

Chapter 540

1985 REPLACEMENT PART

Distribution of Water; Watermasters; Change in Use, Transfer or Abandonment of Water Rights

WATER DISTRICTS, WATERMASTERS, DISTRIBUTION OF WATER GENERALLY	540 310	Ditches and canals, headgates; measuring devices, flumes along lines of ditches	
540.010	Water districts, creation, purposes	540 320	Noncompliance with requirements, effect
540 020	Watermasters, appointment, removal, Water Resources Director vested with powers of watermaster	540 330	Reservoirs; measuring devices, effect of noncompliance
540.030	Water Resources Director, general duties regarding water distribution	540 340	Reservoir and diversion dam, suitable outlet, effect of noncompliance
540.045	Watermaster's duties	540 350	Dams, dikes and other hydraulic works, when showing for power generation use to be made, examination and approval by commission, approval not to relieve owners of responsibility, inspections, modification of works, hearing
540 050	District attorneys to represent Water Resources Director and watermasters	540 360	Order to modify
540 060	Arrest by watermaster; complaint against offender	540 370	Enforcing compliance with order or decree
540 075	Office space and equipment for watermaster	540.380	Reports of consultants, payment
540 080	Employment of assistant watermasters, compensation and expenses, termination of service	540.390	Inspection upon application by resident, landowner or commission's own motion; expenses, deposit by applicant, payment by owner of works, lien
540 100	Division of water among users; payment	540.400	Law not applicable to certain works
540 120	Payment by one water user as giving lien on lands of others; notice, foreclosure	540 410	Use of watercourse to deliver reservoir water, notice to watermaster, adjustment of headgates, expenses, liability for, and collection of, payment
540 130	Advance payment	540 420	Maintenance and operation of jointly owned ditches, performance by coowner, recovery from one in default
540 135	Disposition of funds collected under ORS 540 100 to 540 130 and 540 220	540 430	Effect of nonpayment by coowner, lien on interest, foreclosure, stoppage of delivery of water
540 140	Insufficiency of water for all users, preference of domestic over agricultural use, and agricultural over manufacturing use	540 440	Owner to clear weeds from ditch right of way
540 145	Rules for distribution of water, applicability		
540 150	Rotation in use, notice to watermaster		
DISTRIBUTION OF WATER FROM IRRIGATION DITCHES AND RESERVOIRS	CHANGES IN USE OF WATER, TRANSFER OF WATER RIGHTS		
540 210	Distribution among users from ditch or reservoir; when and how made	540.510	Appurtenancy of water to premises, restrictions on change of use or place of use or point of diversion
540.220	Payment of assistant watermaster	540.520	Application for change of use, place of use or point of diversion, public notice, filing of protest, hearing
540 230	Distribution of waste or seepage water; payment	540 530	Order authorizing change of use, place of use or point of diversion, new certificate
540 240	Lien for wages and expense; property subject to lien, monthly payment	540 540	County acquiring land in irrigation district, transfer of water rights to other lands, authority of county court
540 250	Lien, notice of intent to claim, foreclosure, attorney fees	540 550	Ratification of prior transfer of water rights to irrigation district
540 260	Payment by one user; lien against other users, enforcement, remedy not exclusive		
540 270	Irrigation districts and improvement companies not affected		
HYDRAULIC WORKS AND STRUCTURES, DITCH RIGHT OF WAY	ABANDONMENT OF WATER RIGHTS		
	540 610	Use as measure of water right, abandonment of right for nonuse, nonapplicability	

to municipalities and Department of Veterans' Affairs, confirmation of rights of municipalities

- 540 615 Nonuse, while land withdrawn under federal soil bank program, not an abandonment
- 540 621 Cancellation of abandoned water right upon request of owner
- 540 631 Notice by Water Resources Commission of initiation of proceedings to cancel abandoned water right
- 540 641 Cancellation if no protest, procedure for cancellation if owner or occupant files protest
- 540 650 Issuance of new water right certificate for water rights not canceled

PROHIBITED ACTS, INJUNCTIONS

- 540 710 Interference with headgate, or use of water denied by watermaster or other authority, evidence of guilt
- 540 720 Unauthorized use or waste of water, evidence of guilt of user
- 540 730 Obstruction interfering with use of works or access thereto prohibited
- 540 740 Injunctive relief against action of watermaster
- 540 750 Injunction suits, notice and hearing to authorize restraining order, time of hearing

PENALTIES

- 540 990 Penalties

CROSS REFERENCES

- Administrative procedures and rules of state agencies, 183 310 to 183 550
- Change in use or transfer of rights to ground water, 537 635, 537 705
- Compliance with state water resources policy required, 536 300 to 536 400
- Definitions for chapter, 536 007
- Fees for power development uses, 543 710, 543 720
- Goose Lake Interstate Compact, 542 520
- Improvements, irrigation district authorized to construct or maintain and levy assessments in certain instances, 545 408
- Klamath River Basin Compact, 542 610 to 542 630

540.310 to 540 440

- Release of water from impoundment or diversion structure, 541 510 to 541 545

540 400

- Splash dams unlawful, 541 455

540 610

- Failure to file registration statement, 537 605

540 631

- Abandonment of claim to water presumed if power development fees not paid, 543 730
- Enforcement of laws concerning loss of water rights by Water Resources Commission, 536 340

540 710, 540 720, 540.990

- Wilful diversion of water, penalty, 537 990

**WATER DISTRICTS; WATERMASTERS;
DISTRIBUTION OF WATER
GENERALLY**

540.010 Water districts; creation; purposes. The Water Resources Commission shall divide the state into water districts, which shall be so constituted as to secure the best protection to the claimants for water and the most economical supervision on the part of the state. Water districts shall not be created until necessary [Amended by 1985 c 673 §82]

540.020 Watermasters; appointment; removal; Water Resources Director vested with powers of watermaster. (1) The Water Resources Director shall appoint one watermaster for each water district. The watermaster shall hold office until removed by the director, and shall be subject to any applicable provision of the State Personnel Relations Law. The director shall fill all vacancies which occur in the office.

