

CROOKED RIVER

Agricultural Water Quality Management Area



Biennial Review Report to the Board of Agriculture & ODA Director

Submitted by the Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Meeting Date(s): February 17, 2021 (via Go To Meeting; delayed from May 2020 due to COVID)
LAC Members Present: Greg Bedortha, Bill Sigman, Lawrence Weberg, Mylen Bohle, Bruce Scanlon, Tim Huntley, John Morgan, Trent Smith, Jim Eisner, Wade Flegel
Reporting Time Frame: 2018 through 2019

PROGRESS MEASUREMENT

Management Area

Measurable Objective: The LAC, SWCD and ODA intends to strategically address water quality throughout the Management Area by systematically working in Focus Areas.

Focus Area: Camp Creek

Measurable Objective: By June 30, 2031, decrease

- Acres with juniper by 7,500 acres,
- Corridor Vegetation Condition Class 4 and 5 from 7.63 miles to 5.03 miles, and
- Active Streambank Erosion Class 3, 4, and 5 from 6.14 miles to 3.54 miles.

Milestone: By June 30, 2021, decrease

- Acres with juniper by 1,300 acres,
- Corridor Vegetation Condition class 4 and 5 from 7.63 miles to 6.33 miles, and
- Active Streambank Erosion Class 3, 4, and 5 from 6.14 miles to 4.84 miles.

Current Conditions:

Corridor Vegetation (in streambank miles)		Active Bank Erosion (in streambank miles)		Juniper (in acres)	
Class	2019: Pre-Assessment	Class	2019: Pre-Assessment	Phase	2019
0	0.0	0	2.46	I	5508.0
1	0.52	1	2.50	II	18081.1
2	1.45	2	1.91	III	2648.9
3	3.41	3	3.02	Treated Acres	0
4	7.25	4	2.77	Total	26238.0
5	0.38	5	0.35		
Total	13.01	Total	13.01		

Progress Towards Measurable Objective: to be evaluated July 2021 (date of first milestone goal).

Activities	No.	Discussion
Active Events (e.g. workshops, tours)	4	Sage-brush steppe restoration strategies, water quality, irrigation efficiencies, water rights, Deschutes River Basin Habitat Conservation Plan. Site visits focused on water quality impact from agriculture including: juniper management, erosion control/bank stabilization, irrigation efficiency, grazing management tools, fish and wildlife habitat, and range improvement.
Landowners Participating in Active Events	83	
Landowners Provided Technical Assistance	721	
Site Visits	103	
Conservation Plans Written	2	
Funding Applications Submitted	592	
Funding Applications Awarded	8	

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND IMPEDIMENTS

Progress

A partnership was formed in 2019 to focus on improving water quality in the lower Crooked River. The partnership will work to develop a comprehensive approach to improving water quality derived from the watershed.

Impediments

Landownership: No single source of information of what types of projects have been completed on a property, except the landowner for the period of time. High and frequent landowner turnover presents challenges with historical knowledge of the property. New landowners may not be knowledgeable of projects that were done by the previous landowner, or what their next planned conservation projects were going to be. Monitoring data often does not go with sale of land as it is often considered a deterrent to the sale of the property. Recently, landowner turnover has increased and many of the new property owners do not reside on site, do not live in the watershed, nor are they familiar with the watershed. This presents additional new challenges in engaging landowners. Moreover, new landowners, particularly absentee landowners, often lack understanding of local conservation issues and management conservation practices.

Resources: funding resources for projects and capacity resources for local conservation agencies are a limiting factor. Permits required for implementing restoration work can add challenges. Particularly when assessments and analysis add cost and complexity to core permits. Difficult to document effectiveness of a project (are past and current projects effective in accomplishing their goals), without long-term, and sometimes extensive, monitoring. Additionally, monitoring grants are more complex (e.g. SAP) and thus more difficult to obtain.

Elk damage to fencing and riparian areas.

RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Landownership turnover: Encourage -

- consultants that complete environmental analysis to include streambank/vegetation analysis;
- realtors to provide handouts (e.g. Crook County Rural Living Handbook);
- ODA/SWCD/WC/etc. to create an evaluation process for ranches that identifies potential issues/concerns. Additionally, create a rating system to identify at a glance the properties likely in compliance with AgWQ rules as well as the ranches overall watershed health.

Resources: Encourage governor's natural resource office to seek new funding sources for project implementation and local conservation agency capacity.

ODFW assist in funding repairs from wildlife (elk) damage to fences.

COMPLIANCE ACTIONS

Location	Letter of Compliance	Pre-Enforcement Notification	Notice of Noncompliance	Civil Penalty
Outside SIA(s)	0	0	0	0
Within SIA(s)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A