

# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **City of Ashland to Improve Ashland Creek Water Quality** *Underground pipe will reduce contaminants and improve water quality*

**(ASHLAND, Ore.)** – The City of Ashland plans to pipe two miles of the Ashland Canal between Starlight Place and Terrace Street. The project will improve water quality in Ashland Creek, the outlet of the Ashland Canal, and minimize water losses in the canal itself due to seepage and evaporation.

The City receives a portion of its total water supply from Talent Irrigation District (TID). This water is delivered via the Ashland Canal as a source of seasonal irrigation water. In years when water supplies are limited, the Ashland Canal is used as a supplemental potable water source. The raw water is pumped then treated to drinking water standards at the City’s Water Treatment Plant (WTP).

Raw water in open canals is vulnerable to contaminants from a variety of sources. These contaminants increase treatment costs at the WTP and reduce water quality in Ashland Creek.

Ashland Creek routinely exceeds the State’s maximums for *E. coli* bacteria in the summer months. The Ashland Creek Bacteria Study, conducted in 2010, found Ashland Creek harbors a fluctuating level of *E. coli*. The study, a collaboration between Rogue Riverkeeper (RRK), Southern Oregon University (SOU), the City of Ashland (the City), Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and concerned citizens, recommended piping the Ashland Canal inside City limits.

In addition to improving water quality, conservation efforts will help Ashland to manage its water resources for the future. “We lose approximately 30 percent of the canal water due to evaporation and seepage,” said Water Conservation Specialist, Julie Smitherman. “Piped canals mitigate these losses and conserve a significant portion of this water.”



# CITY OF ASHLAND

This canal piping project is part of a larger, proactive plan to conserve and improve water quality in the City of Ashland, according to Engineering Staff.

“The City’s 2012 Water Master Plan, which was vetted by the Ashland Water Advisory Committee and adopted by the City Council, identified the need to pipe the Ashland Canal,” Public Works Director, Paula Brown said. “This is part of our commitment to delivering a reliable supply of high-quality water to our customers and community for decades to come.”

The preliminary engineering phase (survey and field work) will begin this month and is expected to take 11 months. Construction is not anticipated until late 2019 or early 2020.

A community open house is being planned for April 18, 2018. To learn more about the Ashland Canal Piping Project visit [www.ashland.or.us/ashlandcanal](http://www.ashland.or.us/ashlandcanal).

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