SOUTH SANTIAM 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 the local advisory committee to develop Water Quality Management Area Plans and Rules throughout the state. ODA approved the South Santiam Area Plan and Rules in 2002.

What is the Plan?

The Area Plan is a tool that provides agricultural water quality partners and landowners information about:

- The geographic area of the plan and its boundaries. (See map)
- Local water quality concerns in the plan area.
- Goals and implementation strategies to encourage conservation and improve water quality.
- Optional management practices that landowners may implement to improve water quality.

The water quality concerns identified for the South Santiam Management Area are:

- Temperature
- Bacteria
- Mercury
- Dissolved Oxygen

The area plan does not tell anyone how to farm, ranch, or otherwise utilize their natural resources. Rather it is a resource for landowners to address water quality issues. In it, they can find contacts for technical and financial assistance that will help them meet their business and conservation goals, and attain water quality standards at the same time.

What are the Regulations?

The focus of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Program is on voluntary and cooperative efforts by landowners, the Department, and others to protect water quality. However, the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act also provides for a regulatory backstop to ensure prevention and control of water pollution from agricultural sources in cases where landowners or operators refuse to correct problem conditions.

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

The following is a summary of regulations that apply in the South Santiam area:

- *Riparian vegetation on perennial streams must provide the water quality functions of infiltration of overland flow, shade, and streambank stability.*
- *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.*

Do the Plan and Regulations apply to me?

The Area Plan and associated regulations apply to all lands, regardless of size, in current agricultural use and those lying idle, or on which management has been deferred. It also applies to agricultural operations within incorporated city boundaries within the designated management area boundary.

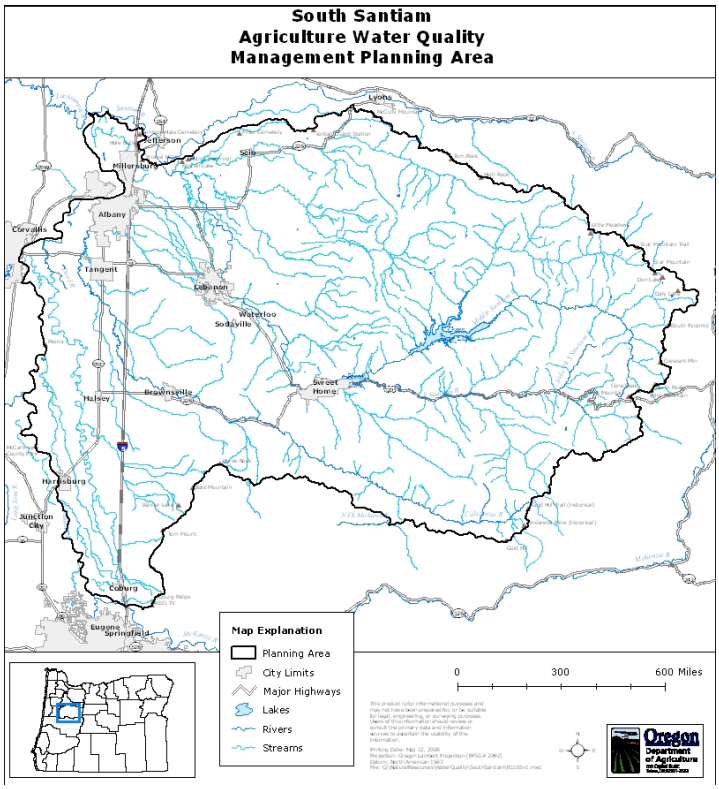
What do I need to do?

You should evaluate your agricultural activities and try to determine whether they might:

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

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

More information?

If you would like additional information or technical assistance, you can contact the Linn SWCD at (541) 926-2483.
OR
For more information on Rules, Plans and how to file a complaint, contact the Regional Water Quality Specialist, Jo Morgan
jmorgan@oda.state.or.us
(503) 986-4712
OR
Oregon Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Programs at (503) 986-4700
visit their website at
http://www.oregon.gov/ODA/programs/NaturalResources/Pages/AgWaterQuality.aspx

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