

UMATILLA

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: February 25, 2026

LAC Members Present: Jake Madison, Tom Straughan, and Ray Qin

Reporting Timeframe: January 2024 – December 2025

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, Morrow SWCD)	#	Description
Events That Actively Engage Landowners	7	The Umatilla SWCD co-hosted the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Work Group Meeting and provided information on the Agricultural Water Quality program in Umatilla County. Strategic Implementation Area (SIA) outreach meetings and low-tech restoration event. The Morrow SWCD assisted in hosting a Water Resilience workshop.
Landowners Participating in Active Events	204	
Landowners provided with brochures/fact sheets/mailings, etc.	274	The Umatilla SWCD developed brochures on the water quality plan rules and posted them in conspicuous locations around the county. Morrow SWCD quarterly flyer. Mailings to SIA landowners.
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance*	189	Umatilla County SWCD technical assistance for riparian restoration, flood and fire damage, grazing and runoff concern, and bank restoration. Morrow SWCD technical assistance for riparian restoration (Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)).
Site Visits	84	Umatilla County SWCD site visits for riparian restoration, flood and fire damage, grazing and runoff concern, and bank restoration. Morrow SWCD site visits for riparian restoration (CREP).
Conservation Plans Written	8	232.23 acres
Funding Applications Submitted	12	OWEB application for riparian assessment, off-channel livestock watering facilities.
Funding Applications Awarded	7	

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

LAC DISCUSSION

Summary of Progress

Umatilla County SWCD

- Continued progress in the East Birch SIA.
- Initiated temperature monitoring on East Birch Creek in 2024; two sites are currently active, with efforts ongoing to reestablish a third. Data submission to Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is in progress.
- SIAs are being used to show progress toward Area Plan measurable objectives. Evaluation of the livestock waste measurable objective is ongoing, with approximately 735 stream miles (17 percent of the management area) assessed.
- Secured funding for a Walla Walla streamside vegetation inventory project to test an updated streamside vegetation assessment method, which may inform future efforts in the Umatilla management area.

ODA/LUBGWMA

- New irrigated agriculture rules for the Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) are expected to be finalized in early March.
- Completed a crop, irrigation, and livestock inventory within the LUBGWMA (led by Morrow SWCD with assistance from ODA and the Umatilla County SWCD).

DEQ

- Bacteria levels remain generally low across the basin, supported by adequate sampling.

- Dissolved oxygen trends are improving basin wide.

Impediments to Implementation of the Area Plan

- Capacity constraints are limiting progress toward certain measurable objectives, including upland soil erosion.

Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management

- Explore opportunities to leverage partner resources and funding to potentially address capacity limitations.

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	7	3	5	1	0	4	0	0
Within SIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0