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I. INTRODUCTION

The Goose and Summer Lakes Basin Local Advisory Committee (LAC) submits this report to the Board of Agriculture to summarize and evaluate implementation of the Goose and Summer Lakes Basin Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan and Rules.

The Area Plan and Rules were created following passage of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act in 1993. The Oregon Legislature adopted the Act to address concerns about agricultural effects to water quality.

From 2001 through 2003, ODA and the LAC developed an Area Plan and associated Administrative Rules for the Goose and Summer Lakes Basin. The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) adopted the Area Plan and Rules in June 2003. The Fort Rock/Silver Lake and Lakeview Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) have served as Local Management Agencies for the development and implementation of the Area Plan and Rules

II. BACKGROUND

When developing the Area Plan and Rules, the LAC identified several objectives and strategies to protect and improve water quality:

1. Minimize water pollution from agricultural activities and soil erosion and achieve applicable water quality standards, where possible.
2. Minimize conditions on agricultural lands that might contribute to reduced water quality.
3. Use the media and other educational methods to increase awareness of agriculture's efforts to maintain and improve water quality.

4. Focus on education, not regulations.

Two Area Rules were adopted:

1. **Streamside Vegetation:** (a) Effective August 1, 2008, management activities will allow the establishment, maintenance, or improvement of streamside vegetation for summer shade and streambank stability, based on site capability.
(b) Part (a) does not apply to flood control practices that have been historically used in the Management Area. These practices include, but are not limited to, the maintenance of flood-control channels, dikes and catch basins.
(c) Part (a) does not apply to irrigation water conveyance systems, including but not limited to irrigation canals, ditches, and laterals.
2. **Waste Management:** Effective on rule adoption, no person subject to these rules shall violate any provision of ORS 468B.025 or ORS 468B.050.

III. IMPLEMENTATION, 2005-2007

A. Technical Assistance and Outreach

The SWCDs worked closely with ODA, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA), Lake County Watershed Councils, and Oregon State University Extension Service (OSU Extension) to provide competent technicians, coordinators, monitoring services, workshop presenters, and initiate mass media campaigns.

SWCDs and Watershed Councils

Each biennium the Soil and Water Conservation Districts are allocated \$100,000 through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Small Grant Program to help landowners with small restoration projects. Twenty landowner

applications were approved. Due to the strong interest from landowners, the funds are allocated before they are even received from the State.

On-the-ground projects included 780 acres of juniper thinning, pond enhancement, 2.5 mile of riparian fencing, 1,630 feet of stream-bank stabilization, 2 weir replacements and head gate system, 2 culvert replacements, fish screen and passage.

Eight newsletters were produced and distributed in Lake County. Each mailing consisted of approximately one article relating to water quality/quantity, riparian buffers, the Agricultural Water Quality (AgWQ) Program, conservation, weed awareness, and horse keeping. Newsletters are mailed to 480 landowners and distributed at some local restaurants and the SWCD office.

Two newspaper articles related to the Area Plan appeared in local papers. The SWCD, Councils, NRCS and FSA displayed materials in the annual fair booth for the last three years displaying projects and events, information about the agencies, water quality and soil conservation and programs available.

The SWCD created one question and answer fact sheet on the AgWQ Program and the Area Plan. It was distributed to area landowners and displayed in the SWCD and OSU Extension offices.

The SWCD has coordinated and archived all LAC correspondence and meeting records.

The SWCD staff, Watershed Council Coordinators, ODA, and 7th & 8th grade teachers put together a Natural Resource Educational Field Day in May of this year.

This event was to help students better understand Lake County natural resources. Nine stations were set up for students to visit. Subjects covered were aquatic insects, water quality testing, watershed concepts, survival skills, plant and forest ecology, wildfires, and soils. This was a successful event.

NRCS contracted 70 new farm plans implementing fish passages, 1,011 acres in brush management practices, 53 irrigation systems installed, water control structures, watering facilities and 5,491 acres in irrigation water management.

B. Monitoring

ODA evaluated data from 4 water quality monitoring stations operated by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) in the Management Area. The LAC identified some concerns. These stations are monitored infrequently (at the most, one time per year). Also, the site on Twentymile Creek does not appear to be representative of the water quality in the creek. The creek is sampled in the middle of a reservoir that has the characteristics of an alkali lake. Perhaps the creek should be sampled at the gauging station at the south end of the valley instead of at the current site.

The LAC didn't have recommendations for additional monitoring sites in the northern part of the Management Area, but did feel that DEQ should be monitoring their sites at least once per year.

Currently, ODA is focusing land condition monitoring efforts on riparian areas because these areas have such an influence over water quality. Riparian land conditions are evaluated every five years for the Management Area by analyzing aerial photographs of about 5% of the riparian agricultural land. ODA staff examine

riparian ground cover at specific points in 90-foot bands along the stream from the aerial photos and assign each sample stream reach a score based on ground cover. Staff will then compare that score with the score when photos are taken again in 5 years to track changes in riparian conditions over time. Because site conditions vary across the state, there is no one correct riparian index score.

The LAC felt that this technique shows promise but that the scoring of vegetative cover types needs to be modified or better explained. The LAC provided ODA staff with questions to be answered. The LAC asked that the index scores be related to the desired vegetative conditions, especially in juniper grasslands and riparian pastures common to the Management Area.

C. Complaints

ODA received 1 complaint in the Management Area during the past two years. A spring and drinking water source on a neighbor's property was exposed to livestock. No violations of agricultural water quality rules were identified. Water sampling by ODA showed no violation of the water quality standard for bacteria. ODA suggested to the owner of the drinking water system that proper repairs be made.

IV. BIENNIAL REVIEW

In December of 2007, the LAC met for the second biennial review and update of their Area Plan and Rules. Landowners representing agricultural commodities (livestock and hay) serve on the LAC. Other interests include Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Lakeview Water Users, and the US Forest Service. The following LAC members participated:

- John O'Keeffe, Chair
- Pete Talbott, Vice Chair

- John Taylor
- Leon Baker
- Ross Colahan
- Bob Elder

In addition, the meeting was attended by representatives of the Lake County SWCDs.

SWCD staff updated the LAC on implementation activities in the last 2 years. ODA staff reported on the Agricultural Water Quality Program's activities around Oregon, with an emphasis on the riparian rules.

Committee members agreed to update the Area Plan to include current economic information, reflect the current 303(d) list, and remove references to the Hawes case.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

LAC members agreed that "voluntary compliance is working", as evidenced by the full utilization of all financial and technical resources made available to landowners. However, the LAC would like to see more money available for juniper control projects.

The LAC believes that the AgWQ Program is using the right approach and showing lots of successes.

The LAC recommended that the SWCD continue its current type of activities and that ODA continue to refine the interpretation of the aerial photographs of riparian condition.