

**From:** Rhonda N.

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**Subject:** Domestic Wells in the Klamath Basin

Hello,

My name is Rhonda N., I am a homeowner in the Klamath Basin that has lost the use of my domestic well. My family has a 5 acre lot outside of Klamath that is along the C canal that has been dry since last winter. We purchased this home in February of 2021. I am a Oregon Department of Human Services Employee and have assisted Emergency Management for ODHS with the locating of tanks for the residents of the Klamath Basin. This summer I watched as each one of my neighbors slowly went dry and the water tanks that I helped procure pop up in my rural neighborhood. We are lucky in the fact that we do not have livestock and we do not have a lawn to worry about watering. Our air conditioning for our home is a water based heat pump so we also stopped utilizing our air conditioning and minimized our water usage in hopes that our well would make it. We foolishly thought that if we made it to September that we would be ok, our well went dry on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September.

The staff at the Water Masters office has been fabulous. When I called about getting tanks delivered to my home Allison helped me get set up and let Garrett know that we need a static water test. Garrett came out to my home that same day to verify that our well was dry and that we needed assistance. Allison was very helpful on the phone and the volunteers that delivered my tanks were very nice. We had tanks within days and we had our water system set up with 7 days total. We have gratefully utilized the water tanks and water delivery that has been available to us through the County Commissioners and the State of Oregon. I would like to thank the State and County for all their efforts to help us maintain water in our home. I had a very positive meeting with Klamath County Commissioner Kelly Minty-Morris and I asked her to look at extending the water program past October 31<sup>st</sup>, as there is no way the water table will be recharged. The county heard my request and they have extended the water program until March of 2022. My family is beyond thankful for that. I also need to thank Cindy R. and her driver Joel who is delivering the water. They have been great as well.

As we move into the fall and winter of the basin we do not have heat. Our home has a water based heat pump that circulated the hot water from our geothermal well to heat our home, so no water no heat. The coldest it has been in the Basin so far was 19 degrees at night and that morning it was 58 degrees in my home. We have a open air fireplace, its more for looks than actual heat. So utilizing it was kind of a joke in an effort to keep our home warm. Since then we have installed a fire place insert and that has helped with the heating. .

Now that I have addressed the most immediate needs of my home. I now can turn my attention to planning for what comes next. We have tried to contact several well drillers. They all basically just put you on the list and can hopefully get back to you in the near future. The estimated well bids I have heard range from \$6,000 to \$60,000 depending on what you need and how deep you need to go. In addition, I have already spent \$8,000 on additional storage tanks, pvc pipe, pipe insulation, pumps and a stove insert so that my family can have water and heat. Since the C canal runs past our home and it is empty I can only guess that negatively impacts our water. We also had a illegal marijuana grow busted within 5 miles of our home that was also stealing water., I would like to see the drug forfeiture money seized from those grows given to the people how need to make well improvements I am also surrounded by farmers and ranchers that utilize water to irrigate their crops and grow food for their herds. I don't blame anyone (except the pot growers) for our misfortune. However, any relief that could be afford my family thru a program or funding that helps us with the cost we will incur as a result of this drought would greatly be appreciated.

I would like to reiterate some suggestions my friend and neighbor ,Misty Buckley, has made to alleviate some of the expenses and hardships that we are facing:

- The state could waive domestic well permit/license/etc fees for deepening or replacing a failed well
- The state could expedite permit processing for replacing existing domestic uses
- The state could allow similarly-licensed well drilling contractors from out of state who are not licensed in Oregon to assist Oregon landowners if their schedule can accommodate sooner than local contractors
- The state could allow variances to deepen domestic wells (if found to be suitable by contractor) even if the well wasn't logged at the time of construction
- The state could increase monitoring and reporting of resulting data for public awareness
- The state could increase transparency of reporting data reflecting groundwater decline and the number of affected landowners
- The county provide property tax adjustments for loss of use for affected properties

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rhonda N.

**Rhonda also shared her immediate September expenses related to taking care of her family. Additional expenses have been incurred in October.**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Items Purchased</b>	<b>Amount</b>
9/15/2021	TC Wells	125
9/15/2021	Storage Tanks	1985
9/16/2021	Bottled Water/Paper Plates	32.54
9/19/2021	Bottled Water	5.79
9/20/2021	Pipe Supplies/Pump	427.8
9/20/2021	Pipe	17.85
9/21/2021	Sump Pump	139
9/26/2021	Pipe Supplies	6.39
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2739.37</b>

*Figure 1 Rhonda's Dry Well Expense Tracking*

**And photos of how her family has had to adapt this year.**



Figure 2 Pump and pipe installation



*Figure 3 Water tanks plumbed into basement*



Figure 4 Piping through basement from tanks pressurized by a pump.



*Figure 5 Day 1 of dry well. Emergency operations to haul water to family*



*Figure 6 Purchased tanks, filled at fairgrounds, and hauling through Klamath Falls to house.*

The timeline of events for Rhonda are as follows:

Hi Gene,

Here is the timeline of events. The photos may not all fit in this email and I will include my expense report.