(2) The director, or any duly authorized assistant, shall have the powers and authority of a watermaster in the distribution of water in any water district [Amended by 1985 c 421 §5]

540.030 Water Resources Director; general duties regarding water distribution. The Water Resources Director shall

(1) Have general control over the watermasters

(2) Execute the laws relative to the distribution of water and perform other functions as may be assigned to the director [Amended by 1953 c 395 §3, 1985 c 673 §82a]

540 040 [Amended by 1953 c 395 §3, 1957 c 341 §10, 1963 c 410 §1, repealed by 1985 c 421 §17]

540.045 Watermaster's duties. Each watermaster shall

(1) Regulate the distribution of water among the various users of water from any natural surface or ground water supply in accordance with the users' existing water rights of record in the office of the Water Resources Director and related court decrees

(2) Upon the request of the users, distribute water among the various users under any partnership ditch, pipeline or well or from any reservoir, in accordance with the users' existing water rights of record in the office of the director

(3) Divide the waters of the natural surface and ground water sources and other sources of water supply among the canals, ditches, pumps, pipelines and reservoirs taking water from the

source for beneficial use, by regulating, adjusting and fastening the headgates, valves or other control works at the several points of diversion of surface water or the several points of appropriation of ground water, according to the users' relative entitlements to water

(4) Attach to the headgate, valve or other control works the watermaster regulates under subsection (3) of this section, a written notice dated and signed by the watermaster, setting forth that the headgate, valve or other control works has been properly regulated and is wholly under the control of the watermaster

(5) Perform any other duties the director may require [1985 c 421 §3]

540.050 District attorneys to represent Water Resources Director and watermasters. The district attorney shall appear on behalf of the Water Resources Director or any watermaster in any case which may arise in the pursuance of the official duties of the director or watermaster within the jurisdiction of the district attorney [Amended by 1985 c 421 §6]

540.060 Arrest by watermaster; complaint against offender. The watermaster or an assistant appointed by the watermaster shall have power to arrest any person violating a provision of the Water Rights Act (as defined in ORS 537 010), ORS 537 120 to 537 330 or 537 505 to 537 795 and turn the person over to the sheriff or other competent police officer within the county. At the time the watermaster delivers the arrested person into the custody of the sheriff, the watermaster or assistant watermaster making the arrest shall file a complaint, as defined in ORS 131 005, against the person arrested [Amended by 1957 c 341 §11, 1985 c 421 §7]

540 070 [Repealed by 1957 c 546 §8]

540 071 [1957 c 546 §2, 1961 c 636 §1, 1963 c 410 §2, repealed by 1985 c 421 §17]

540.075 Office space and equipment for watermaster. (1) The county court or board of county commissioners of each county in which the water district of the watermaster is located shall furnish the watermaster a suitable office and office equipment

(2) If a water district includes all or parts of two or more counties, the office of the watermaster for the water district shall be in the county designated by the director and the county court or board of county commissioners of that county shall provide a suitable office with necessary office equipment for the watermaster [1985 c 421 §2]

540.080 Employment of assistant watermasters; compensation and expenses; termination of service. (1) With the approval

of the Water Resources Director, a watermaster may employ assistants to aid in the discharge of the watermaster's duties. The assistants shall take the same oath as the watermaster and shall obey the watermaster's instructions. Compensation and actual and necessary traveling expenses of an assistant shall be paid by the county court or board of county commissioners upon certificates of the watermaster by an order made at a regular term when sitting for the transaction of county business. If no provision for such payment is made, the assistant's compensation and expenses shall be paid by the water users concerned, as provided in ORS 540.100 to 540.130.

(2) The term of service of an assistant watermaster may be terminated at any time by the director or the watermaster. [Amended by 1957 c 546 §3, 1961 c 636 §2, 1985 c 421 §8]

540.090 [Amended by 1957 c 546 §4, 1961 c 636 §3, 1979 c 18 §1, repealed by 1985 c 421 §17]

540.100 Division of water among users; payment. (1) When water users are unable to agree to the distribution or division of water, a majority of them may request the watermaster of the district in which the distribution or division is in dispute to make a just division or distribution of water among the parties entitled to the use of the water. The request shall be in writing and shall set forth the pertinent facts of the dispute.

(2) If no provision has been made for payment of the necessary assistant watermaster or expenses as provided by ORS 540.080, the assistant shall be paid by the water users among whom the distribution or division is made.

(3) The expense of any assistant watermaster shall be paid by the water users in proportion to the area of land for which each water user is entitled to the use of water, so that each one shall pay the same rate per acre. [Amended by 1957 c 546 §5, 1961 c 636 §4, 1979 c 18 §2, 1985 c 421 §9]

540.110 [Amended by 1981 c 897 §58, repealed by 1985 c 421 §17]

540.120 Payment by one water user as giving lien on lands of others; notice; foreclosure. (1) If one or more of the water users concerned in a distribution or division under ORS 540.100 pay the wages and expenses for another user who fails to contribute a just share or proportion of the wages and expenses, the user paying the wages and expenses shall be entitled to a lien upon the lands of the delinquent user entitled to use of water, in the amount of the delinquent user's just share or proportion.

(2) The lien shall be made effective by filing written notice of intent to claim a lien for pay-

ment of wages and expenses under subsection (1) of this section with the county clerk of the county in which the lands of the delinquent water user are situated.

(3) The notice of intent filed under subsection (2) of this section shall

(a) Be verified by the watermaster or assistant watermaster,

(b) Specify the particular items of wages and expenses for which the lien is claimed,

(c) Describe the lands of each water user upon which the lien is claimed, and

(d) State the name of the owner or reputed owner of the lands.

(4) The lien shall be filed within 60 days from the completion of the distribution or division, and suit to foreclose the lien shall be brought in the circuit court of the county in which the lands or any part of the lands are situated, within six months from the date of filing the notice of lien.

(5) If suit is necessary to foreclose the lien, the plaintiff may recover reasonable attorney fees at trial and on appeal in addition to the costs and disbursements prescribed by law. The lien shall be foreclosed in the manner provided by law for the foreclosure of liens against real property.

(6) A lien filed under this section shall not be considered an exclusive remedy. [Amended by 1985 c 421 §10]

540.130 Advance payment. If no provision has been made for payment of the assistant watermaster or expenses as provided in ORS 540.080, before proceeding to make any distribution or division the Water Resources Director may require the water users requesting the distribution or division to pay in advance the estimated compensation and expenses involved in the work. The director shall keep a true and full account of all moneys paid in advance under this section. Upon the expiration of the period for which the services are required, the director shall refund to the water users any unexpended balance of the moneys paid in advance. [Amended by 1957 c 546 §6, 1961 c 636 §5, 1979 c 18 §3, 1985 c 421 §11]

540.135 Disposition of funds collected under ORS 540.100 to 540.130 and 540.220. Any moneys collected under ORS 540.100 to 540.130 and 540.220 shall be paid to the Water Resources Director and deposited by the director in a revolving fund to be dispersed for the purpose for which it was collected. [1961 c 636 §9, 1985 c 421 §12]

540.140 Insufficiency of water for all users; preference of domestic over agricultural use, and agricultural over manufacturing use. When the waters of any

natural stream are not sufficient for the service of all those desiring the use of the same, those using the water for domestic purposes shall, subject to such limitations as may be prescribed by law, have the preference over those claiming such water for any other purpose, and those using the water for agricultural purposes shall have the preference over those using the same for manufacturing purposes.

540.145 Rules for distribution of water; applicability. The Water Resources Commission may adopt rules to secure the equal and fair distribution of water in accordance with the rights of the various users. The rules shall apply to all water rights that have been established.

(1) By court decree,

(2) Under an order of the commission or the Water Resources Director in proceedings for the determination of relative rights to the use of water, or

(3) Through permits to appropriate water or certificates of water rights issued by the commission [1985 c 673 §81]

540.150 Rotation in use; notice to watermaster. To bring about a more economical use of the available water supply, water users owning lands to which are attached water rights may rotate in the use of the supply to which they may be collectively entitled. Whenever two or more water users notify the watermaster that they desire to use the water by rotation, and present a written agreement as to the manner of rotation, the watermaster shall distribute the water in accordance with the written agreement.

DISTRIBUTION OF WATER FROM IRRIGATION DITCHES AND RESERVOIRS

540.210 Distribution among users from ditch or reservoir; when and how made. (1) Whenever any water users from any ditch or reservoir, either among themselves or with the owner thereof, are unable to agree relative to the distribution or division of water through or from the ditch or reservoir, either the owner or any such water user may apply to the watermaster of the district in which the ditch or reservoir is located, by written notice, setting forth such facts, and asking the watermaster to take charge of the ditch or reservoir for the purpose of making a just division or distribution of water from it to the parties entitled to the use thereof.

(2) The watermaster shall then take exclusive charge of the ditch or reservoir, for the purpose of dividing or distributing the water therefrom in accordance with the respective and relative rights of the various users of water from the ditch or reservoir, and shall continue the work until the necessity therefor shall cease to exist.

(3) The distribution and division of water shall be made according to the relative and respective rights of the various users from the ditch or reservoir, as determined by the Water Resources Director, by decree of the circuit court, or by written contract between all of the users filed with the watermaster.

(4) The circuit court having jurisdiction may request the watermaster of the district to take charge of any such ditch or reservoir, and to enforce any decree respecting such ditch or reservoir made under the jurisdiction of the court.

540.220 Payment of assistant watermaster. (1) A watermaster may appoint an assistant to take charge of the ditch, pipeline or reservoir involved in a distribution or division of water under ORS 540.210. The assistant watermaster shall be paid by the water users from the ditch, pipeline or reservoir for the cost of the distribution. The Water Resources Commission may require the water users to pay in advance the estimated compensation and expenses of the assistant involved in the distribution or division of the water.

(2) In the case of partnership ditches, pipelines or mutual irrigation corporations organized for the benefit of the members or stockholders, the expense of the assistant shall be paid by the water users in proportion to the area of land for which each water user is entitled to the use of water from the ditch, pipeline or reservoir, so that each shall pay the same rate per acre.

(3) In the case of ditches, pipelines and reservoirs constructed and operated for sale or rental of water, the wages and expense of the assistant shall be paid by the owner of the ditch, pipeline or reservoir, unless otherwise provided in written contracts with water users using water from the ditches, pipelines and reservoirs involved in the distribution or division of water [Amended by 1957 c 546 §7, 1961 c 636 §6, 1979 c 18 §4, 1985 c 421 §13, 1985 c 673 §83].

