on water-related topics at future meetings. Staff will continue to work with the Commission to organize panels as staff capacity allows.

ATTACHMENTS

- 2018 Water Panel Summary Report
- 2022 Water Panel Presentations