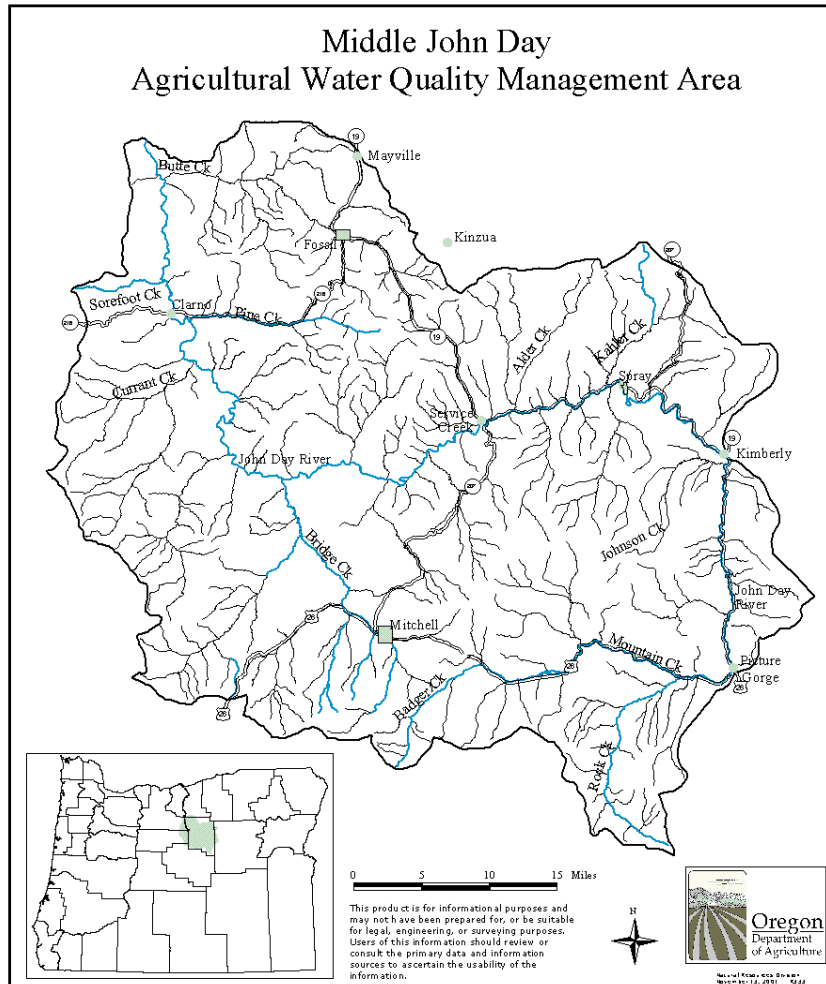


# MIDDLE JOHN DAY

## AGRICULTURAL WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA PLAN AND RULES

### BIENNIAL REVIEW REPORT TO THE OREGON STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

February 27, 2008



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## **I. Introduction**

The Middle John Day Local Advisory Committee (LAC) submits this report to the Board of Agriculture to summarize and evaluate implementation of the Middle John Day Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plan (Area Plan) and Rules.

The Area Plan and Rules were created because of the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act, passed by the Oregon Legislature in 1993 to address concerns about agricultural effects to water quality. This law authorized the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to work with farmers and ranchers to develop Agricultural Water Quality Management Area Plans for basins with water quality problems.

From 2002 to 2003, ODA and a Local Advisory Committee (LAC), consisting primarily of affected landowners, worked to develop a management plan and associated administrative rules for the Middle John Day. ODA adopted the Area Plan and Rules in May 2003. The Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) assisted in nominating the LAC, supported it during development of the Area Plan, and is the local entity responsible for implementing the plan.

## **II. Background**

When developing the Middle John Day Area Plan and Rules, the LAC identified several objectives and strategies to protect and improve water quality. The LAC then developed administrative rules that must be met on all agricultural and rural lands. Although compliance with the rules is required, landowners may choose the best strategies for their operation to meet the rules.

