



Curry Currents

Summer/Fall 2002

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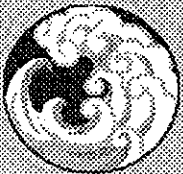
Editor's Note

This publication was produced & supported by grant funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

Each edition of *Curry Currents* has a theme. This issue's theme is "Agricultural Water Quality Management and Senate Bill 1010 in Curry County".

A special "thanks" to the volunteer members of the LAC for their hard work.

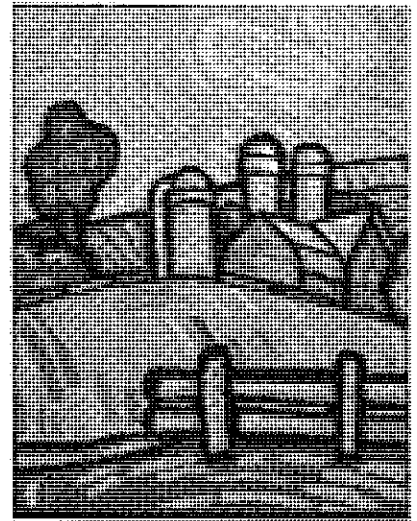
Lucie
La Bonté
Editor



A Review: What is Senate Bill 1010?

Senate Bill 1010 was passed by the 1993 Oregon State Legislature to address the need for water quality protection within the agricultural community. The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identified agriculture as a major contributor to non-point source pollution in America's water resources. (*Non-point* source pollution comes from many and diverse sources that shed pollutants from the land into the waterways, as opposed to *point* source pollution caused by a single identifiable source, such as a sewage treatment plant discharging directly into a river).

The Federal Clean Water Act, Section 303(d), requires each state to identify streams, rivers and lakes that do not meet water quality standards. The standards are designed to protect "beneficial uses" of water such as livestock watering, irrigation, aquatic life, fisheries, recreation aesthetics and drinking water supplies. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is the agency in our state with the job of making the list of water quality limited streams. This is done by assessing the water temperature, level of dissolved oxygen, nutrient and sediment load, pH, bacteria and other factors. The DEQ continues to update the list, known as the "303(d) List", to include more stream segments in Oregon that do not meet water quality standards.



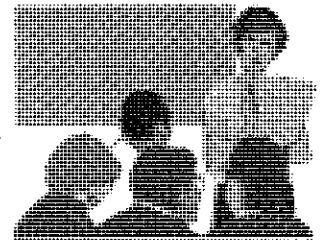
Watersheds on this list are candidates for the protection measures set forth in Senate Bill 1010. The Bill directs the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), in conjunction with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), to oversee the development of Water Quality Management Plans for each watershed. To assure that these plans address the different needs of individual watersheds and that they are not imposed (or forced) upon citizens from the top down, they are developed by Local Advisory Committees (LAC) like the Curry LAC consisting of people who live and work on the land affected by the plan.

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Together with the Curry SWCD, ODA appointed a Local Advisory Committee, consisting of fifteen local residents involved in agriculture, which is responsible for developing the draft action plan to address water quality issues in the Curry County watersheds. Under this plan, local operators will be able to develop their own approaches to local problems. Farmers and ranchers are allowed to choose their own ways of meeting established water quality goals. Sound conservation practices are already being employed by many local landowners to protect water quality.

Curry Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Knute Andersson, Sixes, represents cranberries.
Joe Brown, Langlois, represents sheep and cattle.
Becky Crockett, Brookings represents the lily bulb growers and cattle.
Jim Donaldson, Langlois, represents nurseries, cattle and sheep.
George Fleming, Langlois represents environmental issues and small woodlands.
Ted Fitzgerald, Brookings represents cattle.
Harry Harms, Harbor, represents lilies.
Earl Lang, Langlois, represents Curry SWCD and cattle.
Mike Knapp, Langlois, represents cattle, sheep and Curry SWCD.
Rick McKenzie, Langlois, represents cattle, sheep and cranberries.
Robert McKenzie, Port Orford, represents cranberries.
Walt Schroeder, Gold Beach, represents small acreage landowners.
Jim Waldvogel, Crescent City, represents fisheries.
Norm Yock, Brookings, represents nurseries.



