



REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Title: Request for Council Action – Approving Resolution 33 to Declare a Continuous Commitment to Water Quality

Preferred Agenda: November 13, 2023

Submitted By: Kelcey Young, City Manager

Reviewed By: Kelcey Young, City Manager

Type of Action: Resolution Motion Roll Call Other

Relevant Code/Policy: Resolution 27 for 2023 Setting Rates for Water Utility Services

Towards Council Goal: Effective and efficient government, viable and sustainable essential services

Attachments: Resolution No. 33

Purpose of this RCA:

Determining to approve the Resolution for the City’s Continuous Commitment to Water Quality and to explore all avenues to mitigate and alleviate the unintended consequences caused by the injunction from the U.S. District Court District Court of Oregon requiring the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to lower Green Peter Reservoir.

Background/Context:

The City of Sweet Home has historically had award-winning water.

In 2021, an interim injunction was issued requiring the USACE to take certain actions across multiple Willamette Valley dams that were intended to improve fish passage and water quality. One such action was the requirement to lower Green Peter Reservoir to historically low levels, including surface elevations it has not seen since construction. This recent drawdown of Green Peter Reservoir has had unintended consequences which have drastically impacted the water quality of Foster Lake and therefore the drinking water for the residents of Sweet Home and neighboring communities.

The Challenge/Problem:

The City of Sweet Home is spending increased hours and incurring additional unplanned expenses in order to keep the water within parameters for safe consumption according to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Additionally, some Sweet Home residents are experiencing discolored water that while still considered safe, is unattractive and concerning.

The unintended consequences have also resulted in muddy water, fish die-off, and a negative economic impact of approximately 10% in lost revenue for many of our local businesses.

Due to the legal requirements of the interim injunction, the USACE is not currently able to modify its drawdown plans and ongoing or escalating impacts are not yet known. These unknowns require City staff to adapt daily and even hourly to changing conditions as the drawdown continues to its required surface elevation.

Stakeholders:

- City of Sweet Home Citizens – Citizens of Sweet Home have a right to high quality water.
- City of Sweet Home Employers – Local businesses are seeing negative economic impacts due to the drawdown.
- City of Sweet Home Staff – Staff is spending increased time and money on keeping our water safe and drinkable according to OHA’s parameters.
- City of Sweet Home City Council – The City Council desires to take action to protect the community of Sweet Home.

Issues and Financial Impacts:

Staff will need to determine the cost of providing ongoing clean water to the community.

Elements of a Stable Solution:

Staff will work with other agencies that have control over the waterways to alleviate the unintended consequences that are negatively impacting our community, as well as remain proactive and transparent in assessing and mitigating water quality concerns.

Options:

1. Do Nothing – Do not authorize the resolution.
2. Adopt Resolution No. 33 for 2023 as currently proposed – Adoption of the resolution formalizes the City’s commitment to providing its commitment to our water quality and to explore all avenues to mitigate the impact to our natural amenities and economic viability.

Recommendation:

Option 2 is the recommended option: Motion to pass the Resolution as presented.