

by Bend Weekly News Sources

The Deschutes County Community Development Department will host an open house to provide information on the scientific studies, groundwater modeling, and wastewater treatment systems investigations conducted for the south Deschutes County region.

Drop in on the informational open house at Deschutes County's South County Services Center in La Pine between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday, December 20. At the open house, several staff members will be available to answer questions and talk about the data and other information collected specifically to investigate the groundwater issues in the region.

The open house will be held at the South County Services Center Community Development Department office at 51340 S. Highway 97 in La Pine.

The proposed Local Rule includes three basic options for south County residents:

- 1) New development (of vacant land) uses onsite systems that achieve the maximum level of nitrogen reduction currently possible

- 2) Existing development uses onsite systems that achieve the minimum reduction required to meeting groundwater protection goals

- 3) Existing systems are upgraded to nitrogen reducing systems within ten years of the date the rule is adopted.

The proposed rule will help protect the sole source of drinking water for south Deschutes County residents by reducing the level of nitrogen discharged. Long term research has shown that from pollution discharged by conventional onsite wastewater treatment systems (onsite systems, formerly called septic systems) contaminates groundwater and threatens the region's drinking water supply. Nitrogen, in the form of nitrate, is regulated by the US Environmental Protection Agency as a drinking water contaminant. The rule will also help protect the regional rivers and lakes from the negative effects of increased nitrogen pollution, which include increased aquatic plant growth.

Please visit the County's Community Development Department's website page at www.deschutes.org/cdd/ and use "Quick Links" to get more information on the Groundwater Protection Project. South County residents may also call Barbara Rich at 617-4713 for more information.