USDA Program Provides Rent, Cost-Share For Riparian Buffers

If you're considering alternatives to farming or grazing near-stream areas on your property, you may be interested in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). CREP provides cost-share funds and rent to landowners who create and maintain riparian buffers along fish-bearing streams.

You can enroll near-stream areas from 35 to 180 feet wide in CREP and in some cases, an entire field. CREP will pay rent annually per acre for a 10 to 15 year period. You will be reimbursed for 75% of the costs for projects such as fencing and tree and shrub establishment. You will also receive a signing bonus once you're enrolled in the program, and another bonus when all the practices in your contract are completed. If you and your neighbors enroll over 50% of the land along a five-mile stream segment in the program, you each receive another one-time bonus payment.

In Curry County, five landowners have enrolled near-stream lands in CREP, and several others are on a waiting list because interest in the program currently exceeds staff resources. As landowners complete CREP projects, such as tree planting or fencing, they receive technical support from agencies such as the Oregon Department of Forestry, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Curry Soil and Water Conservation District. The South Coast Watershed Council has also helped some participants remove invasive species in newly planted areas, free of charge.

For more information about the program, contact the Coos/Curry County office of the Farm Service Agency at (541) 396-4323 ext. 1.

Walt Schroeder
Chair of SB 1010 Local Advisory Committee

I became involved in SB 1010 LAC because in my tenure as an Extension Agent in Curry County I learned very quickly that those who live on and work the land are "students of the land". They know what the land will produce and how to protect the land from degradation far better than anyone from outside the area. I learned that most farmers and ranchers are the true environmentalists. They will do all they can to protect the land to the best of their ability and with the best available information.

Water Quality Management is important to farmers and ranchers as well as to municipalities, fish, wildlife, recreationists, and all other water users. SB1010 places water quality management in the hands of those people who are in the best position to know what they can do to prevent the water from being degraded as it passes through their land. It is administered by the Oregon Department of Agriculture and provides assistance to farmers and ranchers to maintain or improve water quality. It is not a threatening program but is designed to help farmers protect their land and the water that runs through it.

Agriculture has a bright as well as an uncertain future in Curry County. Uncertain because of development of agricultural land into housing, efforts by radical environmental groups to make farming and ranching even more difficult, predation by wild animals, farm product prices, competition from other countries without the stringent pesticide and other rules required of our farmers and ranchers, and a myriad of other concerns. Bright because of climate and soils that lend themselves to a variety of crops and year around grazing, and a corps of enthusiastic young farmers who are willing to work to produce a living for their families and protect the land for future generations.

Before and since retirement I've been involved in STEP (Salmon Trout Enhancement Program), building trails for the US Forest Service and State Parks as an unpaid volunteer, helped start the Curry Historical Society and served on board and as president for many years, Rotary Club member 35 years, Lower Rogue Watershed Council, Gideon Secretary (the guys who place Bibles in motels), and as a volunteer tours leader for botany/history hikes, etc..

Resume

Graduated with BS from Oregon State College (now University) in 1949 with a major in Farm Management.

Worked in Madras, OR for Production and Marketing Administration (now Farm Service Agency) from graduation in June 1949 to when I was hired as Coos County 4-H Agent in November 1949.

Sabbatical leave and completed MS degree in Extension Education at University of Wisconsin.

Extension agent in W. Lane office with agriculture, forestry, community development and 4-H responsibilities from 1957-1961.

State Extension agent at OSU responsible for 4-H camping, school forest conservation tours, and outdoor recreation. 1961-1963

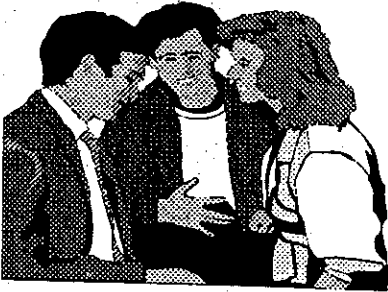
Washington County 4-H agent 1963-1967.

Curry County Extension agent 1967-1983 for Agriculture, Forestry, Marine resources, Community Resource Development, 4-H and Administration. Area Forestry and Marine agents took over those responsibilities about halfway through my tenure.

Retired at end of February in 1983. (Walt also served in the House of the Oregon State Legislature).

