

MIDDLE WILLAMETTE
Agricultural Water Quality Management Area
Biennial Review Report to the Board of Agriculture and ODA Director
Submitted by the Local Advisory Committee (LAC)



Meeting Date: November 19, 2024
LAC Members Present: Jock Dalton, Eric Horning, Scott Setniker, Madeline Hall, George Ice, and Larry Venell
Reporting Timeframe: Calendar years 2022-2023

PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

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

Activities (Benton SWCD, Polk SWCD)	#	Discussion
Events That Actively Engage Landowners	12	Tour of Luckiamute Meadows in Kings Valley to showcase riparian restoration; Native Plant Sale x 2; Living on the Land workshop series; Soil Health Meeting x 2; Annual Native Bulb and Seed Sale x 2; SWV GWMA presentation; NRCS Local Working Group Meeting; J2E project Tour with riparian restoration, log placement, meadow restoration; invasive weed tour on small farm with discussion about managing pasture.
	20	Native plant sales; multiple events to promote good agricultural management practices and promote NRCS programs (CREP, EQUIP, etc.), Living on the Land educational series, and other events that actively involve partners.
Landowners Participating in Active Events	200	Unable to count native plant sale event contacts; 18 participants for April-May Living on the Land workshop, seven of whom were from Upper Muddy Creek SIA.
	646	Event participation ranges from 15 to more than 50 people.
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance*	154	During site visits, phone calls, office walk-ins, emails, etc. Topics include riparian restoration, irrigation, mud and manure management, CAFO information, drainage, landowner ag equipment needs, pasture/hay management, hedgerow plantings, agroforestry, seed drilling, SIA monitoring, swales, wetland restoration, pond maintenance, soils maps, soil testing for pesticides, biochar, well water, riparian invasive plants, cover crops, etc.
	44	Pasture management and weed control questions were the most numerous, followed by riparian area/streambank management.
Site Visits	35	Pasture improvement, land use, riparian plantings, soil health, weed management, forage improvement, barn roof gutters, spring/seeps, wildlife habitat, sacrifice areas, crop diversification, dust control.
	24	Site visits were performed as necessary to further assist with the technical assistance issues above.
Conservation Plans Written	8	Eight agricultural landowners received site visits followed by a conservation plan outlining objectives, soils, resource concerns, and proposed solutions.
	1	One CREP plan.

Funding Applications Submitted	3	Two OWEB Small Grants. One for diverting water from a horse barn and the other to enhance riparian area next to a small farm. Also submitted an ODA Support Grant to help work with ag producers on soil health and water quality.
	1	One CREP project and contract
Funding Applications Awarded	3	Awarded all three of the above mentioned grants
	1	CREP project successfully contracted.

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

LAC DISCUSSION	
Summary of Progress	
Polk SWCD staff worked hard to engage with the Management Area agricultural community after management and staffing turnover. SWCD events drew more people toward the end of the reporting period. While the district is not leading projects in the area, partners are engaged and having great success. The Luckiamute Watershed Council has several ongoing restoration projects with agricultural landowners and the district is supporting that with cash contributions.	
Impediments	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polk SWCD staffing turnover hampered the ability of the district to engage in many active projects. • The emerald ash borer (EAB) could start causing loss of trees along riparian areas in the near future. With the temperature Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) eminent, the committee pointed to the need to prioritize education of management practices and restoration efforts that mitigate EAB and riparian area tree loss. • Some monitoring funding that's offered is unique and it's hard for conservation entities to understand whether they qualify or if they have capacity to fulfill the grant. And then the grant opportunity goes away. • Small woodland owners are largely unaware of what resources and programs are available in the area (Oregon Small Woodlands Association, Oregon Christmas Tree Growers Association). Both have low participation due to lack of outreach. 	
Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add section of the plan for wildfire resilience and mitigation of wildfire effects on water quality, Including education for landowners on wildfire resilience. • Understand how much the Private Forest Accord (PFA) will affect water quality and TMDL attainment on agricultural lands. • Mitigation practices for loss of shade due to tree loss from emerald ash borer, as well as monitoring plans for understanding how they will affect shade • "Temporary funding" sources are unique opportunities for landowners, but they run out quickly. More funding sources specific to agricultural water quality (monitoring) are needed. • Advertise for community input on what types of grant offerings are needed in communities (OWEB) to expand what categories of grant offerings come out and ensure the audience includes underserved demographics. • Recommend a foundation of monitoring and soil health monitoring and capitalize on those "known factors" to create projects with landowners. • The LAC encourages districts target outreach to small woodland owners. • More targeted outreach to targeted agricultural groups (articles in the Capital Press, grower meetings, etc.) • Need for presentations on mercury (in what ways will mercury and other TMDLs affect landowners, how will/should landowners attain TMDL when water levels are so inconsistent). Management practices that allow for separation of crops (grass seed) and riparian plants in streams and ditches without causing contamination into seed growers' crops (seed league). • The LAC suggests that SWCDs create drainage district community with ag producers in the area. 	

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	7	6	22	1	5	11	1	0
Within SIA	N/A							