



Southern Willamette Valley Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan Review

Fall 2010

Committee Identifies Monitoring and Implementation Needs

On October 25, 2010, the Local Advisory Committee (Committee) met with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (Department) and the Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District (District) to review implementation of the Area Plan.

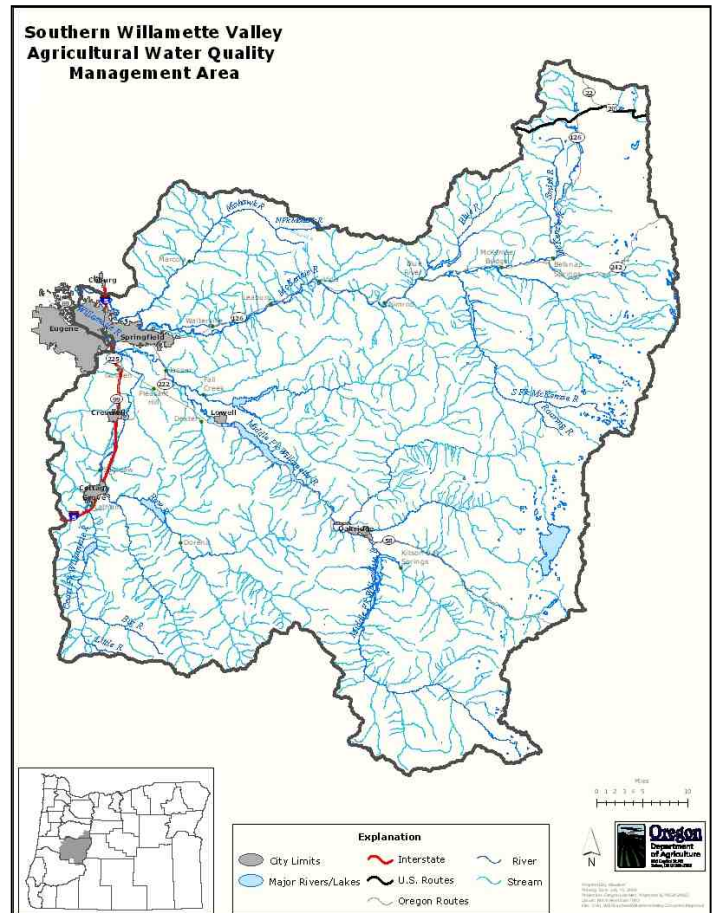
The Committee feels that overall the water quality in the Management Area is very good. They also feel the Area Plan functions well and that the Department and District are doing a good job of implementation and compliance. Lastly, the Committee emphasized the importance to utilize scientific information to drive implementation of the Area Plan.

Currently, the McKenzie Watershed has a lot of water quality data, but it is difficult to understand. The Committee identified a need to analyze the existing data and present it in an easily understandable format. If possible, the Committee would like the analysis to show if and how much agriculture contributes to water quality problems. The Committee recommends expanding monitoring efforts into the Middle and South Fork Willamette Watersheds and to aid in source identification.

At the review meeting, the Committee also reviewed comments and recommendations provided by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The Committee suggested that the Department and District do the following to address DEQ's comments:

- Identify priority areas
- Target education and outreach to priority areas
- Establish a timeline to incorporate DEQ's comments into the Area Plan, and
- Collect additional monitoring data as needed.

(More information on the Department's response to DEQ's comments is on page 4.)



Map: The Southern Willamette Valley Management Area includes the McKenzie, Middle Fork of the Willamette, and Coast Fork of the Willamette watersheds. The Management Area's boundaries are the Cascade Mountains to the east, Calapooya Mountains to the south and west, Long Tom watershed to the west, and the Coburg Hills to the north. Communities in the Management Area include the cities of Springfield, Lowell, Oakridge, Westfir, Creswell, and Cottage Grove.

LAC MEMBERS for 2010

Alan Peterson, Chair	Carol Ach
Dave Daniel	Paul Day
Don Hansen	Steve Houston
Polly Kohl	Glenn Miller
Karl Morgenstern	Artemio Paz
Garry Rodakowski	Jim Sly

Small Acreage Landowner Assistance Growing

During the last decade, the demographics of agricultural land ownership have changed significantly. Large corporate/family farms have been split up into many small acreage farms and individual parcels. These small acreage farms vary and include small livestock operations, orchards, organic farms, and specialty seed production. These parcels range from two acres to 15 acres. Based on these changes and recommendations from the Committee, the District has identified working with small acreage landowners regarding water quality issues a priority.

In 2007, the District board of directors identified a need for outreach/education, technical assistance, and funding assistance to small acreage landowners. A series of workshops were held throughout the District. These workshops provided information to landowners about soils, use of fertilizers, livestock management, pasture management, and weed identification. From this outreach effort, District staff developed a soil-sampling program that provides landowners information about nutrient levels of their soil. District staff also began providing technical assistance to landowners through site assessments. Site assessments provide information specific to livestock management, pasture management, and water quality concerns that coincide with livestock operations.