540.230 Distribution of waste or seepage water; payment. Whenever a watermaster is called upon, in accordance with the provisions of ORS 540.210, to distribute the waters of any ditch containing or carrying waste or seepage water, the holder of the right to the use of such waste or seepage water shall pay the total

cost of the installation of measuring devices for the measurement of the waste or seepage water and the total expense of measuring and distributing it

540.240 Lien for wages and expense; property subject to lien; monthly payment.

In the case of a partnership ditch, pipeline or reservoir, or a ditch, pipeline or reservoir owned in common or by a mutual irrigation company incorporated under the laws of this state, the wages of the assistant watermaster and expenses incurred by the assistant in making the distribution provided for by ORS 540 210 to 540 240, and the necessary and proper expense of installation and maintenance of measuring devices and headgates to provide for the just distribution of water among the several users in accordance with their respective and relative rights, shall be a lien upon the ditch, pipeline or reservoir. The lien shall attach to each tract of land entitled to the use of water for irrigation from the ditch, pipeline or reservoir, and upon the crops produced upon the lands during the irrigation season for which the distribution is made. If a ditch, pipeline or reservoir is owned or operated by a person engaged in the business of selling or renting water from the ditch, pipeline or reservoir, the wages and expense shall be a lien upon the ditch, pipeline or reservoir. The wages and expense shall be paid monthly by the water users, the mutual irrigation company, or the person engaged in the business of selling or renting water from a ditch, pipeline or reservoir [Amended by 1985 c 421 §14]

540.250 Lien, notice of intent to claim; foreclosure; attorney fees. (1) If not paid, the lien under ORS 540 240 may be made effective by the assistant filing a notice in writing of intention to claim a lien for the assistant's wages and expense with the county clerk of the county in which the ditch, pipeline or reservoir and lands are situated

(2) The notice filed under subsection (1) of this section shall

(a) Be verified and subscribed by the watermaster or assistant,

(b) Specify the particular items of wages and expense for which the lien is claimed,

(c) Describe the lands of each water user upon which the lien is claimed, and

(d) Set forth the name of the ditch, pipeline or reservoir and the name of the owner or reputed owner of the lands and ditch, pipeline or reservoir against which the lien is claimed

(3) The lien shall be filed within 60 days from the completion of distribution. Suit to foreclose

the lien shall be brought in the circuit court of the county in which all or part of the lands, ditch, pipeline or reservoir, or any part, are situated, within six months from the date of filing the notice

(4) If suit is necessary to foreclose the lien, the plaintiff shall be allowed to recover a reasonable attorney fee at trial and on appeal in addition to the costs and disbursements prescribed by law. The lien shall be foreclosed in the manner provided by law for the foreclosure of liens against real property [Amended by 1981 c 897 §59, 1985 c 421 §15]

540.260 Payment by one user; lien against other users; enforcement; remedy not exclusive. (1) One or more of the water users from any partnership or mutual irrigation company ditch or pipeline may pay the wages and expense of the assistant watermaster and, as against any other user failing to contribute the user's share or proportion of the wages and expense, shall be entitled to a lien upon the lands of the delinquent user entitled to the use of water from the ditch, pipeline and reservoir and upon the share or interest of the owner in the ditch, pipeline or reservoir, for the user's just share or proportion

(2) The lien shall be made effective by filing a similar notice to that prescribed under ORS 540 250 within 60 days from the date of payment of the wages and expense, with the county clerk. It may be enforced and foreclosed, and the same procedure, including the allowance of reasonable attorney fees, shall be followed in the foreclosure as in the case of a lien claimed and foreclosed by the watermaster under ORS 540 250. The lien shall not be considered an exclusive remedy [Amended by 1985 c 421 §16]

540.270 Irrigation districts and improvement companies not affected.

Nothing contained in ORS 540 210 to 540 260 shall be applicable to the distribution of water from the irrigation systems or works of irrigation districts or district improvement companies unless requested by the district. Distribution of water from such irrigation systems or works shall be under the exclusive control of the directors of the irrigation districts and district improvement companies unless the watermaster has been requested by the district to distribute the water [Amended by 1969 c 303 §1]

HYDRAULIC WORKS AND STRUCTURES; DITCH RIGHT OF WAY

540.310 Ditches and canals; headgates; measuring devices; flumes along lines of ditches. (1) The owner of any ditch or canal

shall maintain to the satisfaction of the Water Resources Commission a substantial headgate at the point where the water is diverted. It shall be of such construction that it can be locked and kept closed by the watermaster.

(2) The owner shall construct and maintain, when required by the commission, suitable measuring devices at such points along the ditch as may be necessary to assist the watermaster in determining the amount of water that is to be diverted into the ditch from the stream, or taken from it by the various users.

(3) When necessary for the protection of other water users, the commission may require flumes to be installed along the line of any ditch. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §84]

540.320 Noncompliance with requirements; effect. If any owner of irrigation works refuses or neglects to construct and put in headgates, flumes or measuring devices, as required under ORS 540.310, after 10 days' notice, the watermaster may close the ditch, and it shall not be opened or any water diverted from the source of supply, under the penalties prescribed by law for the opening of headgates lawfully closed, until the requirements of the Water Resources Commission as to such headgates, flumes or measuring devices have been complied with. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §85]

540.330 Reservoirs; measuring devices; effect of noncompliance. (1) Any owner or manager of a reservoir, located across or upon the bed of a natural stream, shall construct and maintain, when required by the Water Resources Commission, a measuring device below, and one above, the reservoir on each stream or source of supply discharging into the reservoir, to assist the watermaster in determining the amount of water to which appropriators are entitled and thereafter diverting it for their use.

