



Crooked River Agricultural Water Quality Management Program

WINTER 2011/12

Landowners To Receive More Information on Water Quality Requirements

Landowners need more information on water quality requirements to avoid enforcement by Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

This message was presented to ODA and Crook County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) staff by the Crooked River Local Advisory Committee (LAC) at their biennial review on February 9, 2012.

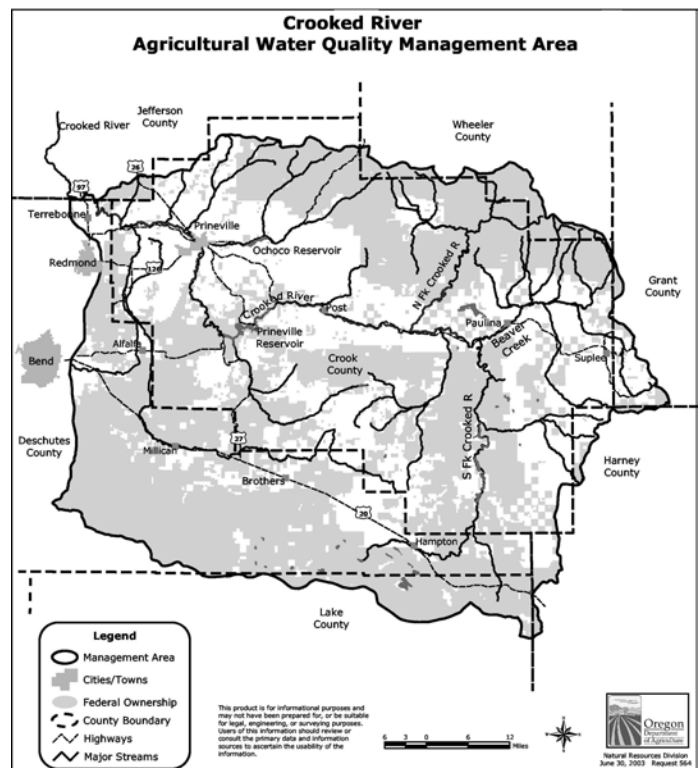
They indicated that efforts to date, including multi-year presentations at landowner meetings at Paulina, were not enough.

LAC recommendations from two years ago were not implemented due to staff turnover of most key conservation partners. The LAC had recommended that the CCSWCD do the following to inform landowners of water quality requirements and appropriate land management activities:

- Send a direct mailing to landowners along streams,
- Submit more articles to the newspaper,
- Include existing agricultural water quality brochures when distributing the Crook County Rural Living Handbook.

ODA and CCSWCD staff agreed to provide more outreach to all landowners and will work to send out a mailing in March 2012, with follow-up the following fall.

The LAC also suggested that ODA monitor land conditions over time using peer-approved protocols such as Multiple Indicator Monitoring.



LAC Members

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Lawrence Weberg, Chair | Russell Rhoden |
| Greg Bedortha, Vice-Chair | Bill Sigman |
| Mylan Bohle | |
| Doug Breese | Alternates: |
| James (JB) Cox | Jim Eisner |
| Tim Huntley | Matt Smith |
| John Morgan | |



Crook County SWCD 2010-2011 Activities

2010 brought several changes to the CCSWCD. In August 2010, Priscilla Johnson became the new fiscal administrator and Libby Stahancyk became the new project manager.

In the last two years, CCSWCD staff wrote and implemented 14 projects through the OWEB small grant program that will improve water quality and quantity in and around the Crooked River Watershed.

Outreach activities included:

- Five landowner workshops in Paulina, Prineville, and Powell Butte.
- Four educational tours in the Upper Crooked River Watershed.
- Two presentations at "Fin, Fire, Feather" elementary natural resources education days.
- Two displays and Question & Answer sessions at the Crook County Fair that emphasized implementing projects that will improve natural resources on private lands.

CCSWCD staff assisted 40 different private landowners with information and/or advice. Projects include:

- Improved irrigation efficiency,
- Riparian and streambank restoration to improve water quality and quantity and fish habitat,
- Upland projects that focus on eliminating invasive and noxious species and increasing water infiltration and availability, and better distribution of livestock.

The CCSWCD completed three extensive projects and is managing one more:

- Mill Creek: half-mile restoration project focused on proper functioning condition by removing berms, re-meandering the stream, exclusion fencing, cross veins and riparian plantings (\$48,000).
- South Prineville Watersheds: managed by the CCSWCD for the Crooked River Watershed Council; encompassed 6,550 acres of juniper control with mechanical treatment and prescribed fire (\$330,000).
- Ant Creek Restoration: also managed by the CCSWCD for the council and encompassed 2,550 acres of juniper treatment (\$112,000).
- Lawson Creek Redband and Wildlife Habitat Recovery (connected to Upper Ochoco Creek): important spawning and rearing habitat for redband trout. The watershed is also critical deer and elk winter range. So far, nearly 500 acres of the 1,500 acre juniper treatment area have been completed. All of the instream structures, one spring development, and herbicide application has been completed. The project still has 1,000 acres of juniper treatment, 50 acres of rangeland seeding, 1.5 miles of riparian planting, and two spring developments left to be completed. The project will be completed by December of 2012.



