

OREGON'S AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY PROGRAM

Focus Areas

CONCENTRATING RESOURCES, MEASURING PROGRESS

History of the program

In 1993, the Oregon Legislature passed the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act, Senate Bill 1010, directing the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to develop plans to prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities and soil erosion, and to achieve water quality standards. The legislation also promotes the involvement of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) as much as possible.

Since 1997, ODA program staff has worked with Local Advisory Committees (LACs), which includes farmers, ranchers and stakeholders, to develop water quality management plans and adopt regulations in Oregon's 38 water quality areas. The Area Plans give local agricultural landowners a framework in which to achieve water quality goals.

Partnerships

Agricultural landowners, ODA, SWCDs and other partners put Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Program into practice.

Consistent with legislative direction, ODA developed agreements with local SWCDs to help implement Area Plans developed by ODA and LACs. SWCDs provide staff support, conduct outreach, and education, and provide technical assistance.



SWCDs are key partners in making Oregon's Agricultural Water Quality Program a success. SWCDs work with interested landowners to complete voluntary agricultural water quality improvement projects.

Partner agencies and organizations support SWCD projects in technical and financial ways, and make additional water quality improvements. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), USDA Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), Natural Resources Conservation Service, and watershed councils, among others, provide substantial resources to improve Oregon's agricultural water quality.

For more information, call ODA's Agricultural Water Quality Program
at (503) 986-4700

Agricultural Water Quality Concerns



Restoration Projects Completed in Cooperation with SWCDs



Implementation

In the early 2000s, ODA's focus was to implement as many agricultural water quality improvement projects as possible, and document those accomplishments. Efforts focused on outreach and technical help to create projects that would achieve immediate water quality benefits and build the foundation for strong partnerships in the future. Oregonians have made tremendous investments to protect and improve our water quality.

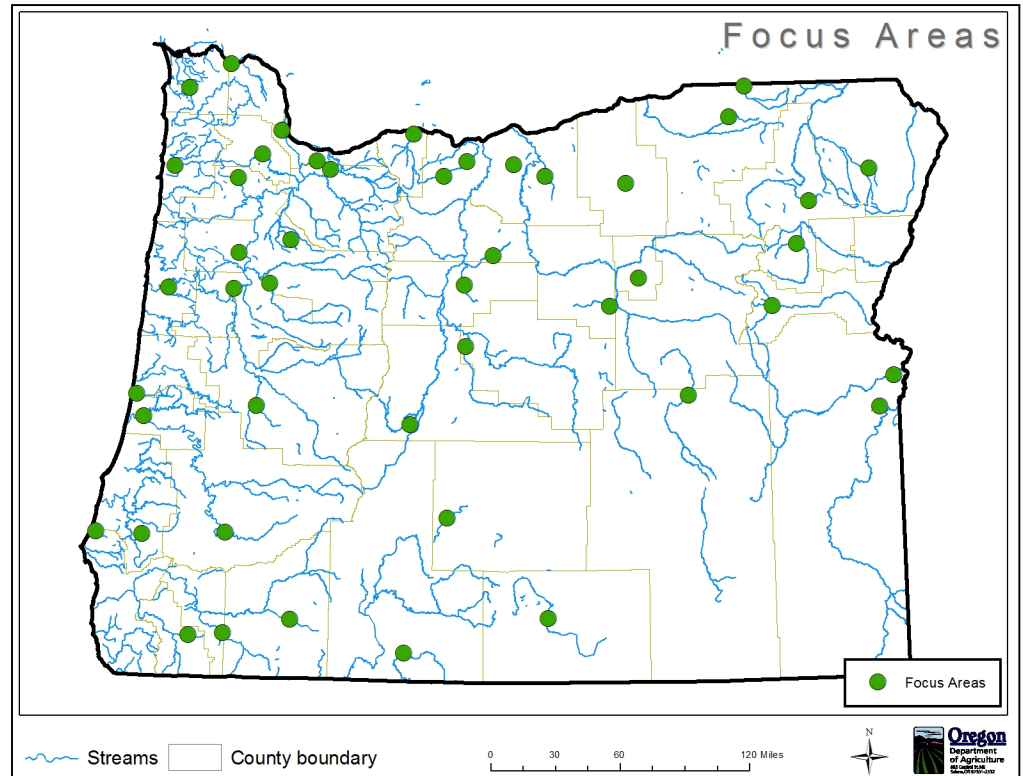
Scientific studies and technical documents from university researchers, the USDA, and other federal agencies show the types of projects implemented improve water quality at the farm scale. However, it has been a challenge to document the benefits of these projects on a larger scale.

Focus Areas

As the Agricultural Water Quality Program matures, it must adapt and gather more data, and document accomplishments to meet Oregon's water quality goals as a result of these investments. Comparing the scale of accomplishments within a larger scope will help ODA and its partners better track progress and estimate the costs of treating remaining areas.

One way to evaluate and document Program effectiveness is to concentrate efforts in a "Focus Area." A Focus Area is a small watershed within an Agricultural Water

Quality Management Area. The focus area concept evolved from conversations among ODA, SWCDs, LACs, and others seeking more ways to document the effectiveness of water quality improvement programs. Beginning in the 2013-2015 Biennium, all SWCDs in Oregon are working in Focus Areas.



Focus Area Process

**Pre-
Assessment
to Measure
Current
Conditions**

**Contact
Landowners**

**Technical
Assistance and
Project
Implementation**

**Post-
Assessment
to Measure
Improved
Conditions**

**Report
Progress**

FOCUS AREA ADVANTAGES

- * Measuring progress is easier and more accurate in smaller watersheds.
- * Partners can coordinate financial resources and water quality improvement efforts.
- * Addressing water quality concerns from agricultural activities in a focused area can improve water quality watershed-wide.
- * Providing outreach and technical assistance in a small geographic area increases the chances of success as neighbors help neighbors.
- * Work in one Focus Area today, followed by another tomorrow, eventually will lead to improved water quality regionwide.

Each SWCD selected its Focus Area based on the watershed's need for continued agricultural water quality improvements. In most Focus Areas, SWCDs are working with landowners to improve streamside vegetation, which helps water quality by providing shade, streambank stability, and filtration of potential pollutants. Several Focus Areas are working with landowners to address other concerns, including livestock and sediment.

SWCDs will contact agricultural landowners with potential water quality concerns to offer voluntary assistance. One-on-one outreach and focused assistance efforts often are more effective in reaching landowners than general outreach methods. Focusing outreach and technical assistance within a specific area will allow the Program to demonstrate effectiveness over a short timeframe. ODA and program partners believe this will lead to greater program success and allow ODA and SWCDs to make better use of limited resources.

Comparisons of baseline and post-implementation data on land conditions or water quality will help ODA and partners evaluate the effectiveness of Area Plans better than reports of scattered projects throughout a Management Area.

Where can I find?

My Plan Area and Regulations?

oregon.gov/ODA/programs/NaturalResources/Pages/AgWaterQuality.aspx

My local Soil and Water Conservation District?

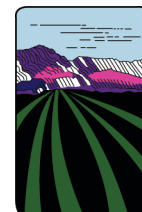
oacd.org/conservation-districts/directory

The ODA Water Quality Specialist for my Area?

oregon.gov/ODA/programs/NaturalResources/Pages/AgWaterQuality.aspx



Water Quality Program



Oregon
Department
of Agriculture

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Agricultural Water
Quality Management Program
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