(2) If any owner or manager of a reservoir located across the bed of a natural stream neglects or refuses to put in a measuring device after 10 days' notice by the commission, the watermaster may open the sluiceway or outlet of the reservoir, and it shall not be closed, under penalties of the law for changing or interfering with headgates, until the requirements of the commission as to such measuring devices are complied with. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §86]

540.340 Reservoir and diversion dam; suitable outlet; effect of noncompliance. (1) Whenever it may be necessary for the protection of other water users, the Water Resources Commission shall require every owner or manager of a

reservoir or diversion dam, located across or upon the bed of a natural stream, to construct and maintain a suitable outlet in the reservoir or diversion dam which will allow the free passage of the natural flow of the stream. The commission shall determine what constitutes a suitable outlet.

(2) If any owner or manager of a reservoir or diversion dam refuses or neglects to construct or put in such outlet in the reservoir or diversion dam after 10 days' notice by the commission, the commission may close the ditch carrying water from the reservoir or diversion dam and it shall not be opened or any water diverted from the reservoir or diversion dam, under the penalties prescribed by law for the opening of headgates lawfully closed, until the requirements of the commission regarding such outlet have been complied with. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §87]

540.350 Dams, dikes and other hydraulic works; when showing for power generation use to be made; examination and approval by commission; approval not to relieve owners of responsibility; inspections; modification of works; hearing. (1) No person, firm or private or municipal corporation shall construct any dam, dike, or other hydraulic structure or works, the failure of which the Water Resources Commission finds would result in damage to life or property, unless the commission has made an examination of the site and of the plans and specifications and other features involved in the construction of such works, and has approved them in writing.

(2) When a person, firm or private or municipal corporation seeks the written approval of the Water Resources Commission, of the site, plans, specifications and features for a dam more than 25 feet high at a site where there is an average annual flow exceeding two cubic feet a second, that party must demonstrate that the dam includes measures that make it readily adaptable to power generation in a manner meeting statutory requirements for the safe passage of fish. These measures shall include the installation of a pressure conduit, penstock, drain or similar water diversion system at the time the dam is built.

(3) A person, firm or private or municipal corporation seeking approval for a dam described in subsection (2) of this section need not make the showing required by that subsection if that party demonstrates to the commission's satisfaction that

(a) It is not likely the installation of hydroelectric generating facilities at the proposed site would be feasible anytime during the life of the proposed dam, or

(b) It would be more feasible to install hydroelectric facilities after construction of the proposed dam

(4) The commission's approval of the site, plans and specifications, or other features involved in the construction, maintenance and operation of any hydraulic works whatsoever shall not relieve the owners of their legal responsibilities

(5) The commission may make inspections of any hydraulic structure, the site thereof, and of the plans and specifications, and any other features involved in the construction, maintenance and operation of the works. If, as a result of the inspections, the commission considers any modifications necessary to insure the safety of the works with reference to possible damage to life or property, the commission shall notify the legal owners by registered mail, stating why the works are unsafe. The notice shall set forth the modifications necessary to insure the safety of the works in so far as it affects possible damage to life or property. The notice also shall set a hearing at a time and place as will give the owners a reasonable time to prepare for the hearing. [Amended by 1981 c 210 §1, 1985 c 673 §88]

540.360 Order to modify. After the hearing the Water Resources Commission may issue a written order to the owners to make such modifications as the commission considers necessary to insure the safety of the works with reference to possible damage to life or property and shall fix the time within which work shall begin in good faith and the time for completion. The owners, upon receipt of the order, shall make the modifications ordered within the time limit prescribed or shall initiate an appeal as above provided. [Amended by 1975 c 581 §26a, 1981 c 210 §2, 1985 c 673 §89]

540.370 Enforcing compliance with order or decree. (1) If the owners fail to make the modifications within the time limits set by the Water Resources Commission, or to institute their appeal or to comply with the decree of the appellate court in case an appeal is taken, the commission shall issue an order in writing to the owners directing that the gates be kept open, or an opening made in the dam if necessary, or that the structure shall not be used for the storage, restraint or conveyance of water until the modifications have been made

(2) No owner shall refuse to comply with the orders of the commission or the decree of an appellate court

(3) In case of noncompliance, the commission shall direct the watermaster or other authorized assistant to carry out the orders, or the

commission may file a copy of the commission's order with the Attorney General or with the district attorney of the county within which the works are located. The Attorney General or district attorney shall bring proceedings in the name of the state, in the circuit court of the county within which the works or any part thereof are situated, to abate the offending works. The court, after a full hearing on the matter, may declare the works a nuisance and order their removal, or order any repairs or alterations, and may enforce its orders in the manner provided by law. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §90]

540.380 Reports of consultants; payment. The Water Resources Commission may accept the reports of consulting engineers, geologists or other specialists whom the owners of the works in question may have employed. But if, for any reason, the commission considers the reports insufficient, the commission may employ consulting engineers, geologists or other specialists outside the Water Resources Department to make special examinations and inspections and to prepare reports for the commission's guidance. The cost of such special examinations, inspections and reports shall be paid by the commission from any funds at the commission's disposal, or it may be divided by mutual agreement between the state and the owners. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §91]

