



Oregon
Department
of Agriculture

Upper Grande Ronde Subbasin Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan

December 2010

Upper Grande Ronde Local Advisory Committee Meets to Review Area Plan

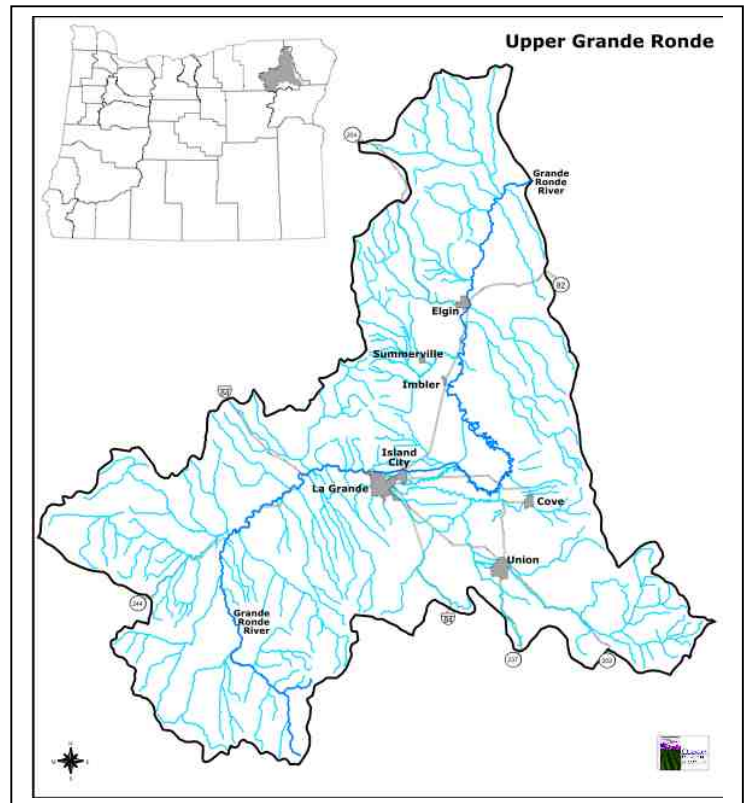
Executive Summary

The fourth biennial review of the Upper Grande Ronde Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan was held on December 8, 2010. The Upper Grande Ronde Local Advisory Committee (LAC) met with the Union Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to review progress of the Area Plan implementation. LAC members present were: Dale Counsel, Ross Bingaman, Allen Childs, Gene Hardy, Jed Hassinger, Bill Howell, Dave Ricker, Maarten Tromp Van Holst, and John Schiller. Also attending were representatives from the Union SWCD, Grande Ronde Model Watershed Council, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and NOAA Fisheries.

ODA reviewed the goals and objectives of the Area Plan and the Area Rules and presented a PowerPoint on riparian conditions and compliance issues around the state.

The SWCD presented their report of implementation activities conducted by the SWCD and NRCS over the past two years. The report included an overview of the education and outreach activities and technical assistance provided to landowners during 2008-2010.

LAC members were asked to comment on any



The Upper Grande Ronde River subbasin includes the drainage area of the Grande Ronde River from the headwaters to its confluence with the Wallowa River.

barriers they felt were impeding the progress of implementing the Agricultural Water Quality Management Program.

A significant barrier reported was the lack of resources to conduct adequate water quality monitoring to meet water quality standards. Concern was also expressed about the impact to agricultural operations by new rules restricting application of farm chemicals on cropland near fish-bearing streams.



Mission/Goals

Compliance Summary

One compliance investigation was completed resulting in a Letter of Warning. The landowner had removed riparian vegetation from the streambanks of Catherine Creek. A follow-up site visit showed adequate recovery of the vegetation and a Letter of Compliance was issued.

Background

The Area Plan was developed by the LAC in 1999 to identify strategies to reduce water pollution from agricultural lands through a combination of educational programs, monitoring, suggested land treatment, and management activities.

The Area Plan is also used by landowners and the SWCD to provide guidance for solutions to water quality problems and to enhance public awareness and understanding of water quality issues.

In September 1999, the Oregon Board of Agriculture adopted the Area Plan and Oregon Administrative Rules (603-095-0400 thru 0460). Biennial reviews of the progress of implementation of the Area Plan were conducted in 2002, 2005, and 2008. No revisions have been made to the original Area Plan or Rules.

