

SOUTH SANTIAM

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

Meeting Date: March 18, 2025

LAC Members Present: Clint Bentz (chair), Sudy Lamb, and David Neal

Reporting Timeframe: Calendar years 2023–2024

PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

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

Activities	#	Description
Linn Soil and Water CD		
Events That Actively Engage Landowners	3	Project tour, booths
Landowners Participating in Active Events	800	
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance*	141	
Site Visits	38	
Conservation Plans Written	8	
Funding Applications Submitted	4	
Funding Applications Awarded	2	

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

LAC DISCUSSION

Summary of Progress

- Linn SWCD is working with the county road department to train road department staff to identify potential water quality compliance concerns and bring them to the attention of the SWCD. That way, the SWCD can attempt to provide technical assistance before they become compliance issues.
- Linn SWCD is 80 years old this year.
- More in-person meetings, less virtual, means more farm visits working with landowners.
- Oregon Department of Agriculture has additional monitoring funds and Linn SWCD applied for a grant to increase monitoring efforts in the Management Area. Other partners have monitoring for other parameters and the SWCD doesn't want to duplicate efforts but wants to get a clear picture.
- Crop types have changed (less mint, less row crops, less fertilizer used, more livestock, more feed stock crops, more small farms since 2021).
- There is less market demand in the grass seed industry because younger generations don't want lawns/yards as much.

Impediments

- Erosion remains a high concern in the Management Area. Filbert and Christmas trees still have a lack of cover cropping. Landowners are aware that erosion is an issue and are working harder than ever to preserve soils. Voles are a big issue in the area, affecting the livelihood of organic farmers, grape growers in particular.
- The Private Forest Accord is putting a huge burden on landowners to fix culverts and more. It also created a funding mechanism for landowners to pay for that work.
- Rain events are "100-year storms" every year, impacting soil heavily and increasing runoff and erosion. Summers are longer and hotter, with less groundwater/subsurface flow/springs.

Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management

- LAC suggests monitoring fire effects on water turbidity and effects on soil.
- Dam drawdowns are contributing to sediment fall out in watershed (Green Peter, etc.). How do agencies manage for sediment when it's being added in huge amounts?
- There are many probes in the water but where is that data, particularly for temperature and flow, and how do agencies access it? LAC wants to see better data prior to agencies making final decisions. The LAC worries that the Legislature sees water quality data numbers staying the same or getting worse with no way

to improve that narrative because agencies don't have the correct continued monitoring (Southern Willamette Valley Groundwater Management Area).

- Linn SWCD needs to focus on soil health, no-till/low-till, and inundation outreach/education in the area.

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	1	2	6	0	2	2	0	0
Within SIA	N/A							