To date, District staff has provided technical assistance to nearly 100 small acreage landowners within the Southern Willamette Valley Plan area. Utilizing funding opportunities provided by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board small grant program and other funding entities, District staff has completed over 15 projects within the Southern Willamette Valley Agricultural Water Quality Management Area. Over \$150,000 in grant funds have been utilized to assist landowners to address water quality concerns such as manure management, mud management, exclusion fencing from streams, and pasture management. The goal is to use best management practices to reduce water quality impacts generated from their operations.

The District's mission is to encourage and promote the responsible stewardship of natural resources by providing leadership, information representation, and through local conservation education. This mission will continue to be carried out by District staff through technical assistance to small acreage landowners. Although the contributions to water quality impacts from small acreage properties are on a smaller scale than larger properties, both are equally important to improve water quality in the Southern Willamette Valley Agricultural Water Quality Management Area.



Exclusion Fencing



Heavy use and manure storage



Mud and manure management



Manure storage



Background

The Committee advised the Department on development of the Area Plan and Rules. After review by the State Board of Agriculture, the director of the Department approved the Area Plan and Rules in May 2002.

The Area Plan encourages good stewardship of natural resources and depends upon landowners volunteering to use conservation measures and reduce pollution from agricultural lands. In addition, the Area Plan identifies optional management practices for:

- Riparian areas and streams,
- Nutrient and manure management,
- Erosion, sediment, and mercury control,
- Pest management.

The Committee identified a mission “to develop a framework of strategies for agricultural lands within the McKenzie, Middle Fork and Coast Fork watersheds that will contribute to desirable water quality and to develop programs to achieve the goals of the Plan while maintaining the economic sustainability of agriculture.”

The Committee identified the following goals in conjunction with the mission of the Area Plan.

- Prevent and control owner or operator-induced conditions on agricultural and rural lands in the Plan area that contribute to exceedance of state water quality standards.
- Ensure that agricultural activities do not contribute to water pollution or diminished water quality as defined within 303(d) listings and TMDLs.
- Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of the Area Plan.
- Reduce agriculture’s contribution to water quality parameters of concern through education and outreach, and by promoting optional management practices.

In addition, the Committee developed several objectives to work toward the goals and mission of the Area Plan.

- Manage sheet and rill erosion to a rate that does not exceed an acceptable level.
- Curb the amount of active streambank erosion.
- Prevent any conditions already prohibited under ORS 468B.025 and 468B.050.
- Manage irrigation surface water return flow to prevent waters of the state from exceeding state water quality standards.
- Improve/maintain the ability of riparian areas to respond and function according to the vegetative site capability.
- Provide suggestions of optional measures that could help achieve water quality goals.

See Attachment A for a summary of progress.

The following is a summary of regulations that apply in the Southern Willamette Valley Management Area:

1. Landowner actions may not cause pollution to waters of the state or place any wastes in a location where such wastes are likely to escape or be carried into waters of the state by any means.
2. Agricultural management shall allow establishment and maintenance of vegetation along perennial streams consistent with the capability of the site to provide streambank stability and shade.
3. Prevent soil erosion above the tolerable soil loss T.
4. Prevent pollution from irrigation surface return flows.

Compliance investigations

Department staff has investigated two compliance cases since the last biennial review in June of 2008. One investigation is being followed-up by the Confined Animal Feeding Operations program. The other investigation resulted in a Letter of Compliance; no water quality concerns were noted at the site visit.

Department Response to DEQ Concerns and Recommendations

As part of the biennial review process, the Department consults with DEQ regarding the content and implementation of the Area Plan. DEQ provided comments that were reviewed by the Department and presented to the Committee. The Area Plan is reviewed and updated at alternating Committee meetings. Updates to the Area Plan were not planned during this review, and therefore, revisions to the Area Plan will be completed at the 2012 review. The Department has begun working with partners including DEQ to develop and refine updates for the Area Plan in 2012. The following will be included as updates to the Area Plan in 2012:

- Agricultural TMDL load allocations;
- The regulatory intent of TMDLs and Area Rules will more clearly be articulated;
- Details for pollution prevention and control measures necessary to achieve goals of the Area Plan, a schedule for implementation of identified measures, and strategies to ensure that identified measures are completed;
- Action items and targets for education and outreach, technical assistance, voluntary conservation, and monitoring;
- Compliance assurance process;
- Implementation monitoring reporting process.

In addition to these updates in 2012, the Department is developing, and plans to implement a process to identify operator-induced conditions and actions that will help reduce pollutant loads. The first step in this process is identification of a priority area that can be targeted at a scale that progress can be measured. The Department is working with partners to identify a priority area.

After a priority area is identified, the following steps will be taken to help achieve the goals of the Area Plan and reduce pollutant loads:

- Inventory of current conditions;
- Targets for implementation and future conditions developed;
- Practices identified to help achieve load allocations and reduce pollutant loads;
- Targeted outreach and project implementation completed;
- Compliance assurance process implemented;
- Assessment of conditions following one year of targeted work.

The goal of this process is to document the results of education and outreach, project implementation, and compliance assurance within the priority area within a relatively short time scale.