540.390 Inspection upon application by resident, landowner or commission's own motion; expenses; deposit by applicant; payment by owner of works; lien. Should any person residing on or owning land in the neighborhood of any dam, dike or other hydraulic structure after completion, or in course of construction, apply to the Water Resources Commission in writing desiring an inspection of the works, the commission may order an inspection, or the commission may make such order on the commission's own motion. Before doing so the commission may require the applicant for inspection to deposit a sum of money sufficient to pay the expenses of an inspection. If the application appears to the commission not to have been justified the commission may cause the whole or part of the expenses to be paid out of the deposit. If the application appears to have been justified, the commission may require the owner of the works to pay the whole or any part of the expenses of the inspection, and it shall constitute a valid lien against the works, which may be enforced in the same manner as provided for the enforcement of mechanics' liens. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §92]

540.400 Law not applicable to certain works. ORS 540 350 to 540 390 shall not apply to

- (1) Any dam less than 10 feet in height or impounding less than 3,000,000 gallons of water
- (2) Splash dams used for driving logs
- (3) Farm dikes constructed by individuals on their own property
- (4) Ditches carrying less than five cubic feet of water per second

540.410 Use of watercourse to deliver reservoir water; notice to watermaster; adjustment of headgates; expenses; liability for, and collection of, payment. Whenever the owner, manager or lessee of a reservoir constructed under the provisions of the Water Rights Act, as defined in ORS 537 010, desires to use the bed of a stream, or other watercourse, to carry stored or impounded water from the reservoir to the consumer of the water, the owner, manager or lessee shall, in writing, notify the watermaster of the district in which the stored or impounded water from the reservoir is to be used, giving the date when it is proposed to discharge water from the reservoir, its volume, and the names of all persons and ditches entitled to its use. The watermaster shall then close, or so adjust the headgates of all ditches from the stream or watercourse, not entitled to the use of such stored water, as will enable those having the right to secure the volume to which they are entitled. The watermaster shall keep a true and just account of the time spent in the discharge of the watermaster's duties as defined in this section, and the Water Resources Commission shall present a bill of one-half the expense so incurred to the reservoir owner, manager or lessee. If the owner, manager or lessee neglects for 30 days, after presentation of the bill of costs, to pay it, the costs shall be made a charge upon the reservoir and the state shall have a preference lien therefor. Upon notice from the commission, the Attorney General shall foreclose the lien and collect the amount due, as provided in this section, in the same manner as other liens on real property are foreclosed. [Amended by 1955 c 39 §1, 1961 c 636 §7, 1985 c 673 §93]

540.420 Maintenance and operation of jointly owned ditches; performance by coowner; recovery from one in default. In all cases where ditches are owned by two or more persons and one or more of such persons fails or neglects to do a proportionate share of the work necessary for the proper maintenance and operation of the ditch, or to construct suitable headgates or measuring devices at the points where water is diverted from the main ditch, the owner desiring the performance of such work may, after

having given 10 days' written notice to the other owner who has failed to perform a proportionate share of the work, perform such share, and recover therefor from the person in default the reasonable expense of the work

540.430 Effect of nonpayment by coowner; lien on interest; foreclosure; stoppage of delivery of water. (1) Upon the failure of any coowner to pay a proportionate share of the expense, as mentioned in ORS 540 420, within 30 days after receiving a statement of the same as performed by the coowner, the latter may secure payment of the claim by filing an itemized and sworn statement thereof, setting forth the date of performance and the nature of the labor performed, with the county clerk of the county wherein the ditch is situated. When so filed it shall constitute a valid lien against the interest of the person in default, which lien may be established and enforced in the same manner as provided by law for the enforcement of mechanic's liens

(2) In lieu of proceeding to enforce the lien, the person performing the labor may file an itemized and sworn statement with the watermaster of the district within which the ditch is located, setting forth the date of performance, the nature of the labor performed, the total expense incurred by the person and the proportion of the expense each owner should pay, together with a written request that the watermaster take charge of the distribution of the water from the ditch to the parties entitled to the use thereof. Thereupon the watermaster may proceed to distribute the water in accordance with established rights. However, if an owner or user has not paid the proportion of expenses of the owner or user incurred for the proper maintenance and operation of the ditch, the watermaster may serve such party with written notice, personally or by registered mail, setting forth the proportion of expenses incurred for which the owner or user is obligated to pay. If the party so served refuses or neglects to pay that part of the expense within 10 days after the serving or mailing of the notice, the watermaster may refuse to deliver water to be used upon the lands of such person until after the expense has been paid

540.440 Owner to clear weeds from ditch right of way. All persons owning or controlling any water ditches shall keep their right of way along the ditches clean and free from wild oats, mustard, thistles, or any weeds or obnoxious grasses whatsoever

CHANGES IN USE OF WATER; TRANSFER OF WATER RIGHTS

540.510 Appurtenancy of water to premises; restrictions on change of use or place of use or point of diversion. All water used in this state for any purpose shall remain appurtenant to the premises upon which it is used and no change in use or place of use of any water for any purpose may be made without compliance with the provisions of ORS 540 520 and 540 530. However, the owner of any water right may, upon compliance with the provisions of ORS 540 520 and 540 530, change the use and place of use, the point of diversion or the use theretofore made of the water in all cases without losing priority of the right theretofore established.

540.520 Application for change of use, place of use or point of diversion; public notice; filing of protest; hearing. (1) Whenever the owner of a water right for irrigation, domestic use, manufacturing purposes, or other use, for any reason desires to change the place of use, the point of diversion, or the use made of the water, an application to make such change, as the case may be, shall be filed with the Water Resources Commission. The application shall state the name of the owner, the previous use of the water, a description of the premises upon which the water is used, a description of the premises upon which it is proposed to use the water, the use which is proposed to be made of the water, and the reasons for making the proposed change.

