

# WILLOW CREEK

## 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

<b>Meeting Date:</b> February 22, 2024
<b>LAC Members Present:</b> Terry Felda, Travis Harrison, Mark McElligott, Erin Heidemann, Jacob Neiffer, Jim McElligott, and Joe McElligott
<b>Reporting Timeframe:</b> January 2020 – December 2023

### PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

#### Management Area

**Measurable Objective:** *Pollution from wastes.* By June 30, 2030, fewer than 5% of livestock operations are likely to pollute surface water.

**Current Conditions:**

	2021	2023
Livestock Operations	7	N/A

**Activities and Accomplishments:** Morrow SWCD submitted and was awarded a DEQ 319 grant to address a winter-feeding area.

**Measurable Objective:** *Riparian vegetation.* By June 30, 2047, 85% (128.86 Miles) of perennial streams in agricultural areas will have streamside vegetation that likely provides the full suite of water quality functions the site is capable of (Class I).

**Current Conditions:**

Classes	2021	2023
Class I: Fully provided.	31%	N/A
Class II: Partially provided, not impaired by agricultural activities	65%	N/A
Class III: Likely not provided due to agricultural activities	4%	N/A
Total	100%	100%

**Activities and Accomplishments:** Morrow SWCD submitted and awarded OWEB CREP TA grant in 2021 and 2023. Other OWEB grants awarded include Dow Ranch Beaver Dam Analogs Phase 2, Proudfoot Ranch Watershed Enhancement, McElligott's Lone Riparian Enhancement, Glavey Ranch Beaver Dam Analogs, and Burns Upland Spring Development.

**Measurable Objective:** *Soil erosion.* By 2026, ODA and the SWCD will develop an assessment method that will track erosion potential on uplands.

#### Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA)

**Measurable Objective:** *Inventory non-permitted livestock operations.* By June 30, 2025, the Umatilla SWCD and Morrow SWCD will complete inventory of large and small livestock operations in the LUBGWMA.

**Current status:** The database and data input forms are being developed and the Morrow and Umatilla SWCDs will begin the inventory in May of 2024.

**Measurable Objective:** *Inventory crop and sprinkler systems.* By June 30, 2025, the Umatilla SWCD and Morrow SWCD will complete an inventory of crop and sprinkler systems in the LUBGWMA.

**Current status:** The database and data input forms are being developed and the Morrow and Umatilla SWCDs will begin the inventory in May of 2024.

#### Strategic Implementation Area (SIA): Upper Willow Creek Basin

**ODA Measurable Objective:** By October 16, 2024, all nine tax lots identified as a Potential Violation or Compliance Opportunity will be improved to Restoration Opportunity or Likely in Compliance.

**Current Status:** Eight tax lots identified at Potential Violation or Compliance Opportunity were improved to Restoration Opportunity or Likely in Compliance. One tax lot has a drive-by scheduled for February 2024.

Management Area-wide Activities Morrow SWCD	#	Discussion
Events That Actively Engage Landowners	5	Covid-19 restrictions limited active events.
Landowners Participating in Active Events	1,659	Morrow County Fair, NRCS local workgroup meetings, workshops.
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance*	976	
Site Visits	271	
Conservation Plans Written	38	
Funding Applications Submitted	38	
Funding Applications Awarded	20	

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

LAC DISCUSSION	
<b>Summary of Progress</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Morrow SWCD continues to apply for small and large grants available through OWEB for removing invasive annual grasses, removing animals off the bottomlands, beaver dam analog development, and livestock exclusion fencing.</li> <li>Pre-2021 projects include livestock water development, livestock exclusion, meadow planting, and installing an onion storage facility. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DEQ 319 nonpoint source grant was awarded to implement BMPs in Upper Willow Creek SIA.</li> </ul> </li> <li>OWRD: Groundwater recharge project to capture runoff, inject into aquifer to improve availability in late season/summer flows. Upper Willow Creek SIA monitoring plan has been approved for <i>E. Coli</i> and TSS water quality sampling on Upper Willow Creek, Hinton Creek, and Shobe Creek.</li> <li>Upcoming LUBGWMA SIA focused on groundwater in the LUBGWMA.</li> <li>A crop and sprinkler inventory project was funded by the ODA Ag Water Quality Support Grant.</li> <li>The Morrow SWCD applied for a CREP technician grant through OWEB and received funding.</li> <li>NRCS is working in the LUBGWMA SIA with the West Extension Irrigation District on flood to sprinkler irrigation conversion.</li> </ul>	
<b>Impediments</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Management Area-wide assessments were not repeated for this biennial review due to staff time and resources needed for the LUBGWMA.</li> <li>NRCS not having the capacity to collaborate on soil erosion Management Area-wide measurable objective.</li> <li>Recruitment for vacant SWCD position has been difficult to fill and position has been vacant for more than a year.</li> <li>Permitting processes is challenging and is slowing project implementation.</li> <li>Removing invasive riparian vegetation is needed to reestablish native vegetation but reduces shade.</li> <li>If the cultural resource survey requirement comes down to the OWEB small grant program, it will not be cost effective as small grant of \$7,000 would need a \$12-\$15K cultural resource survey.</li> <li>Creeks in the management area are washing out. Beavers and people are influencing this issue.</li> <li>It is challenging for Morrow SWCD projects to be awarded through OWEB because Willow Creek is not essential salmonid habitat and there are no major fish issues in the area.</li> </ul>	
<b>Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource Assistance for Rural Environments program could help SWCD in filling vacant position.</li> <li>Collaborate with NRCS to help complete soil erosion assessment for Management Area-wide measurable objectives.</li> <li>LAC would like to see more bank stability projects.</li> </ul>	

ODA COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES								
Location	Cases		Site Visits	Agency Actions				
	New	Closed		Letter of Compliance		Pre-Enforcement Notification	Notice of Noncompliance	Civil Penalty
				Already in compliance	Brought into compliance			
Outside SIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Within SIA	4	3	5	0	2	4	0	