Oregon Department of Agriculture

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The Southern Willamette Valley Management Area has water bodies that are 'water quality limited' for temperature, bacteria, mercury, and dissolved oxygen.

For more assistance, you can also contact your local SWCD office:

Upper Willamette SWCD

780 Bailey Hill Road, Suite 5
Eugene, Oregon 97402
(541) 465-6436

Attachment A:

<p>Implementation Strategy</p>	<p><i>Progress July 2008 to November 2010</i></p>
<p>Education and Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Willamette SWCD and OSU Extension sponsored a series of four workshops for small acreage Landowners in Creswell in 2008. Topics for the workshops included soil types and structure, soil testing, Best Management Practices (BMP's) for a variety of crops, manure and mud management, nutrient management, pest management, pasture management, weed identification, and water quality. Information was presented about the Area Plan and Rules. • A farm tour was conducted for the attendees of the 2008 landowner workshop in Creswell. Four farm sites were visited highlighting BMP's and funding opportunities from both Federal and State sources. • Upper Willamette SWCD worked with OSU Extension on a proposal to merge the two organizations together to provide Education/outreach and technical assistance on a voluntary basis to landowners. The merge effort was unsuccessful because of the land grant issue associated with OSU. • District staff authored four newsletter articles for small acreage landowners to provide technical and funding assistance to address manure and mud management. One of the articles was published in the McKenzie Watershed Council newsletter and two in the Farm Service Agency quarterly newsletter. In August 2010, the Upper Willamette SWCD partnered with the Eugene Water and Electric Board to distribute a newsletter with information about a project to provide technical assistance to landowners in the McKenzie Watershed. Assistance includes soil sampling and technical assistance to implement BMP's associated with water quality concerns. • The district staffed a booth at the Local Food Connection Conference held in February 2009 and February 2019 at Lane Community College. Over 200 small acreage producers were in attendance along with restaurant owners, chefs, and local food buyers. Staff distributed over 120 fact sheets about the Area Plan and Rules, technical assistance information, BMP's regarding resource concerns, and conservation programs. • District staff helped sponsor an agricultural producer meeting in March 2009 with OSU Extension in Eugene. Topics for the meeting included conservation programs, funding opportunities, and information on the Area Plan and Rules. • District staff developed an informational fact sheet for the Management Area. This fact sheet explains what the Area Plan is, how it was developed, who it applies to, who to contact and an example of a non-compliance situation. • In March 2010, district staff attended the annual meeting for the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council in Lowell. Staff provided a short presentation regarding the Area Plan and Rules.
<p>Provide Technical Assistance to landowners in the Management Area</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Willamette SWCD staff provided technical assistance to over 80 landowners within the Management Area. • Staff worked with 21 individual landowners since July 1, 2008 to develop conservation plans encompassing over 2500 acres. • Staff provided assistance for the installation of the following practices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --7 Manure storage composting facilities. --8 acres of heavy Use Protection areas --4,635 feet of livestock exclusion fencing --192 acres of Pest management --451 acres of Nutrient management --1,764 acres of Prescribed grazing management --32 acres of tree/shrub riparian establishment --184 acres of irrigation water management/systems --388 feet of conservation water conveyance pipeline <p>The Upper Willamette SWCD continued to secure conservation funds from the Natural Resource Conservation Service through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Funds were also acquired from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to provide funding for technical assistance and project implementation for water quality and conservation issues.</p>

<p>Implementation Strategy</p>	<p><i>Progress July 2008 to November 2010</i></p>
<p>Incentives for Voluntary Conservation: * Submit grant proposals to the Environmental Protection Agency, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Oregon DEQ, ODA, and other organizations that will support the adoption of voluntary conservation actions to achieve the goals and objectives of the Area Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Upper Willamette SWCD worked with 22 landowners to submit and receive grant funds totaling \$ 207,904.00 to address water quality concerns within the Management Area. • ODA has provided over \$100,000.00 to the Upper Willamette SWCD to provide technical assistance to landowners who reside within the district boundaries. • The Upper Willamette SWCD continues to partner with the Natural Resource Conservation Service to assist landowners to enroll in Federal Conservation programs. These programs have brought in approximately \$ 75,000.00 in conservation practice implementation within the Management Area. • The Upper Willamette SWCD has also utilized funding from a DEQ 319 water quality grant to help leverage grant funds for implementation of water quality projects. \$ 22,000 were used to help match other grant funding to complete projects.
<p>Submit grant proposals to support monitoring activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Upper Willamette SWCD, in conjunction with ODA, is working with conservation entities within the Management Area to obtain local monitoring data. The entities have met to discuss existing and needed water quality monitoring. Results of this effort are still being collected and should be completed by the end of 2010. Entities involved in this process are the Eugene Water and Electric Board, Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council, McKenzie Watershed Council, Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council, University of Oregon Environmental Ecology Department. • The Upper Willamette SWCD supports the Thurston Middle School water quality-monitoring program on Cedar Creek and Camp Creek within the Management area. Parameters for testing include Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen and Bacteria.