



# MEMORANDUM

EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD

*Rely on us.*

TO: Commissioners Carlson, Mital, Helgeson, Schlossberg and Brown  
FROM: Michael McCann, Generation Manager, and Susan Ackerman, Chief Energy Officer  
DATE: April 26, 2019  
SUBJECT: Walterville canal flow restrictions for summer 2019  
OBJECTIVE: Information Only

---

## **Issue:**

In a Record of Decision implemented on January 10, 2018, General Manager Frank Lawson formalized an operational decision regarding summer flows in the Walterville Canal, which is part of the Leaburg/Walterville Hydroelectric Project (FERC #2496). The decision states that, “In years with below median expected summer stream flows/snowpack, from May 20<sup>th</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>, EWEB will voluntarily adjust the power canal intake in order to maintain at least 10% more flow in the McKenzie bypass reach of the Walterville hydroelectric project than flows exiting the tailrace of the project.”

## **Background**

EWEB owns and operates the Walterville hydroelectric project, with a nameplate capacity of 8 MW, on the lower McKenzie River under a license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on April 27, 2000. Up to 2,577 cubic feet per second (cfs) can be diverted into the Walterville canal at the Walterville diversion under normal operations. Under the terms of the operating license, EWEB is required to maintain minimum instream flows in the bypassed reach of the McKenzie River of 1,000 cfs at all times.

In accordance with the Record of Decision, in low flow years EWEB will adjust the flow going into the Walterville canal in such a way as to maintain 10% more flow in the river than in the canal during the summer. Low flow years are defined as having below median streamflow forecasts and April snowpack data. Maintaining more flow in the river than in the canal will improve fish migration as well as enhancing water quality and recreational use during the summer months in the bypassed reach. The primary impact to EWEB will be financial through lost generation.

## **Discussion**

Based upon snowpack data and summer stream forecasts available in mid-April 2019, the McKenzie Basin is projected to experience a near average summer. NRCS SnoTel data indicates that current snowpack in the basin is roughly 111% of median. McKenzie River streamflow forecasts for the April to September period at Vida (the closest forecast station) are for flows at 94% of average, but

those projections were made before the April high flow event. Staff expect that summer flow projections will increase to at or above 100% when the May streamflow forecast is released.

Accordingly, EWEB Generation will not implement the Walterville Canal flow restrictions as identified in the January 2018 Record of Decision in 2019. Staff will continue to monitor data as it becomes available and notify the Board should conditions change our operational plans.