



**NRD WATER QUALITY PROGRAM  
AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA  
BIENNIAL REVIEW SUMMARY**



<b>Management Area: Malheur River Basin</b>
<b>Meeting Date(s): February 20, 2015</b>
<b>LAC Members Present: Doug Maag (Chair), Loren Weideman, Bill Romans, Marvin Remple, Les Ito</b>
<b>Implementation Summary for Malheur County SWCD, Harney SWCD, and Malheur Watershed Council (January 2013-December 2014)</b>
<p><b>Outreach and Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coyote Gulch Focus Area: 40 landowners to discuss monitoring information and need for projects</li> <li>• Shared water quality data with 4 irrigation districts</li> <li>• Two landowner meetings on Vale Bench for Laterals 230 and 227 projects (30 landowners total) in conjunction with NRCS, MWC, and VOID</li> <li>• No-till drill tour (6 attendees)</li> </ul> <p><b>Planning and Projects:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 projects completed totaling 3.5 miles of installed pipeline, 1 pumpback system, 2 pivots, 2 k-lines</li> <li>• Stabilized 1 mile of streambank</li> <li>• Cut 1,060 acres of juniper</li> <li>• Cut 100 acres of conifers</li> <li>• Installed 5,640 feet of water pipe for off-stream troughs, 10 livestock troughs, 1 storage tank, and 1 solar pump</li> <li>• Built 50,000 feet of riparian fencing</li> <li>• Converted 468 acres from flood irrigation to sprinkler</li> <li>• Dismantled and moved a 300-head feed lot ½ mile away from Rose Creek</li> <li>• Piped 15,825 feet of open ditches and mainlines</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitoring:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued water quality monitoring in Willow Creek and the lower Malheur River watershed</li> </ul> <p><b>Funding and Grants:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Primary funders were OWEB and DEQ's 319 program</li> </ul>
<p><b>Progress Measurement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results from Focus Areas will be provided at the 2017 Biennial Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary of Impediments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landowners are interested in doing projects but cost-share funds are insufficient to help them implement projects</li> <li>• Conservation partners lack sufficient staff to respond to landowner desires to make changes</li> <li>• There is low interest in solutions such as sediment basins because they take high-value cropland out of production</li> <li>• There may be some landowners that don't see themselves as part of the problem</li> <li>• Landowners who do work on their own don't get credit for the improvements they have made so it appears to outsiders that progress is slow</li> <li>• Some landowners and local partners have concerns that water quality and land condition data will be used in ways that inhibit progress</li> <li>• Some cropping systems don't allow for some of the technological solutions that improve water quality, e.g. drip irrigation</li> <li>• Some solutions conflict with management practices on adjoining lands, e.g. return flows used by a neighbor for irrigation</li> <li>• Federal lands are a source of pollutants but litigation and Federal policies make land management changes difficult</li> <li>• BLM is a major landowner but cannot effectively participate in finding and implementing solutions</li> <li>• Catastrophic wildfires disrupt watershed functions: sediment eroded from burned areas is entering rivers and streams; wildfires are eliminating upland and riparian vegetation and displacing wildlife</li> <li>• Phosphorus enters the Malheur River from naturally occurring deposits, e.g. ash layers in the upper watershed, not just anthropogenic activities such as farming</li> <li>• Aquatic and terrestrial weed infestations (including juniper) can reduce water quality</li> <li>• Lack of baseline data for riparian conditions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recommendations for Modifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More public education on land management practices</li> <li>• More interaction among partners so all know what they are working on</li> <li>• Meet every January to discuss Ag WQ issues and activities</li> <li>• Develop goals common to all partners about watershed management</li> <li>• Better management of fuel loads to reduce wildfires</li> </ul>

- Figure out monitoring needs and how to answer them
- Figure out how to show our progress with numbers and do it
- Continue support to irrigation districts to be part of the solution
- Thin forests on Federal land and manage fuel loads on range lands to control wildfires

**Enforcement:**      *Letter of Compliance -0*      *Water Quality Advisory -0*      *Letter of Warning -0*  
                          *Notice of Noncompliance -1*      *Civil Penalty -0*      *Alternative Measures -0*

**Total Complaints: 1**

**Notes:** The complaint related to removal of trees along an intermittent stream to allow a new pivot to cross the channel.