

HOOD RIVER

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: January 4, 2023
LAC Members Present: Brian Nakumera, Ben Saur, Megan Saunders, Alex Johnson, Steve Pappas, Patrick Hayden
Reporting Time Frame: Calendar years 2021-2022

PROGRESS MEASUREMENT		
<i>This was a Light Review; progress toward Measurable Objectives will be reported at the next Full Review.</i>		
Activities (Hood River SWCD, NRCS, and Hood River Watershed Group)	#	Discussion
Events That Actively Engage Landowners	12	Plant sale; Oregon State University Extension crop talk event in which SWCD presented on funding and technical assistance opportunities; sprayer calibration workshop (two days); presentations at Winter Hort and Cherry Days; Master Gardener's workshop focusing on riparian issues; Rotary presentation; pesticide best management practices workshops (two days); and presentation on opportunities at irrigation workshop.
Landowners Participating in Active Events	442	Some people may be counted twice as sign-up lists are not crosschecked.
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance*	418	Includes phone, email, and walk-in clients at the SWCD who were provided with information, handouts, contacts, and brochures. Many people contact the SWCD after receiving a quarterly eNews or annual report. These visits often lead to developing a small grant project.
Site Visits	60	This number includes some repeat visits to landowners during the course of developing small grant projects, plus anyone with a natural resource issue they would like to discuss.
Conservation Plans Written	0	
Funding Applications Submitted	15	Nine OWEB small grants; Pesticide BMPs to OWEB and EPA; Tri County Hazardous Waste small grant program for riparian plantings; PSP funding for more riparian plantings; ODA agricultural water quality support grant for irrigation upgrade assessment; and OWEB Focused Investment Partnership for water quality and conservation projects.
Funding Applications Awarded	13	Entities did not receive the OWEB Focused Investment Partnership or the grant to the Environmental Protection Agency for pesticide BMP work. One of the small grants was canceled. During this reporting period, Natural Resources Conservation Service certified 59 Environmental Quality Incentives Program projects.

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

LAC DISCUSSION
Summary of Progress
Focus Area: Whiskey Creek Focus Area The SWCD met the measurable objective in the focus area for improving irrigation systems.
Strategic Implementation Area: Odell Creek SIA ODA and partners met the measurable objective in the SIA.

Impediments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not having consistent outreach to landowners that clearly shows ODA is regulatory entity and SWCD is voluntary. • Lack of landowner interest being involved on the LAC. • Local partners are put in uncomfortable situations when conducting compliance. • Funding match is too high, and partners have a hard time obtaining that match. • Challenging to find funding for specific weed treatments in restoration projects, post project. • Bilingual horticultural educational opportunities in the Hood River Valley are lacking and funding for facilitating these opportunities is needed. • Securing funding for small projects when the SWCD does not have a tax base is challenging and capacity quickly becomes an issue and means few projects are implemented. • When working with unwilling landowners under the threat of regulatory action, the SWCD may need to take on all aspects of the project and not rely on landowner match. • The SIA process can provide funds for technical assistance and monitoring but not implementation. Implementation funds are challenging to get and are challenging to apply to projects identified by an SIA or Focus Area. • Not being quick and responsive in getting an identified project developed and implemented. This is an important step to reduce the burden on an unwilling landowner. Having a readily available, easy-to-access, pot of money for project implementation rather than a regular OWEB grant with its long timeline and post-project monitoring requirements, would ease the burden on the landowner. • The many agencies and their roles are confusing to landowners.

Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert Hood River executive summary to Spanish. • Conduct outreach to landowners that clearly shows ODA is regulatory entity and SWCD is voluntary. • Ensure that reports and outreach are bilingual. • Weave in agricultural water quality related topics into outreach into events such as pesticide/sprayer calibrations. • Conduct direct phone calls to landowners for LAC recruitment for vineyard, blueberry, lavender, livestock, and fruit grower producers. • Provide summary of current agricultural water quality status in newsletter, such as table with status and trends. • If a portion of SIA funds could be used for on-the-ground implementation (paying contractors and for materials) in addition to landowner outreach, technical assistance, and project development, it would streamline the process and allow for small planting and fencing projects to easily get installed. Simply put: "If you give us a pot of money we can use for every aspect of the project, will get projects done and done quickly!" • Gather all partner agencies together to discuss projects prior to meeting with the landowner and develop clear concise messaging to bring to the landowner. • Continue to clearly identify each agency's role in the process when communicating with landowners.

ODA COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES (Jan. 1, 2021, through Aug. 31, 2022)

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	0
Within SIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0