The goal of the Area Plan is to develop strategies that are practical and economically feasible in order to aid the prevention of water pollution from agricultural and rural activities and the control of water pollution if such problems exist

## **III. Area Plan and Rules Implementation Activities, 2006-2007**

As described in the Area Plan, the Wheeler SWCD is the Local Management Agency (LMA) for the Middle John Day Area Plan. The Middle John Day Management Area includes most of Wheeler County and small parts of Grant, Gilliam, Wasco and Crook counties. Wheeler SWCD directors and employees have worked closely with ODA, US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Oregon State University Extension Service (OSU Extension) and others to encourage landowners to use sound water quality preservation and management practices.

### **Wheeler SWCD Activity Summary 2006-2007**

#### **Objective 1 - Promoting voluntary land stewardship practices that enhance water quality.**

- Range seeding – 84 ac
- Diversion improvements – 27
- Pipelines – 57,000 ft
- Spring developments/troughs – 12/22
- Culvert/bridges – 10
- Irrigation systems – 2 pivots
- Riparian fencing – 21,500 ft.
- Thinning – 508 ac.
- Juniper control – 373 ac.
- Brush mgt. – 110 ac.

**Objective 2 - Increasing public awareness and understanding of agriculture's contributions to improving water quality.**

- Youth education – Earth Week program (47 attending), Riparian tree planting, Riparian Health Field Day
- Tours – 15
- Workshops – 5 (120 attending)
- Demonstrations – Juniper control (40 attending)
- Presentations – 6 (131 attending)
- Displays - 6 (3,608 attending)
- Newsletters, fact sheets, annual reports – 2,326 copies distributed
- Newspaper articles – 9 (3,000 circulation)

**Objective 3 - Ensuring technical and financial assistance for implementing effective water quality improvement projects.**

- 20 grants awarded for improvement projects for landowners
- Support two watershed councils
- Funding partners – ODA, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), NRCS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-Fisheries), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), United States Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF), Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (CTWS)
- Educational partners – City of Fossil, Pioneer Learning Network, Wild Salmon Center, Wheeler County Road Department and Weed Department. Mitchell Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- Other partners – Oregon Paleo Lands Institute, Wheeler County OSU Extension, Oregon Department of

Forestry (ODF), Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODF&W), US Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Department of State Lands (DSL), USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), Northwest Power and Conservation Commission (NWPCC), Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD), Oregon Water Trust, Columbia-Blue Mountain Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D), US Forest Service (USFS)

**Objective 4 - Promoting a monitoring program that provides scientifically credible data.**

- Butte Creek Assessment & Restoration Recommendations - completed
- John Day Subbbasin Plan
- Bridge Creek Watershed Evaluation

**IV. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The SWCD recently completed an assessment of the Butte Creek watershed funded by OWEB and contracted to ABR, Inc. Because water quality information was lacking, temperature, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, and biological data were collected during the summer of 2005. Data indicate that temperature and macroinvertebrate communities were most impaired in the middle reaches of Butte Creek. It was recommended to establish permanent monitoring sites to allow determination of both overall trends in water quality as well as the effects of any restoration efforts.

**V. Complaints**

No complaints have been received.

## **VI. Middle John Day Area Plan and Rules Review Process**

The first biennial review was held in January 2006. At the meeting, the SWCD provided information to the LAC on water quality improvement projects, outreach, and education. ODA staff provided an update on the Agricultural Water Quality Program's activities around Oregon and also reviewed the summary of Wheeler SWCD accomplishments between 2004 and 2005. LAC members brought up no major concerns with the program and no changes were proposed for the Area Plan or Rules.

The second biennial review was held on February 27, 2008. Five LAC members, 9 SWCD members and staff and 5 partner agency staff were present for the meeting providing a diverse audience representing regional interests. ODA presented a review of the Agricultural Water Quality Program, the Area Rules and a summary of compliance issues statewide. The SWCD presented a review of outreach and technical assistance activities and a review of the assessment done in the Butte Creek watershed.

LAC members raised no significant concerns or others present at the meeting. The Wheeler SWCD has an active and competent program to provide assistance to landowners concerning water quality issues. At the next biennial review, in 2010, the John Day River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) may be complete and will be incorporated into the Area Plan.