TMDL

The Upper Grande Ronde Total Daily Maximum Load (TMDL) and Management Plan were completed prior to completion of the Area Plan. The TMDL sets targets for the following water quality parameters: dissolved oxygen and pH, sediment, temperature, bacteria, aquatic habitat modification, and flow modification.

Implementation

Mission

Maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry, while pursuing ecological integrity through maintenance, restoration, education, and monitoring.

Goals

- Protect economic viability;
- Sustain and/or improve water quality by:
 - Reducing soil erosion from agricultural land in the basin,
 - Improving bank stability,
 - Improving riparian conditions,
 - Improving nutrient, animal waste, and irrigation management.
- Preserve private property rights;
- Promote landowner stewardship by encouraging the adoption of best management practices;
- Increase public awareness and understanding of agriculture's contributions to improving water quality through coordinated watershed outreach activities;
- Pursue funding for private landowners to implement water quality improvement projects;
- Participate in a monitoring program that:
 - Identifies current water quality conditions and assesses water quality trends,
 - Assesses the implementation of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act,
 - Assists in delisting water quality limited streams in the Upper Grande Ronde Subbasin,
 - Assesses compliance with the undesirable conditions outlined in this Plan.

Rules Summary

Prohibited Conditions:

Soil erosion in excess of T; discharge of sediment,
Streambank breakdown or erosion,
Nutrient application exceeding crop requirements,
Drainage ditches that discharge sediment,
Activities that do not allow riparian vegetation to develop,
Discharge of wastes that cause pollution.

Summary of Accomplishments

Promoting landowners stewardship by encouraging the adoption of best management practices:

Technical and Financial Assistance:

271 Landowner contacts, 137 Landowners assisted, 68 Site visits, 18 Water Quality projects planned/initiated.

Practices installed: SWCD projects:

Stream enclosure fencing, stream protection/restoration, diversion improvement, range seeding/aeration, pasture fencing, pasture seeding, tree/shrub establishment, irrigation pipelines, ponds, off-stream water facilities, cropland terraces, spring developments, windbreaks, fish weirs.

USDA/NRCS programs:

Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Security Program (CSP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP).

Practices installed:

Wetland restoration (280 ac.); conservation cropping systems (3304 ac.); riparian forest buffers (222 ac.); and, windbreaks (5965 ft.).

Increasing public awareness and understanding of agriculture's contributions to improving water quality:

Education and Outreach:

Three water quality presentations, three project tours, three displays, one demonstration, 1050 fact sheets distributed, and six news articles published.

Pursuing funding for private landowners to implement water quality improvement projects:

14 grant applications to various sources by SWCD; USDA program funding: EQIP (\$1,055,491), CSP (\$5,269,235), WHIP (\$60,581).

Success Story



The Oro Dell project was designed to remove the existing antiquated Grande Ronde River diversion dam structure and replace it with four rock weirs. The rock weirs maintain the proper river channel grade allowing for adequate irrigation diversion while providing year round fish passage for all Salmonid species.





**Oregon Dept. Of
Agriculture**

Water Quality Program
635 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Regional Water
Quality Specialist
Tom Straughan

Phone:

(541) 278-6721

Fax:

(541) 278-6721

E-Mail:

tstraughan@oda.state.or.us

Success Story, Con't

The Oro Dell project provides an excellent example of agriculture and conservation meeting hand-in-hand to provide benefits for both. This project provided fish passage while eliminating constant structure repair. The Union Soil and Water Conservation District and Oro Dell Ditch Company landowners are very proud of this successful project. The Oro Dell Fish Passage Enhancement project is located between I-84 and the railroad tracks on the west side of La Grande.

Completed Structure



LAC Members

Dale Counsel, Chair
Ross Bingaman
Allen Childs
Gene Hardy
Jed Hassinger
Bill Howell
Dave Ricker
Maarten Tromp van Holst
John Schiller

SWCD Directors

Curtis Ricker, Chair
Paul Boehne
Curtis Martin
Jared Teeter
Melanie Tromp van Holst
Fred Wallender
Doug Watts

SWCD Staff

Craig Schellsmidt, District Mgr.
Sam Wyffels, Conservationist
(541) 963-1313
unionswcd@hotmail.com

We're on the Web!

See us at:

http://egov.oregon.gov/ODA/NRD/water_quality_front.shtml