(2) Upon the filing of the application the commission shall give notice by publication in a newspaper having general circulation in the area in which the water rights are located, for a period of at least three weeks and not less than one publication each week. The cost of the publication shall be paid by the applicant in advance to the commission. In applications for only a change in place of use or for a change in the point of diversion of less than one-fourth mile, and where there are no intervening diversions between the old diversion of the applicant and the proposed new diversion, no notice need be published.

(3) Applications requiring publication of notice shall not be approved within less than 20 days after the last date the notice appeared in the newspaper.

(4) Any person may file, jointly or severally, with the commission at any time prior to approval of a pending application, a protest against approval of the application.

(5) Whenever a timely protest is filed, or in the opinion of the commission a hearing is necessary to determine whether the proposed changes as described by the application would result in

injury to existing water rights, the commission shall hold a hearing on the matter. Notice and conduct of the hearing shall be under the provisions of ORS 183 310 to 183 550, pertaining to contested cases, and shall be held in the area where the rights are located unless all parties and persons who filed a protest under this subsection stipulate otherwise. [Amended by 1983 c 807 §1, 1985 c 673 §94]

540.530 Order authorizing change of use, place of use or point of diversion; new certificate. (1) If, after hearing or examination, the Water Resources Commission finds that the proposed change can be effected without injury to existing water rights, the commission shall make an order approving the transfer and fixing a time limit within which the approved changes may be completed. The time allowed by the Water Resources Commission for completion of an authorized change shall not be used when computing a five-year period of nonuse under the provisions of ORS 540 610 (1).

(2) If a certificate covering the water right has been previously issued, the commission shall cancel the previous certificate and, when proper proof of completion of the authorized changes has been filed with the commission, issue a new certificate preserving the previously established priority of rights and covering the authorized changes. If only a portion of the water right covered by the previous certificate is affected by the changes, a separate new certificate may be issued to cover the unaffected portion of the water right. [Amended by 1975 c 581 §26b, 1983 c 807 §2, 1985 c 673 §95]

540.540 County acquiring land in irrigation district; transfer of water rights to other lands; authority of county court.

Whenever the title to lands within an irrigation district has been or is acquired by the county within which the land is located, by foreclosure of tax liens or otherwise, the county court or board of county commissioners, upon request of the irrigation district, may make application under the provisions of ORS 540 510 to 540 530 to have the water rights appurtenant to such lands transferred to other lands within the irrigation district which are owned by the county or privately owned.

540.550 Ratification of prior transfer of water rights to irrigation district. All attempted transfers or sales, prior to March 6, 1931, to an irrigation district, of water rights which theretofore had been appurtenant to lands located in the district and which lands at the time of the attempted transfer or sale were owned by

the county, shall be considered to be legal and binding, and the water rights which were appurtenant to such lands shall be considered to have become the property of the district to which attempted to be conveyed, but appurtenant only to lands within the boundaries of the district as they existed on March 6, 1931, if the irrigation district applied to the Water Resources Director, within five years after March 6, 1931, under the provisions of section 47-712, Oregon Code 1930, as amended by chapter 102, Oregon Laws 1931, to have the water rights made appurtenant to other lands within the irrigation district. In that event, the county shall sell the lands without any water rights being appurtenant thereto. If the irrigation district failed within five years after March 6, 1931, to make such application, then title to the water rights shall be considered to have been forfeited.

ABANDONMENT OF WATER RIGHTS

540.610 Use as measure of water right; abandonment of right for nonuse; nonapplicability to municipalities and Department of Veterans' Affairs; confirmation of rights of municipalities.

(1) Beneficial use shall be the basis, the measure and the limit of all rights to the use of water in this state. Whenever the owner of a perfected and developed water right ceases or fails to use the water appropriated for a period of five successive years, the right to use shall cease, and the failure to use shall be conclusively presumed to be an abandonment of water right. Thereafter the water which was the subject of use under such water right shall revert to the public and become again the subject of appropriation in the manner provided by law, subject to existing priorities.

(2) However, this section shall not apply to, or affect, the use of water, or rights of use, acquired by cities and towns in this state, by appropriation or by purchase, for all reasonable and usual municipal purposes, nor shall it be so construed as to impair any of the rights of such cities and towns to the use of water, whether acquired by appropriation or purchase, or heretofore recognized by act of the legislature, or which may hereafter be acquired.

(3) The right of all cities and towns in this state to acquire rights to the use of the water of natural streams and lakes, not otherwise appropriated, and subject to existing rights, for all reasonable and usual municipal purposes, and for such future reasonable and usual municipal purposes as may reasonably be anticipated by reason of growth of population, or to secure sufficient

water supply in cases of emergency, is expressly confirmed.

