

burr Beckwith

I have lived on the edge of Soap Lake for nearly 50 years. I am a student of the lake. The ORW process is a significant step forward in providing Soap Lake with the worldwide recognition it needs to further enhance efforts to preserve and protect this invaluable resource for both science and health.

My concern is that the ORW process, and possible designation might in the end prove to be misguided.

From reading the responses submitted so far, there has been no mention of the possible negative impact of the Bureau of Reclamation interception wells that surround the lake. The interception wells prevent mostly fresh area ground water from working its way into the lake, possibly diluting the lake and even under past conditions, flooding the town.

In the 2009 journal article, Hydrological Controls and Freshening in Meromictic Soap Lake, Leo Bodensteiner suggests that interactions between the lake and the pumping are having significant impacts on the layering and the mineral contents of the lake.

Bodensteiner's research implies that primary protection and preservation efforts going forward should focus on the effects of pumping rather than secondary sources of degradation such as problematic septic systems, storm sewer runoff, agricultural chemicals, motorized watercraft, etc.

In the end if Soap Lake receives the ORW designation and the elephant in the room, the pumping issue is not dealt with, then the ORW designation could prove to be misleading and misguided.