

# INLAND ROGUE

## 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

<b>Meeting Date(s):</b> June 23, 2022
<b>LAC Members Present:</b> Bob Niedermeyer (Chair), Tom Dover, Dave Picanso, Gordon Jones, Greg Walch, Ron Hillers
<b>Reporting Time Frame:</b> Calendar years 2018-2021

### PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

#### Strategic Implementation Area (SIA): Applegate River SIA (initiated 2019)

Measurable Objective: By November 25, 2023, all 30 tax lots identified as a Potential Violation or a Compliance Opportunity will be downgraded to Restoration Opportunity or Likely in Compliance.

Current Conditions or Assessment Results:  
As of March 6, 2022, 26 tax lots identified as a Potential Violation or a Compliance Opportunity were downgraded to Restoration Opportunity or Likely in Compliance. PV = 0, CO = 4, RO = 123, LC = 1,609.

Activities and Accomplishments:

Activity	Accomplishment	Description
<b>ODA</b>		
# acres evaluated	25,764	
# stream miles evaluated	67	
# landowners at Open House	2	Multiple mailings, live online meeting, recorded meeting posted online and on SWCD website.
# landowners receiving outreach materials	183	

Management Areawide Activities: Jackson, Two Rivers, and Illinois Valley SWCDs, The Freshwater Trust	#	Discussion
Events That Actively Engage Landowners	144	Mud and manure; water rights and irrigation; cannabis water quality concerns; soil health.
Landowners Participating in Active Events	2,404	
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance*	1,112	Landowners provided with ag water quality improvement project guidance, planning, and/or designs.
Site Visits	644	Site visits with landowners for Ag water quality assessment and planning.
Conservation Plans Written	24	Plans for water quality improvements.
Funding Applications Submitted	32	Applications for water quality outreach and projects.
Funding Applications Awarded	28	Funding awarded for Ag water quality projects.

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

### LAC DISCUSSION

#### Summary of Progress

Jackson SWCD continues to make significant progress in its Little Butte Priority Area (formerly a Focus Area). Impressive irrigation pipeline projects in partnership with irrigation districts, support for landowners recovering from wildfire, and a skilled, respected, and expanding staff are among its ongoing accomplishments.

The Applegate SIA nearly achieved its Measurable Objective, with only two remaining Opportunity for Improvement concerns. All other concerns were addressed through ODA's process.

The Illinois Valley SWCD produced a stunning report capturing the impacts from illegal cannabis operations in its watershed. This report was used to inform the public, legislators, agencies, and others.

Two Rivers SWCD gained additional staff and are pursuing projects as well as strengthening partnerships in its district.

## Impediments

The past several years have brought a prolonged drought to the region. This has created unprecedented low volumes of irrigation water available to irrigation districts in the Management Area. For example, the irrigation season for the Talent Irrigation District, that serves much of the Bear Creek Watershed, was terminated in early July 2021. Previously viable wells were running dry.

There has been a dramatic increase in marijuana and hemp production over the past four years in the Inland Rogue Management Area. There are implications for water quality and water quantity. The region experienced rampant illegal water use without water rights during a severe drought. Decreased water instream is likely to result in water quality degradation including increased stream temperature, higher concentrations of pollutants, increased algal blooms, etc. Excessive sediment, nutrients, and pesticides, as well as riparian vegetation removal, are all common occurrences and concerns associated with the cannabis boom.

Impacts from wildfires, exacerbated by the drought, are negatively affecting already stressed ecological systems. During and following wildfires, additional sediment and nutrients can enter the waterways. The loss of trees for shade can increase stream temperatures. This makes it even more important that additional stressors, such as agricultural impacts, are minimized.

## Recommended Modifications and Adaptive Management

- Prioritize outreach regarding Ag Water Quality Rules, Plan, Program to relevant groups, ag landowners new to the area.
- Consider adding Ag Water Quality information to the 4-H, FFA curriculum.
- Add Ag Water Quality information to the memos/mailings from the various irrigation districts.
- Prioritize funding for monitoring. Request for DEQ to train SWCD monitoring staff.
- Identify Ag Water Quality Concern hot spots. Focus work in those areas.
- Convene the LAC more often to discuss concerns and make progress.

## 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	35	38	45	7	18	31	1	0
Within SIA	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	0