# WALLA WALLA
## Agricultural Water Quality Management Area

**Biennial Review Report to the Board of Agriculture and ODA Director**

*Submitted by the Local Advisory Committee (LAC)*

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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| **Meeting Date:** May 15, 2024 |
| **LAC Members Present:** Vern Rodighiero, Nathan Rea (standing in for Dennis Rea), Lance Bullock, Ralph Perkins, and Troy Baker |
| **Reporting Timeframe:** Calendar years 2022-2023 |

**PROGRESS MEASUREMENT**

*This was a Light Review; progress toward Measurable Objectives will be reported at the next Full Review.*

| **Activities** (Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council) | **#** | **Discussion** |
|---|---|---|
| Events That Actively Engage Landowners | 7 | Landowner meetings focusing on water quality and streambank restoration, bi-monthly stakeholder workshops, Dry Creek assessment stakeholder engagement meetings, and PSP annual meetings. |
| Landowners Participating in Active Events | 270 | Letters to landowners for the Dry Creek assessment, direct engagement through community events and workshops, and individual landowner meetings. |
| Landowners Provided Technical Assistance* | 11 | Technical assistance for spring developments, riparian restoration, bank erosion, riparian fencing, livestock exclusion, and upland erosion control. |
| Site Visits | 25 | Site visits for spring developments, riparian restoration, bank erosion, riparian fencing, livestock exclusion, floodplain restoration projects, and landowner meetings for assessments. |
| Conservation Plans Written | 7 | Conservation plans developed to manage water quality concerns. Grazing plans for habitat restoration and floodplain reconnection projects to protect riparian planting post project implementation. Previous to this report, conservation plans were not being reported because they were understood to be NRCS certified plans. |
| Funding Applications Submitted | 13 | |
| Funding Applications Awarded | 10 | Umatilla County Bank Restoration and River Resiliency Guidebook, Hydrological Trend Monitoring in the Walla Walla Basin, North Fork Walla Walla River Base Flow (GDE) Spring Protection-Culverts, North Fork Walla Walla River RM 3.6-4.3 Floodplain Restoration Construction, Cup Gulch Assessment and Action Plan, Watershed Stewardship Workshops, Dry Creek and Lower Pine Creek Assessment Stakeholder Engagement, Mill Creek Baseflow Assessment and Springs Inventory, and Couse Creek RM4 Floodplain and Aquatic Habitat Restoration. |

* Number reported likely double counts some landowners due to tracking methods.

**LAC DISCUSSION**

**Summary of Progress**

- Progress is being made by the Umatilla SWCD and WWBWC in the Dry-Couse SIA. The Umatilla SWCD has funding through ODA to conduct outreach and provide support to the WWBWC. The WWBWC has several active and completed projects within the SIA. They have either completed or are in progress on completing a Couse Creek Watershed Assessment, Cup Gulch Assessment and Action Plan, and the Dry Creek and lower Pine Creek Engagement Project.

- ODA's ag field assessment tool will allow for baseline data to be collected in the Management Area for the objectives outlined in the 2020 Area Plan.
- The Umatilla SWCD created a bank restoration guidebook for landowners. This will be published in the next week and will be distributed throughout the County. This guidebook will include pre-engineered bank restoration designs for landowners to more easily navigate the permitting process needed to get restoration projects done.
- The WWBWC has had a Pesticide Stewardship Partnership since 2005. They currently test 5 locations, and they are detecting analytes but in low concentrations. The WWBWC has the capacity to collect more locations. However, number of sampling locations has decreased over time due to limits on the number of samples that can be processed. The PSP focus has shifted toward education in the past few years.
    - There is a lot of interest from vineyards in participating in the PSP program.
    - Voluntary access to grab sample collection sites has been instrumental in addressing water quality issues for pesticide pollution.
- Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan, published in 2021, contains a lot of the same goals as the Walla Walla Ag Water Quality Management Plan. The purpose of the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan is to guide water resource decisions for the next 30 years in the basin.

**Impediments**

- The 2020 floods took out a lot of riparian vegetation and resulted in severe deposition of sediment. The WWBWC is seeing higher water temperature post 2020 floods.
- The levees are an impediment in making progress toward reaching the temperature TMDL as the Corps has their own requirements for levees that conflict with the DEQ and ODA requirements.
- Activity numbers reported above may not accurately depict the amount of work that the WWBWC is doing in the Management Area.
- Farm field access roads also contribute to soil erosion in the Management Area.

**Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management**

- With the upcoming temperature TMDL replacement project, the LAC recommends that DEQ take into account the levees, as approximately 30 percent of flow is lost through the levee reach.
- The Umatilla SWCD will increase communication with the WWBWC to gather activity numbers more frequently than every two years to capture more accurate numbers.
- Recommend that DEQ allocates additional funds to increase the number of pesticide sampling locations through the PSP program to include vineyard locations.
- Utilize the ODA ag field assessment tool to identify fields that don't have any sort of conservation tillage, as well as access roads that appear to be eroding.
- The LAC would like to see grant funds available for improving farm access roads to reduce erosion potential.

**ODA COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES**

| Location | Cases | | Site Visits | Agency Actions | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Letter of Compliance | | Pre-Enforcement Notification | Notice of Noncompliance | Civil Penalty |
| | New | Closed | | Already in compliance | Brought into compliance | | | |
| **Outside SIA** | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **Within SIA** | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |