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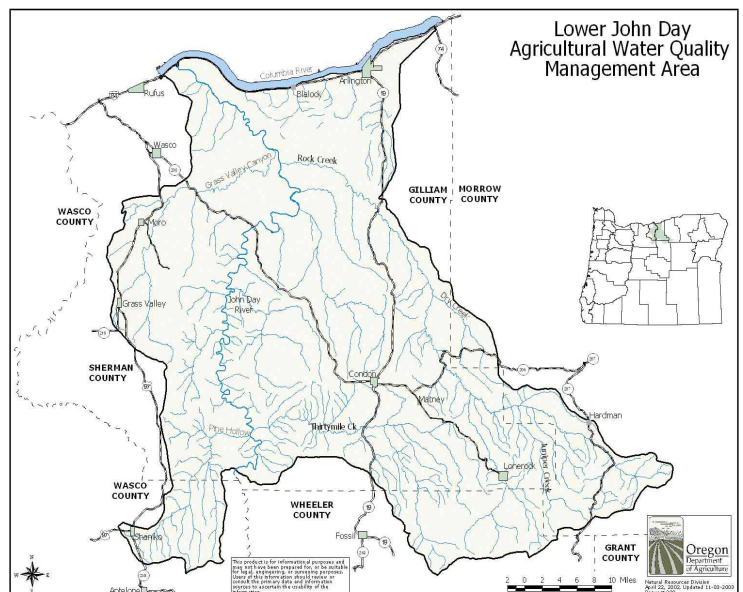
# Lower John Day Subbasin Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan

## Lower John Day Local Advisory Committee Meets to Revise Area Plan

### Executive Summary

The Lower John Day River Local Advisory Committee (LAC) met with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (Department) to conduct its third biennial review of the Lower John Day River Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan (Area Plan). LAC members present were: Walter Powell, chair, Marty Belshe, Brad Eakin, Susie Anderson, Bob Martin, Marvin Thompson. Also present were Tom McCoy, landowner, representatives from the Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation District (District), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

During the review, the Department updated the LAC on statewide water quality and compliance issues, reviewed the District implementation activities and revised the Area Plan to include information from the recently approved the John Day Basin Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). The TMDL is a plan developed by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to improve water quality in the John Day Basin.



**The Lower John Day Agricultural Water Quality Management Area includes the area that drains into the John Day River and its tributaries downstream from but not inclusive of the Butte Creek drainage and all streams flowing into the Columbia River between the Lower Deschutes drainage and the Willow Creek drainage.**

The TMDL focuses on temperature and bacteria reduction measures. Implementation of these target measures will subsequently address the water quality concerns for dissolved oxygen and biological diversity. Each jurisdictional authority then develops water quality management plans to achieve the load allocations. This Area Plan serves as the implementation plan for agriculture's load allocation.

# LAC Plan Review

## **LAC Findings/Recommendations**

Concern was raised about future direction of the ag water quality program relative to DEQ's adoption of much stricter toxic standards. LAC members feel strongly that ODA must continue to be the lead agency for water quality regulation on agricultural lands.

## **Compliance Summary**

No compliance investigations were conducted during the two-year period.

## **Background**

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

Landowners and the District use the Area Plan as guidance to solutions for water quality problems. It is also used to enhance public awareness and understanding of water quality issues.

In February 2004, the Oregon Board of Agriculture adopted the Lower John Day River Area Plan and Oregon Administrative Rules (603-095-2900 thru 2960). The LAC meets annually with biennial reviews conducted in 2006 and 2009. The Area Plan was revised during the 2006 biennial review to clarify the requirements for controlling sediment delivery to streams.

## **Goal**

The goal of the Area Plan is to promote the most economical preventative measures to reduce water pollution from agricultural activities and seek to meet applicable water quality standards.

## **Objectives**

- Control soil erosion on uplands to acceptable rates.
- Control pollution caused by the introduction of or discharge of wastes into waters of the state.
- Provide riparian vegetation for streambank stability.

## **Strategies**

Work to improve the quality of water in the Management Area through planning and:

- Implementation of technically sound and economically feasible conservation practices that contribute to meeting Area Plan objectives.
- Create a high level of awareness and an understanding of water quality issues among the agricultural community and rural public in a manner that minimizes conflict and encourages cooperative efforts through education and technical assistance activities.
- Encourage active participation by the agricultural community and rural public in the process of solving our water quality problems.
- Encourage adequate funding and administration of the program to achieve Area Plan goals and objectives.

### **LAC Members**

Walter Powell, chair	Martin Belshe
Brad Eakin	Bob Martin
Susie Anderson	Gene Burnett
Gary Carlson	Tracy Fields
Linnea Holmes	Raymond Mabe
Bill Van Schoiack	Marvin Thompson
Guy Weedman	

### **SWCD Contacts**

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 Walter Powell, District Manager  
 Roger Lathrop, Riparian Buffer Technician  
 Cheryl Baker, Financial Officer

**Sherman County SWCD (541) 565-3216**  
 Brian Stradley, District Manager  
 Krista Coelsch, Assistant Manager  
 Jake Calvert, CREP Technician  
 Emily Lyle, Watershed Coordinator

# Summary of Accomplishments

## **Technical Assistance**

Conservation practices installed:

- Grass waterways
- Terraces
- Water & sediment control basins
- Watering facilities
- Spring developments
- Range seeding
- Direct seeding/reduced tillage
- Juniper removal
- Grass buffers
- Reduced chemical and fertilizer technology
- Streamside planting

Watershed assessments completed or ongoing:

- Rock Creek
- Thirty Mile Creek
- Grass Valley
- Pine Hollow/Jackknife

Buffers installed:

- CREP Enrollment – 584 acres
- Non-CREP – 5 miles

Irrigation efficiency:

- RMS plans – 3
- Lower Rock Creek funding pool

## **Outreach:**

- Newsletters
- Website
- Displays
- Conservation After Hours sessions
- Tours
- Agency contacts

## **Education:**

- Sherman Education Grant Program
- ODFW STEP program
- 4-H and Salmon Watch programs
- Stream monitoring
- Project monitoring status reviews

## **Conservation Planning:**

- CREP - 10
- RMS plans - 13
- Grazing plans - 4
- Farm plan updates
- On-farm practice evaluation and demonstration

## Success Story

In the fall of 2010, the Sherman County Area Watersheds District received grant money from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board to implement a Conservation Awareness Program. The Council and the District agreed that there was a need for children of Sherman County to learn more about the environment around them.

Students from grades 5th through 10th participated in this month-long program. Each Wednesday they would get a lesson on watersheds and conservation.

The Conservation Awareness Program ended with a trip to the new Cottonwood Canyon State Park on the John Day River. While at the park, students went around to five different stations, which included invasive species/noxious weeds, life cycles of steelhead salmon and trout, macro-invertebrates, wildlife identification and habitat, and conservation practices. To wrap up the stations, each presenter talked to the students about how they got involved with their respective careers.





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Water Quality Program**

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*We're on the Web!*

See us at:

**[http://egov.oregon.gov/ODA/NRD/water\\_quality\\_front.shtml](http://egov.oregon.gov/ODA/NRD/water_quality_front.shtml)**

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## Oregon Department of Agriculture

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