(4) This section shall not apply to, or affect, the use of water, or rights of use, appurtenant to property obtained by the Department of Veterans' Affairs under ORS 407 135 or 407 145 for three years after the expiration of redemptions as provided in ORS 23 530 to 23 600 while the land is held by the Director of Veterans' Affairs, even if during such time the water is not used for a period of more than five successive years. [Amended by 1985 c 689 §5]

540.615 Nonuse, while land withdrawn under federal soil bank program, not an abandonment. The time within which land is withdrawn from use in accordance with the Act of Congress of May 28, 1956, chapter 327 (7 U S C 1801-1814, 1821-1824, 1831-1837), shall not, for the purpose of computing the five-year period stated in ORS 540 610 (1), be considered a period within which the owner of a water right ceases or fails to use water appropriated. [1961 c 140 §1]

540.620 [Repealed by 1955 c 671 §1]

540.621 Cancellation of abandoned water right upon request of owner. Whenever the owner of a perfected and developed water right certifies under oath to the Water Resources Commission that the water right has been abandoned by the owner and that the owner desires cancellation thereof, the commission shall enter an order canceling the water right. Effective upon the date of the entering of such order, the water which was the subject of use under the water right shall revert to the public and become again the subject of appropriation in the manner provided by law, subject to existing priorities. [1955 c 670 §1, 1979 c 67 §5, 1985 c 673 §96]

540 630 [Repealed by 1955 c 671 §1]

540.631 Notice by Water Resources Commission of initiation of proceedings to cancel abandoned water right. Whenever it appears to the satisfaction of the Water Resources Commission upon the commission's own determination or upon evidence submitted to the commission by any person that a perfected and developed water right has been abandoned as provided in ORS 540 610, the commission may initiate proceedings for the cancellation of such water right by causing written notice of such initiation of proceedings to be given by registered mail, return receipt requested, to the legal owner of the lands to which the water right is appurtenant and to the occupant of such lands. The notice to the legal owner shall be addressed to the legal owner at the owner's last address of record in the office of the county assessor of the county in

which the lands are located. The notice shall contain a complete description of the water right and of the lands to which the water right is appurtenant. The notice shall state that the legal owner or the occupant has a period of 60 days from the date of the mailing of the notice within which to protest the proposed cancellation of the water right. [1955 c 670 §2, 1985 c 673 §97]

540.640 [Repealed by 1955 c 671 §1]

540.641 Cancellation if no protest; procedure for cancellation if owner or occupant files protest. (1) If the legal owner or the occupant receiving notice as provided in ORS 540.631 fails to protest the proposed cancellation of the water right within the 60-day period prescribed in the notice, the Water Resources Commission may enter an order canceling the water right.

(2) If the legal owner or the occupant receiving notice as provided in ORS 540.631 files a protest against the proposed cancellation of the water right with the commission within the 60-day period prescribed in the notice, the commission shall fix a time and place for a hearing on the protest. The commission shall cause written notice of the hearing to be given at least 10 days prior to the hearing to the person protesting the cancellation of the water right and to any other person who in the opinion of the commission is an interested party to the proceeding. The hearing shall be held by the commission and shall be conducted under the provisions of ORS 183.310 to 183.550 pertaining to contested cases. After the hearing the commission shall enter an order canceling the water right, canceling in part or modifying the water right, or declaring that the water right shall not be canceled or modified. [1955 c 670 §3, 1975 c 581 §26c, 1983 c 807 §3, 1985 c 673 §98]

540.650 Issuance of new water right certificate for water rights not canceled. If the order of the Water Resources Commission or the final decree on the appeal therefrom under ORS 540.641 cancels in part or modifies the water right, that portion of the water right not canceled or continued as modified shall be reaffirmed by a new water right certificate issued by the commission. Such certificate shall be of the same character as that described in ORS 539.140. The certificate shall be recorded and transmitted to the owner of the water right as provided in ORS 539.140. [1955 c 670 §4, 1979 c 67 §6, 1985 c 673 §99]

PROHIBITED ACTS; INJUNCTIONS

540.710 Interference with headgate, or use of water denied by watermaster or other authority; evidence of guilt. No per-

son shall wilfully open, close, change or interfere with any lawfully established headgate or water box without authority, or wilfully use water or conduct water into or through the ditch of the person which has been lawfully denied the person by the watermaster or other competent authority. The possession or use of water when the same shall have been lawfully denied by the watermaster or other competent authority shall be prima facie evidence of the guilt of the person using it.

540.720 Unauthorized use or waste of water; evidence of guilt of user. No person shall use without authorization water to which another person is entitled, or wilfully waste water to the detriment of another. The possession or use of such water without legal right shall be prima facie evidence of the guilt of the person using it.

540.730 Obstruction interfering with use of works or access thereto prohibited. Whenever any appropriator of water has the lawful right of way for the storage, diversion, or carriage of water, no person shall place or maintain any obstruction that shall interfere with the use of the works, or prevent convenient access thereto.

540.740 Injunctive relief against action of watermaster. Any person who may be injured by the action of any watermaster may appeal to the circuit court for an injunction. The injunction shall only be issued in case it can be shown at the hearing that the watermaster has failed to carry into effect the order of the Water Resources Commission or decrees of the court determining the existing rights to the use of water. [Amended by 1985 c 673 §100]

540.750 Injunction suits, notice and hearing to authorize restraining order; time of hearing. In suits for injunction affecting the use of water from streams upon which the rights to water have been determined, no restraining order shall be granted before hearing had after at least three days' notice thereof, served upon all parties defendant. All suits for injunction involving the use of water shall be heard, either in term time or during vacation, not later than 15 days after issues joined, unless for good cause shown further time be allowed.

PENALTIES

540.990 Penalties. (1) Violation of any provision of ORS 540 440 is punishable, upon conviction, by a fine of not less than \$25 nor more than \$150, together with the costs and disbursements of the action, and in default of the payment of the fine and costs, by confinement in the county jail one day for each \$2 thereof Justice courts shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit courts in the trial of all proceedings under this subsection

punishable, upon conviction, by a fine of not less than \$10 nor more than \$250, or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than six months, or both Justice courts and district courts shall have concurrent jurisdiction with the circuit courts in the trial of all violations under this subsection.

(2) Violation of any provision of ORS 540 710, 540 720 or 540 730, or 540 370 (2), is

