

Oregon's Underground Injection Control Program

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The Federal Underground Injection Control Program (UIC) is the only groundwater protection permit program delegated by the Environmental Protection Agency to states. The program covers thirty types of subsurface discharges including stormwater, geothermal, aquifer storage and recovery, remediation, large onsites, and re-injected gas field brines. The intent of the program is to protect groundwater resources from contamination in a sustainable manner. Injection systems are one of many tools available to jurisdictions for co-management of groundwater and surface water resources that compliment the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program. Injection systems also provide an adaptable method to mitigate increased rainfall due to climate changes while providing integrated watershed protection that can be used by jurisdictions in new and existing developments.

In Oregon, the predominant use of injection systems is for stormwater though the use of low impact development techniques as pretreatment prior to discharge to a drywell or other type of injection design. Use of injection systems can provide cool recharge to watersheds that are water quality limited for temperature, assist in the reduction of flash floods, and are often used to recharge depleted aquifers for municipal, domestic and agricultural use. This presentation will summarize Oregon's UIC rules, focusing on stormwater for jurisdictions and private owners.

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Barbara Priest has been working to protect Oregon's drinking and surface water at the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality since 1990. Her prior positions at DEQ include work as a Senior Watershed Coordinator on the Willamette River Study, 401-C Certification Coordinator, Non-point Source Coordinator, and Wellhead Protection Coordinator (now called Drinking Water program or Source Water). Since 1999, Barbara has been coordinating the UIC program for DEQ's Water Quality Division. Prior to coming to DEQ, Barbara worked as an environmental auditor at Hahn and Associate, a long-range planner at Multnomah County Environmental Services, as a long-range planner and mineral program coordinator at the Bureau of Land Management, and as a project coordinator and marketing manager at VTN. She received her M.S. degree from Portland State in Physical Geography, with a minor in Land Use Planning, and her B.S. degree from the University of Nevada in Physical Geography, with a minor in Geology.