

Wasco County Community Resources to Prepare for Drought And Other Effects of a Changing Climate

Drought and other disasters are much less scary to contemplate if one is prepared. Being prepared for emergencies can help you when an emergency happens. To learn more about being prepared, visit Oregon Health Authority's website, "Preparedness 101":

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/Prepare/Pages/index.aspx>

Keep in mind, however, that a strong community is one of the best hedges against disasters. Get involved in the activities within your community, know your neighbors, and work towards creating a community that can weather any storm.

Water scarcity is the most obvious effect of drought and there are resources to show you how to use your water more wisely and how to monitor and take care of your well and keep your water safe to drink.

Water scarcity affects our way of life and sometimes our livelihoods as well. The effects of drought move far and wide like ripples in a pond. Drought is a threat to livestock, crops, and the rural economy. Because of this it can become a major stressor within the community, which can then lead to anxiety, depression, substance abuse and even domestic violence. It is because of this broad array of effects, that the list of resources below is quite varied.

Water Testing Resources:

Keeping tabs on the safety of your private water source:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/>

Ground Water and Wells

"When rain falls, much of it is absorbed into the ground. Water that's not used by plants moves downward through pores and spaces in the rock until it reaches a dense layer of rock. The water trapped below the ground in the pores and spaces above the dense rock barrier is called ground water, and this is the water we get when we drill wells. Another common term for ground water is 'aquifer' or 'ground water aquifer.'

- Over 15 million U.S. households regularly depend on private ground water wells.
- All private wells use ground water." Source: CDC, Private Groundwater Wells

Oregon Labs for Drinking Water and Public Testing: 971 673-0405

<http://public.health.oregon.gov/LaboratoryServices/EnvironmentalLaboratoryAccreditation/Documents/AllLabsDWMatrix.pdf>

CDC Guidance on how to test well water, and how often:

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/private/wells/testing.html>

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) information on Private Wells:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/dwp/wellowners.htm>

Oregon DEQ "Frequently Asked Questions Page" (FAQs) which answers many common questions:

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/dwp/pwofaqs.htm>

Costs: Excerpts from the Oregon's Well Testing & Regulations web page, as of April 2014:

"Testing for the most common risks will typically cost from \$20 to \$40 for nitrate analysis, \$25-\$40 for coliform bacteria (microbiological) testing, and \$20-\$45 for arsenic analysis. If other contaminants are suspected, more extensive testing may be warranted. Make sure to use an accredited laboratory."

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/DrinkingWater/SourceWater/DomesticWellSafety/Pages/Testing-Regulations.aspx>

Contamination: The Oregon DEQ Water Quality website's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) page for private well owners offers the following guidance for contamination issues: (link is at bottom of previous page)

If test results from your private well indicate contamination, call the OHA Drinking Water Program at 971-673-0405 for information. They can assist with information on how to disinfect your well if you have problems with microbiological contaminants (microscopic bacteria, viruses, or one celled organisms), provide fact sheets for chemicals, or information on how to address other problems.

If test results show your well has toxic contaminants at concentrations above federal drinking-water standards, the responsibility for follow-up falls to DEQ, rather than OHA. In this case, report the results using DEQ's Environmental Complaints System [<http://www.deq.state.or.us/complaints/rep.htm>] or phone 1-888-997-7888. As DEQ's regional staff resources permit (depending on the magnitude of the problem and the number of persons affected), they may investigate alternative water supplies and seek the source(s) of contamination.

NOTE: In contrast to private wells, all **public** water system compliance issues should be referred to the OHA Drinking Water Program, at (971) 673-0405.

Water Conservation Tips:

There is abundant information on how to use water wisely:

<http://wateruseitwisely.com/links-and-resources/>

Water-wise Gardening:

Some smart water usage has to do with the types of plants you use in your garden.

Sometimes we think there are only two choices:

- 1) Plant your yard like an oasis, and water everything all summer or
- 2) Resign yourself to a yard full of dried grasses and weeds.

There is another option, fortunately. Look to Mother Nature.

Every region has plants that will grow without additional watering. It may take some water to get such a landscape established, but you should be able to create a beautiful landscape in your yard that doesn't require large quantities of water. This type of landscaping is often referred to as Xeriscaping; the word was invented by the Denver CO water department in 1981, and in fact, they have a copyright on it; it was inspired by two words "Landscape" and the Greek word for dry: "Xeros." (Continued)

Here is the Central Oregon Xeriscaping resource, developed by the cities of Central Oregon:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/deschutes/sites/default/files/Horticulture/documents/xeri-all-v3-augus06.pdf> (Continued)

Water-wise Gardening (Continued):

Information on Xeriscaping from the University of Oregon:

<http://pages.uoregon.edu/recycle/XERISCAPE.htm>

A thorough discussion of Xeriscaping from planning, preparation, plant selection and other essentials, visit *Our Organic Northwest ~Stories, links and ideas for those interested in organic farming and gardening*, at: http://nwpublicmedia.typepad.com/our_organic_northwest/xeriscaping/ (Continued)

Water-wise gardening (Continued)

Here is another source for water savvy gardening worth checking out on Squidoo:

<http://www.squidoo.com/xeriscapes>

County Soil and Water Conservation Districts:

Background information on Soil and Water Conservation Districts is provided by Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District:

“Historically, conservation districts were formed in response to the tragedy that was the Dust Bowl. The first great dust storm of the Dust Bowl occurred on May 11, 1934. It originated in the Great Plains region and swept over Washington DC and 300 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean. The second great storm happened again on March 6, 1935. In response, the Soil Conservation Service was created under the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to address the catastrophe.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt recommended to state governors that legislative authority be provided for the establishment of soil conservation districts as political or legal subdivisions of the state government to deal with the problems of erosion control and soil conservation. The first conservation districts were guided by local farmers elected to fill Supervisor positions who knew first-hand the environmental issues facing farmers.”

Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District

www.wasco.oacd.org

2325 River Rd. Ste 3

The Dalles, OR 97058

541-296-6178 ext 3 Fax: 541-296-7868

The Wasco County Soil and Water Conservation District provides information and technical assistance to assist the people of Wasco County in conservation of their natural resources.

OSU Extension: Resources for Life, Resiliency, Self Sufficiency and much more:

The “Family and Health program exists to improve the life of Oregonians. Our publications, classes, and research-based programs focus on many different topics: nutrition, finances, planning for a healthy retirement, aging well, parenting, emergency preparedness, and food security. From cradle to rocking chair, the OSU Extension Family and Community Health program is here to prepare you for life in the 21st century.”

Gardening: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/gardening/>

Small Farms: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/farms>

Food Preservation: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation> (Continued)

OSU Extension (Continued)

Food Safety: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-safety>

Healthy Eating: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/healthy-eating>

Healthy Families: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/healthy-families>

Emergency Preparedness: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/healthy-communities/emergency-preparedness>

Other OSU Extension topics: Pesticide Safety and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Education, Crops, Farm Management, Horticulture, Rainfall, Livestock.

Wasco County Extension Service

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/wasco/>

400 E. Scenic Drive,

Suite 2.278

The Dalles, OR 97058

Phone: 541-296-5494

Fax: 541-298-3574

Open: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday

Master Gardener Hours: April-October, 1-4 p.m., Tuesdays & Thursdays, Extension Office

April-early August, 9-1, Saturdays, Fred Meyer Garden Center

Mental Health & Addictions

Mid Columbia Center for Living:

<http://www.mccfl.org/about.html>

Wasco and Sherman Counties: 541 296-5452

Wasco County Annex A

419 East 7th Street

Room 207

The Dalles, Oregon 97058.

Vision: "Empower people to make positive changes."

Mission: "Provide comprehensive and culturally sensitive services in the least restrictive setting."

They accept Oregon Health Plan, Medicare, most private insurances, cash, check, Visa/MasterCard, or money order. A sliding fee scale is available for those who qualify. Some grant supported services are provided at no cost to you. Call for more information.

Mid Columbia Center for Living's comprehensive Resource Page for links relevant to Mental Health, Addictions and Developmental Disabilities: <http://www.mccfl.org/resources.htm>

Gambling Addiction Help:

<http://www.1877mylimit.org/>

Available by phone, live email chat by various instant messaging formats, etc. (Continued)

Gambling Addiction (Continued)

Phone: 1-877-MY-LIMIT (1-877-695-4648) Live Chat 9 am-9 pm Monday through Friday

Instant Message (MSN, AIM, YAHOO, GOOGLE, ICQ)

Email: help@1877MYLIMIT.ORG

Legal Aid services of Oregon:

This site contains legal information about subjects such as domestic law, Special Education, Housing, Social Security, Disability, Consumer issues and other topics, and there is an option to see the same services in Spanish: www.lawhelp.org/OR

Legal Aid regional office in Pendleton:

365 SE 3rd St.,

PO Box 1327,

Pendleton, OR 97801

Phone: 541 276-6685

Fax: 541 276-4549

Domestic Violence:

HAVEN from Domestic Violence

(This resource covers all of North Central Public Health District, and other counties as well)

Office: 541 296-1662

Crisis: 541 298-4789

Toll Free: 1-800 249-4789

They can provide access to motels or other options, provide counseling/advocacy for women and children, support groups, legal assistance/referrals, help with transportation, free counseling related to intimate partner violence, and financial literacy classes (teaching money management, budgeting and understanding financial abuse.) Haven has bilingual employees fluent in Spanish.

Energy assistance, Food, Housing Resources

Community Action Agencies:

Community Action Agencies (CAAs) are nonprofit private and public organizations established under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 to fight America's War on Poverty. Community Action Agencies help people to help themselves in achieving self-sufficiency.

Each Community Action Agency has a slightly different mix of services offered, which may include emergency services, education, food and nutrition, income management, job readiness training, transportation, day care, housing and so forth. You may have to check with your local agency to see what they offer or if they can refer you to other services within your community.

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, Inc.

Provides services to Hood River, Wasco and Sherman Counties

There is energy assistance outreach to various rural communities; the schedule is posted on their website; besides energy assistance, there is education and weatherization. They also distribute food to various agencies serving low income people, and provide homeless assistance, rent assistance, and transitional housing. AARP tax aid is also available.

(Continued)

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council, Inc. (Continued):

<http://www.mccac.com/>

The Dalles

312 E. 4th St.

PO Box 1969

The Dalles, OR 97058

Phone: 541-298-5131

Fax: 541-298-5141