

Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Program

In 1972, Congress passed the federal Clean Water Act. The Act's purpose is to clean up water pollution from activities like forestry, factories, and farms. Oregon's legislature passed the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act in 1993 and founded the Water Quality program at the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA). The Water Quality program regulates the industry in preventing and controlling pollution. Compliance with the regulations is required by state law. The regulations allow flexibility for landowners to achieve compliance in ways suitable for their farm or ranch. If a landowner will not comply, they are subject to enforcement actions, including fines.

REQUIREMENTS

The program focuses compliance work in these areas:

- Streamside Vegetation: Agricultural activities must allow streamside vegetation to establish and grow to provide shade, stabilize banks, and filter pollutants. These efforts also result in improved wildlife habitat.
- Erosion control: Keep soil in place and out of streams and ditches.
- Manure and nutrients: use efficiently to keep them out of streams and ditches.

BACKGROUND

ODA created 38 watershed-based regions, called Water Quality Management Areas. These Management Areas each have a management plan called an Area Plan. These Area Plans have rules, known as Area Rules, which are the regulations for the area. The Area Rules ensure that all landowners do their part to prevent water pollution.

These Management Areas and Rules were created with Local Advisory Committees (LAC). The LACs are groups of local people who ensure that local water quality protection and improvement efforts are planned in a way that works for the local agricultural, environmental, and tribal considerations. The LAC identifies local agricultural water quality problems and opportunities for improvement.

The program works closely with Oregon's 45 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs). The SWCDs provide landowners with technical and financial assistance.



WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

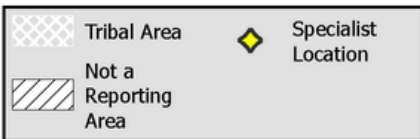
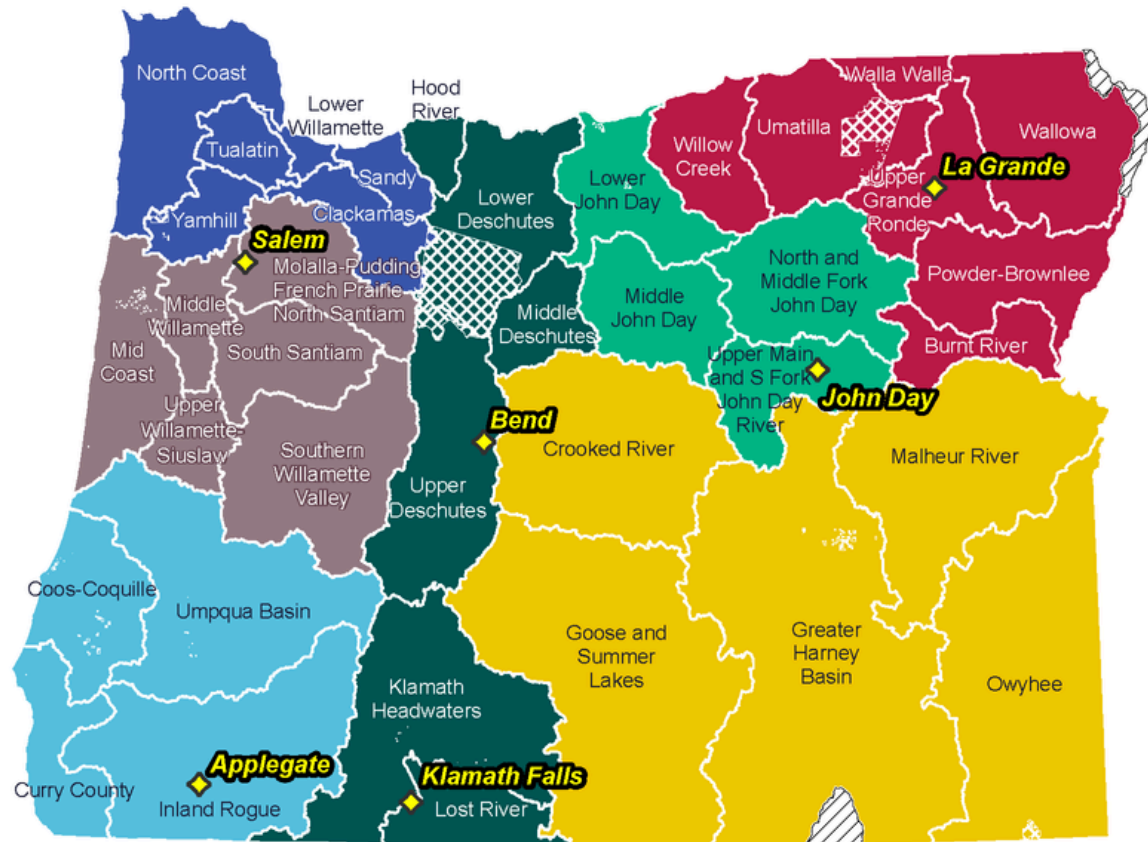
Technical assistance is available at no charge from SWCDs, watershed councils, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Oregon State University Extension Service, and ODA.

Funds are available through grants and programs that deal with water quality issues. Often, implementing management alternatives helps the environment while also making operations more productive and profitable.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

Information about the program, Area Plans, regulations, and recommended management activities, SWCDs, and more are available at ODA.direct/AgWQPlans.

Oregon Department of Agriculture Agricultural Water Quality Program Management Areas



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