

# Upper Grande Ronde Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan and Rules

The Oregon legislature passed the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act in 1993. It requires the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities.

As a result, ODA worked with local advisory committees to develop Water Quality Management Area Plans and Rules through the state. ODA approved the Upper Grande Ronde Area Plan and Rules in 1999.

## What is the Plan?

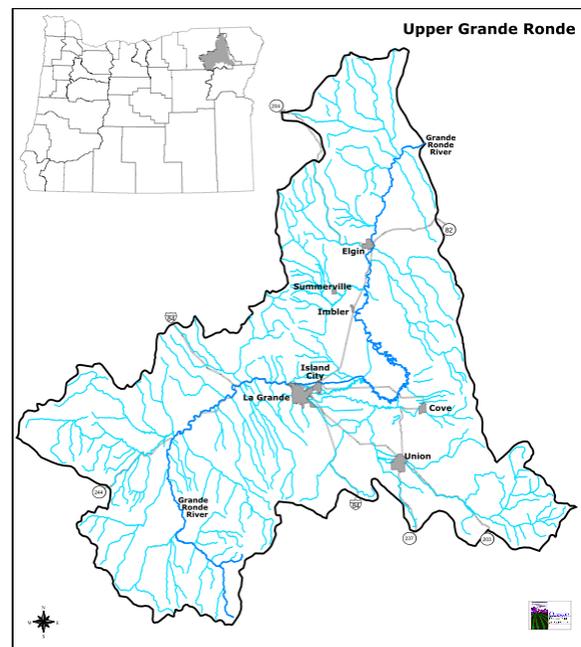
The Upper Grande Ronde Area Plan guides landowners on how to prevent pollution.

The goals of the Plan are to protect economic viability, preserve private property rights, sustain and/or improve water quality, promote landowner stewardship, and increase public awareness.

Agricultural water quality concerns in the Upper Grande Ronde area are primarily:

- Erosion and surface water management
- Nutrient management
- Animal enterprises including Confined Animal Feeding Operations
- Near-stream management areas
- Livestock management

The Area Plan does not tell anyone how to farm, ranch, or otherwise use the natural resources. Rather, it includes recommended practices that a landowner can choose from. The practices can help them meet their business and conservation goals, while also preventing water pollution.



## What are the Regulations?

The Agricultural Water Quality Management Program focuses on voluntary and cooperative efforts by landowners and others to protect water quality. However, the Agricultural Water Quality Act also provides for enforcement to ensure prevention and control of water

pollution from agricultural sources when land managers fail to correct problems.

Agricultural water quality regulations (Area Rules) allow landowners flexibility in how they protect water quality. Area Rules describe characteristics that landowners must achieve on agricultural lands, rather than practices they must implement.

The local advisory committee helped ODA develop the Area Rules specifically for the Upper Grande Ronde area. These Rules address water quality objectives identified in the Area Plan.

The following is a summary of regulations that apply to the Upper Grande Ronde area:

- *Allow the development of riparian vegetation to control water pollution by providing erosion control, sediment and nutrient filtering, moderation of solar heating, and water infiltration into the soil profile.*
- *Landowner actions may not cause pollution to any waters of the state or place any wastes in a location where such wastes are likely to escape or be carried into the waters of the state by any means.*
- *In addition, there are rules specific to soil erosion, streambank conditions, nutrient applications, and drainage ditches.*

## **Do the Plan and Regulations apply to me?**

The Area Plan and Rules apply to all lands in current agricultural use, regardless of size, and those lying idle, or on which

management has been deferred. It also applies to agricultural operations within incorporated city boundaries and urban growth boundaries.

## **What do I need to do?**

Evaluate your agricultural activities and try to determine whether they might: Pollute streams, canals and groundwater, and protect growth of appropriate vegetation along streams.

Then change any problem practices to ensure compliance with the Area Rules.

## **Who can help me?**

The Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is the primary source of landowner assistance to address water quality concerns. SWCDs are non-regulatory and can help with technical assistance, information, and direct you to additional sources of help.

You can contact the Union SWCD at (541) 963-1313.

OR

For more information on Rules, Plans and how to file a water quality complaint, contact Tom Straughan at [tstraughan@oda.state.or.us](mailto:tstraughan@oda.state.or.us) (541) 278-6721

OR

Visit the ODA website at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/NaturalResources/Pages/AgWaterQuality.aspx>