Juniper treatment: before and after cut and burn

2012 and 2013 should be exciting and busy years for the CCSWCD. Not only will they be continuing to implement current projects but they have exciting new project ideas for future grants including a tail water recovery project in Powell Butte. And, as usual, they continue to provide water quality technical assistance to their partners and the community.

Background

The LAC advised ODA on the development of the Area Plan and Area Rules (Oregon Administrative Rules 603-095-3400). The LAC reconvenes every two years to review progress towards meeting Plan goals. LAC members represent farming and ranching, private timberlands, Oregon State University Extension Service, Trout Unlimited, and the CCSWCD.

The LAC's mission is to "promote cost-effective agricultural management practices that maintain or enhance water quality in the Crooked River Management Area." Their goal is to "prevent and control water pollution from agricultural activities and soil erosion through education and voluntary implementation" by:

- Providing landowners with information and technical and financial assistance to minimize agriculture's contribution to water quality concerns.
- Pursuing and identifying cost-effective juniper-control and range improvement projects to improve watershed health.
- Continuing to include landowners, land managers, and local communities in the revisions and implementation of the Area Plan and associated Area Rules.
- Informing the general public about how agriculture benefits the community.
- Informing members of the community of the effects of various human activities, including agriculture, on water quality within the Management Area.

Area Rules:

1. Streamside Vegetation Management.
 - (a) Agricultural management must allow establishment, growth, and active recruitment of streamside riparian vegetation, consistent with site capability, to moderate solar heating,

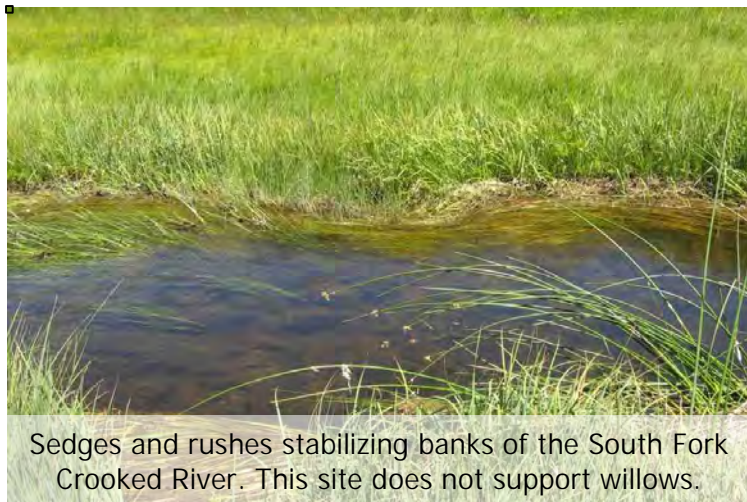
stabilize streambanks, and filter sediment and nutrients from overland flows.

(b) Except as provided in (a), grazing, weed control, and other common agricultural activities are allowed in riparian areas.

(c) Water gaps and hardened crossings are allowed in streams that otherwise meet conditions required under (a).

2. Waste Management.

No person shall cause pollution, place wastes where they are likely to pollute, or discharge waste sufficient to violate water quality standards (Oregon Revised Statute 468B.025).



Sedges and rushes stabilizing banks of the South Fork Crooked River. This site does not support willows.



Willows growing vigorously along the Crooked River.



**Oregon Department
of Agriculture**

Water Quality Program
635 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

**Regional Water
Quality Specialist:**

Ellen Hammond
475 NE Bellevue Dr. #110
Bend, OR 97701

Ph: 541-617-0017

Fax: 541-388-8283

ehammond@oda.state.or.us

Complaints

ODA investigated four complaints in this management area. All four were triggered by concerns about poorly managed livestock use of the Crooked River and its tributaries, resulting in inadequate vegetation to provide water quality benefits.

One challenge with investigating complaints in the management area is that not all streamside areas can support willows; some will only support sedges and rushes. From a distance, those areas may look overgrazed, but on closer evaluation, it is clear that willows can't grow in those areas.

Three landowners received Letters of Warning, indicating that some of their management activities were not allowing riparian vegetation to stabilize streambanks, filter out potential pollutants from overland flows, or moderate solar heating. Two of those landowners are now in compliance through changes in land and livestock management.

The fourth landowner allowed his cattle to graze along streams in the winter, but his management was such that the sedges and rushes were continuing to colonize and stabilize streambanks. He received a Letter of Compliance as a result of the first and only site visit.

We're on the Web!

http://egov.oregon.gov/ODA/NRD/water_quality_front.shtml

Crook County SWCD

498 SE Lynn Blvd.
Prineville, OR 97754