Rhonda

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the well stopped working at the N... families primary residence. Mr. ... contacted TW Wells and they came out to the property. Upon immediate opening of the well house it was discovered that the well casing was leaking at the base which was evident by the wet dirt around it. TW Wells pulled out the pump and inspected the pipe that runs from the well opening to the pump. This pipe did not show evidence of a hole or damage, the pump was running and appeared to be operating as necessary. TW Wells then used a static water line to measure water in the well and found no water. Per the well report the well is 125 feet deep, the well pump was sitting at 105 feet deep and when TW Wells attempted to lower the well pump, they were unable to do that. So the well may have collapsed 20 feet. Upon notification of no water, Rhonda N., immediately contacted the county water masters office. Here is a link to the water masters water assistance program <https://www.klamathcounty.org/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=488> . Mrs. N. spoke with Allison at the water masters office and reported that the well was dry and that the residence would require the use of two 500 gallon water tanks that the county was providing as drought assistance to home owners. Mrs. N. was told that Garrett from the water masters office would have to come out and check the water static level of the well to approve the receiving of the two tanks. Garret came out within an hour to the residence and again used a water static tester to locate water, Garrett attempted to lower the water static testing device down the well casing and was unable to get the tester to the bottom of the well as it appeared to be catching on something. Since the residence clearly did not have water based on the fact that water was not coming out of the faucets and that TW Wells had already checked the well, they determined the well was dry and approved the two tanks to be delivered. Ms. N. was informed that the family could go to the local fair grounds to fill up any portable water storage tanks or devices for free. Ms. N. went to the fairgrounds and filled up any tanks she had and transported them in the back of her car (picture downloaded). The N. residence has an open loop water sourced heat pump that pulls water from the well. The water from the well is consistently 72 degrees and utilized to heat and cool the home. So not only does the residence not have water, but they do not have heat or air conditioning.

Due to lack of water the N. family had to shower and eat at their neighbors house. Rhonda and Ryan N. both missed work on this day due to the days events.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, the N. family was able to procure a 2500 gallon and a 550 gallon water storage tank from Wilco Farms in Oregon City, Oregon. These additional tanks cost the family 1,985.00. Ryan N.' s father, Steve N., went and got the tanks for the family. (picture downloaded)

On September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the county delivered two 500 gallon water storage tanks to the N. family residence. The county program for drought assistance can be found at this website: <http://airquality.klamathcounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/29321/Info-Sheet-on-Water-Tank-Usage-Criteria-and-Approval> (picture downloaded)

The county advised they would not fill up the water tanks until the N. family had them piped in. The N. family still had to shower and eat at the neighbor's house. Rhonda N. also had to do laundry at a relatives home. Rhonda N. missed work due to the days events.

On September 17<sup>th</sup> thru September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the N. family had to leave town to take their oldest child in college and were not able to work on getting the tanks plumbed into the primary residence. The N. family were able to bring that additional tanks, purchased in Oregon City, to the home.

On September 20<sup>th</sup>, Rhonda and Ryan N. plumbed the water tanks into their home that the county provided. The family had to purchase numerous plumbing supplies and pumps in order to get the system operational. A detailed list of these supplies will be provided (picture downloaded). The N. family were unable to bathe this day and had to purchase dinner. Rhonda N. also did laundry at a relatives home as this was her regular day off.

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 Rhonda and Ryan N. had to shower at the gym in order to go to work.

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Rhonda N. contacted the water master's office to get water delivered to their home. The watermasters office was unsure of what date they would get water delivered to the home. After work on the 21<sup>st</sup> Rhonda and Ryan N. took the additional storage tanks to the Klamath County fairgrounds (who have been providing free water to drought victims) of 550 gallons and fill the tanks utilizing 2 garden hoses, this took the family about 30-45 minutes. The N. family then purchased a sump pump, to pump the 550 gallons of water obtained from the fairgrounds into the two tanks the family was provided by the county. (pictures downloaded)

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, the county filled up the remaining storage tank for the family. The family was finally able to bathe, do laundry and prepare food in their residence. The county will provide water to the N. family home in the amount of 1,000 gallons each week and they get watered delivered every Monday. However, the counties water program ends on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and if the home still does not have water the family will then have to purchase water. The county advises to not drink the water in the tanks, therefore, the family has been purchasing drinking water.

On September 26<sup>th</sup>, Rhonda and Ryan N. were also able to pipe in the 2500 gallon storage tank located in their driveway to gravity feed into the two 500 gallon storage tanks located outside their basement. The county is able to provide the family with 1,000 gallons of water each week until October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. (pictures downloaded)

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, the family came home and it was 64 degrees in the residence. Mr. N. built a fire in the fireplace of the residence. The family's home filled with smoke as result of this and the family had to put out the fire in the fireplace. Mr. N. will have to check the

chimney flu to see if there is something blocking it. The family residence does not have heat as a result of not having water from their well. The family is utilizing 2 small space heaters to heat a 2,500 square feet home and they are not sufficient.

On September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021 the family woke up to a home that was 62 degrees. Temperatures in the area are starting to drop into the 30s at night and the family has no way of sufficiently heating their home.

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the family woke up to the home being 63 degrees, during the night the temperature dropped down to the low 30's. Mrs. N. uploaded a current expense sheet to her online claim. Mrs. N. still has not heard from her insurance company.

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the N. family were forced to purchase a wood burning insert for their fire place to increase the heat in the home. Since losing water also meant losing heat most mornings it has been 58 to 63 degrees in the N. family home.

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Rhonda N. left messages for 2 different contractors in town that did fire place installation. Edwards Family Construction called her back. The other installer called also but they only did gas fireplace inserts not wood burning fire places.

October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 it was supposed to get down to 19 degrees during the night. Ryan and Rhonda N. had to purchase insulation materials and heat tape to prevent the water lines of the outside water storage tanks from freezing. The Ryan and Rhonda N. Family installed this in the dark. They N. family also received a letter from the County Commissioners advising that water deliveries have been extended thru March of 2022.

October 12<sup>th</sup>, it was 58 degrees in the N. family home.

On October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Edwards Family construction came out to the N. family residence to bid the fireplace install. They stated since the family had no heat they would work on a Saturday so the home would have heat again.

On October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Edwards Family construction installed the families fireplace. The home now has heat.