

A P R I L 2 0 1 1



Upper John Day Subbasin Agriculture Water Quality Management Area Plan

Local Advisory Committee Meets to Merge Area Plan and TMDL

Executive Summary

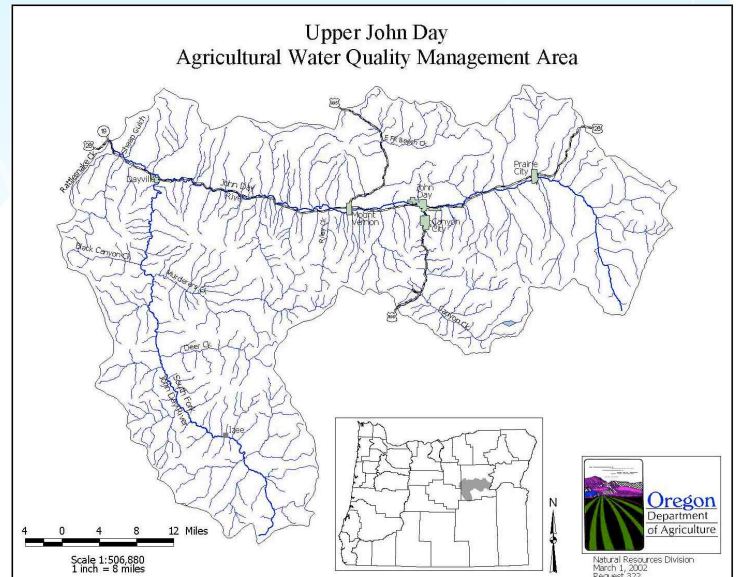
The Upper John Day River Local Advisory Committee (LAC) met with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (Department) to conduct its fourth biennial review of the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Agriculture Water Quality Management Area Plan (Area Plan). LAC members present were: Joanne Keerins (chair), TG Brown, Ted Clausen, Roger Ediger, Frazier Nichol, Dennis Reynolds, Byron Rudishauser, and Phil St. Clair. Also present was staff from the Grant Soil and Water Conservation District (District).

During the three meetings held, the Department update 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 John Day Basin Total Management Daily Load (TMDL).

The TMDL is a plan developed by the Department of Environmental Quality to improve water quality in the John Day Basin.

TMDL

The TMDL was approved by the Environmental Protection Agency in 2010 to fulfill requirements of the Clean Water Act to develop control targets and improvement plans for impaired water within the Plan area.



The Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Management Area include the area that drains into the John Day River upstream of Picture Gorge.

In the Upper John Day Subbasin, TMDL targets have been established to address instream temperature, dissolved oxygen, bacteria, and biological criteria. 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 Findings and Recommendations

LAC members reported that they felt there were not enough resources available to show the effectiveness of the program.



Before and after photos of bank stabilization project on John Day River. Stabilizing the banks reduces bank erosion and sediment in the stream.



Area Plan Review

Compliance Summary

Two complaint investigations were conducted during this period and both were related to riparian conditions. One received a Letter of Compliance after the first visit and the second complaint received a Letter of Warning. Subsequent site visits resulted in issuance of a Letter of Compliance after the landowner fenced off a section of the creek adjoining a heavily used winter feeding area.

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.

The Area Plan is used by landowners and the District for guidance in dealing with water quality problems and to enhance public awareness and understanding of water quality issues.

In December 2002, the Oregon Board of Agriculture adopted the Upper Mainstem and South Fork John Day River Area Plan and Oregon Administrative Rules (603-095-2000 thru 2060). Biennial reviews were conducted in 2004, 2007, and 2009.

Mission

Maintain the economic viability of the agricultural industry and individual landowners, while pursuing water quality improvement through maintenance, restoration, education, and monitoring in the management area.

Goals

- Prevent and control water pollution from agricultural and rural land activities and soil erosion to achieve applicable water quality standards.
- To respect private property rights.

Objectives

- Promote landowner stewardship by encouraging technically sound and economically feasible management practices that enhance water quality.
- Increase public awareness and understanding of agriculture's contributions to improving water quality through educational outreach activities.
- Promote cost share funding to private landowners for implementing water quality improvement projects through state and federal conservation agencies.
- Support a monitoring program that provides scientifically credible data for:
 - Identifying current water quality conditions and assessing water quality trends.
 - Assessing effects of implementing elements of the plan.
 - Assessing compliance with this plan.
 - Seek solutions that protect and enhance economic viability of the agricultural industry and individual landowners.

Rule Summary

In addition to voluntary strategies to achieve the goals and objectives, enforceable Area Rules were adopted to provide the regulatory backstop needed to assure that water quality standards are achieved. Prevention and control measures include land conditions associated with:

- Waste management
- Livestock management
- Uplands management
- Streamside management
- Irrigation management

Summary of Accomplishments and Success Story



Before and after photos of push-up dam replacement with a permanent lay-down stanchion type diversion structure that eliminates annual stream disturbance.



Outreach and Education

- The District has hosted multiple tours showcasing projects that improve water quality. Tours have been held for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Freshwater Trust, Bureau of Reclamation as well as District directors and local landowners.
- Successful partnerships with other agencies involved in natural resources have enabled the District to be the "on-the-ground" implementor of restoration projects.
- The District holds an annual landowner appreciation event to report accomplishments and honor landowners that implement restoration projects.

Technical Assistance

- Each year the District plans, designs and implements eight to ten instream diversion projects, improving fish passage and irrigation efficiency.
- The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife continued their riparian fencing program, installing 62.6 miles of fence in the last two years. Overall, the program has installed and maintained over 200 miles of riparian fence in the John Day basin.
- Grant Weed Control continues an aggressive program to control invasive weeds on private and public lands. During the last two years, 4,561 acres have been treated. In addition, landowners have controlled juniper on 2,685 acres utilizing various funding sources.
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services has focused cost-share assistance on upland management and irrigation efficiency practices.

Success Story

The District received the 2009 Oregon State Land Board Stream Project Award for completing 100 irrigation diversion improvement projects. The BPA funds the projects and has a waiting list of landowners interested in future projects.



*We're on the Web!
See us at:*

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

**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

LAC Members

Joanne Keerins, chair
TG Brown
Ted Clausen
Roger Ediger
Frazier Nichol
Dennis Reynolds
Byron Rudishauser
Phil St. Clair