

# LOWER JOHN DAY 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 Lower John Day Area Plan and Rules in 2004.

## What is the Plan?

The Lower John Day Area Plan guides landowners on how to prevent pollution. The goal of the Plan is to reduce water pollution from agricultural lands. Agricultural water quality concerns in the Lower John Day area are primarily:

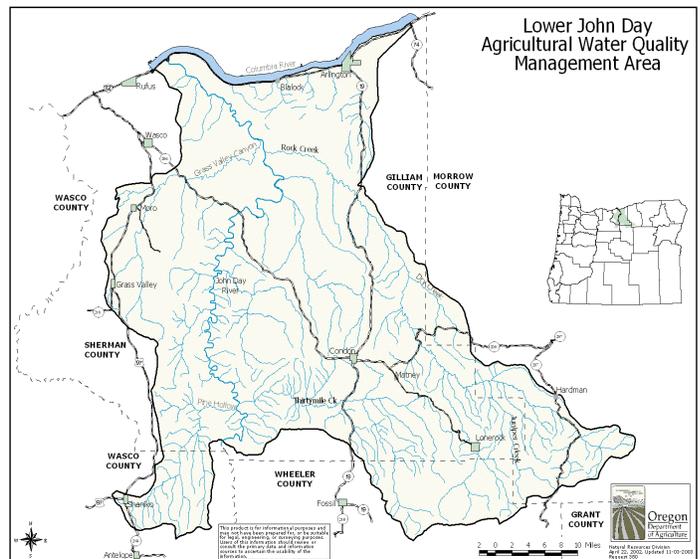
- Stream temperature
- Bacteria levels
- Low oxygen concentrations
- Impaired biological conditions

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 Lower John Day area. These Rules address water quality objectives identified in the Area Plan.

The following is a summary of regulations that apply to the Lower John Day area:

- *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.*
- *Landowners must control upland soil erosion using technically sound and economically feasible methods.*
- *Streamside management must allow the establishment and improvement, over time, of riparian vegetation for streambank stability, filtering sediment and shading, consistent with site capability.*

## 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:

1. Pollute streams, canals and groundwater, and
2. Protect growth of appropriate vegetation along streams.

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

## Who can help me?

The Area Plan describes water quality concerns, lists sources of help, and includes recommended practices.

The Gilliam and Sherman County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are 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 Gilliam SWCD at:  
(541) 384-2672

OR

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