

LOGOS (WC and SWCD?)

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For Immediate Release

Contact:

- Name, email, #, title, Fifteenmile WC
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Project to build underground water storage in Fifteenmile Creek Basin, benefiting farms and fish, secures two grants

The Fifteenmile Watershed Council has secured two grants from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) to move forward on an idea to provide more water in Fifteenmile Creek in summer by storing some of the creek's winter and spring flow underground.

"Fifteenmile Creek is often dry in summer, harming steelhead and other fish as well as many irrigators and their businesses. This project will benefit both farmers and fish in our basin," said NAME, TITLE of the Fifteenmile Watershed Council. "We're glad that OWEB understood the need for this project."

The project location is approximately six miles upstream from Dufur, Ore. Surface flows in Fifteenmile Creek are over-allocated in summer months, limiting allocations to irrigators. With low water levels come hotter stream temperatures as well, which harms or kills salmon and trout that are spawning, rearing or migrating in the creek – including mid-Columbia steelhead, listed as threatened by the federal Endangered Species Act.

The council is partnering with the Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District, which completed two studies that both determined it is feasible to divert cool water from Fifteenmile Creek during winter and spring when flows are higher, store it underground, and return it in summer when flows are low.

The new funding allows the council and partners to:

- Construct a small-scale pilot project to test the underground water storage idea;
- Identify an owner and operator for the project long term, including potentially a special district;
- Identify funding for the project's long-term operations and maintenance;
- Create initial designs for the diversion; and,
- Design a treatment system to ensure diverted water meets water quality standards.

Other fish species that will benefit from the project include Pacific lamprey, cutthroat trout and more. Additional project partners include Oregon Department of Agriculture, Oregon Water Resources Department and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"QUOTE," NAME , TITLE, Wasco SWCD.

About the Fifteenmile Watershed Council

2-5 boilerplate sentences here giving background on council

About the Wasco SWCD

2-5 boilerplate sentences here giving background on district