



1037 NW Grebe Street
Seal Rock, Oregon 97376
Phone: 541.563.3529 – Fax: 541.563.4246
www.srwd.org



Seal Rock Water District

September 1, 2023 - Posted on the District's Website

Follow up to

Application of Herbicides in the District's Watershed on South Beaver Creek

On Wednesday, August 23, 2023, SRWD received notification through the Forest Activity Electronic Reporting and Notification System (FERNS) notification process that the subject timberland owner has filed a new Notification of Operations/Permit to Operate Power-Driven Machinery (NOAP) for Ground-Pressurized / Broadcast (Backpack-Spray) of herbicides on the same lots. A copy of NOAP 2023-553-10095 has been made available to the Seal Rock Water District Board of Commissioners and is posted on the district's website. The public comment period for this NOAP closes on September 13, 2023, at 12:59 PM. The district would like to encourage customers and interested parties to access the FERNS website and submit public comments before the deadline. Submission of a new NOAP by the timberland owner does not void the existing NOAP scheduled to go into effect on September 2, 2023. The proposed new NOAP which includes backpack spray does not change the district's planned approach to managing raw water conditions affected by the application of herbicides.

The SRWD Board of Commissioners and staff are very concerned about the effect of herbicide application on our coastal environment, residents, wildlife, and water intake operations at the SRWD's Point of Diversion (POD) downstream of the proposed application sites. The district continues working with state agencies to develop protocols for managing potential hazards from entering the drinking water system to ensure that the spray operation will not adversely impact our domestic water supply.

On August 23, 2023, the district reached out to the consultant for ANE Forests of Oregon C/O HFI Consultants, requesting an informal meeting with the district and the timberland owner President Mr. Nymark, including Representative Gomberg and Lincoln County Commissioner Miller. On behalf of our SRWD customers, we expressed the importance of meeting with Mr. Nymark to exchange information regarding the district's operation and risk relative to the proposed application of herbicides. The consultant did affirm that aerial application of herbicides has not been removed from consideration and reports that the timber owner is well within their rights under the Oregon Forest Practice Act with respect to this issue.

The district has reached out to the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to provide assistance to the district under the state's Pesticide Management Plan for Water Quality Protection. Specifically, as it relates to: *"The formation of a Water Quality Pesticide Management Team (WQPMT) composed of representatives from each of the four agencies (ODA/DEQ/ODF/OHA) responsible for water quality in Oregon. This team will act as a coordinating advisory team between state agencies and the district.* On September 6, 2023, the district will meet with representatives from the WQPMT to discuss the development of a formal Pesticides Management Plan for Water Quality Protection on Beaver Creek.

In an effort to promote inclusiveness and transparency with SRWD customers and the community, the district has hosted several community meetings to support, inform, and increase awareness regarding the Board's ongoing response to this issue. SRWD Board of Commissioners held an Emergency Board Meeting on August 31, 2023, to receive information from staff regarding the district's progress and receive public testimony regarding this issue. A copy of the staff report along with Board packet materials from this meeting can be obtained by visiting the district's website.

The district would like to take this opportunity to thank our customers, the community, and our elected officials for the overwhelming support of the district as we work diligently to provide the community and our customers with updates regarding this matter. District staff will continue to provide updated information on our website.

Very respectfully, SRWD

The Seal Rock Water District Water Quality Report is available online at www.srwd.org/report or contact us for a paper copy

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