SB 1010 Plan is a Team Effort

As part of the team put together to write this plan, Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) has provided us with Water Quality Planner, Tim Stevenson. Tim has an extensive agriculture background, having been employed as a commercial crop consultant in North Dakota, as an agricultural development specialist in Uganda and as a county extension agent in Nevada, plus for the past five years as a Water Quality Planner in Oregon. You may contact Tim at 541-471-7838 or tstevens@oda.state.or.us



Together with the Curry Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), ODA appointed a Local Advisory Committee (LAC), consisting of fifteen local residents involved in agriculture, which is responsible for developing a draft action plan to address agricultural water quality issues in the Curry County watersheds. Under this plan, local operators will be able to develop their own approaches to local problems. Farmers and ranchers are allowed to choose their own ways of meeting established water quality goals. Sound conservation practices are already being employed by many local landowners to protect water quality.

Curry SWCD has been instrumental in working with landowners to achieve county standards and good stewardship practices. Watershed Coordinators Harry Hoogesteger and Dana Hicks are also available for answering questions, advising landowners on how to deal with problems, and to help find funding for projects necessary to implement better stewardship practices. You may contact Harry or Dana at the SWCD office at 541-247-2755 for more information.

Through the SWCD, landowners also have the opportunity to develop individual voluntary farm plans. These plans are 100% customized to meet your priorities, time frames and resources. Joe Brown has just recently been employed by the Curry County SWCD as the Farm Planner for Curry County. An added benefit for those with an individual farm plan on file with the SWCD, is that there is a measure of protection from third party lawsuits related to any allegations of water quality violations. One of the stated missions of the Oregon Dept. of Agriculture is to protect the economic viability of agriculture in the state. The 1010 plans are one way we can do that. Joe Brown can be contacted at the SWCD office at 541-247-2755.

On page 2 is a list of the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) members. Monthly public meetings are held with the LAC, ODA Water Quality Planner and Curry SWCD representatives. These meetings are held on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the OSU Extension Office in Gold Beach, unless otherwise posted. Watch the local newspapers for meeting notices and reports on the progress of the plan. Public is welcome at all meetings and public input is encouraged.

If you have any questions, need more information or would like to talk to the farm planner or water quality planner, please call me at 541-348-2652 or email me at lindasmith@briskweb.net I'd be happy to explain as much as possible or find out about anything I can't answer. I look forward to hearing from you.

What Will be in the Curry County SB 1010 Plan?

The Curry SB 1010 Local Advisory Committee has been working nearly 2 years deciding what should and should not be included in the Plan. The committee wants the plan to be broad enough to cover the subject, yet specific enough to be meaningful, without too much left up to future generations for their own interpretation.

Thus far the LAC has focused on educating themselves about local watersheds, identifying and prioritizing the issues to be addressed in the plan. The committee's drafted "Goal and Objectives" statement is as follows:

GOAL

To set forth agricultural management opportunities that result in the continued protection of water quality in the watersheds of Curry County.

OBJECTIVES

- To protect water quality by limiting, to the extent feasible, undesirable contributions from agricultural practices.
- To raise public awareness of agriculture's contribution in protecting water quality.
- To provide public involvement opportunities to share information about positive agricultural management practices.
- To have a plan that is developed locally, supported by the local people and implemented voluntarily.

The plan will not specifically tell farmers what management practices they have to use. Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) does not want to "sit in the tractor seat" with producers, but rather to give them the opportunity to manage their own business as long as they follow local plan guidelines. Local operators will be encouraged to deal with any identified problems such as soil erosion, nutrient/waste disposal, or degraded stream banks. SB 1010 is designed to be implemented on a voluntary basis with regulation being an absolute last resort.

Apart from the SB1010 Plan, ODA recommends creating voluntary, site-specific farm plans for individual operators. This personalized plan explains how your operation addresses its own water quality issues. It contains practices and strategies that you, as the landowner and manager can implement over time. These individual farm plans are entirely voluntary and a Watershed Technical Specialist is available through the Curry County SWCD to help assist operators in creating their own plan.

An effective plan can do several things to improve water quality and help you manage your farm or ranch. Also, if you have an ODA approved farm plan in place and are operating accordingly, you will be protected from possible ODA regulatory action. Even if there is a problem with water quality management, ODA will simply work with you to improve your plan rather than impose penalties.

Voluntary farm plan guidelines under SB 1010 are similar to and easily adapted to Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) plans which may provide financial and technical assistance as well as the many incentives offered for good conservation practices and projects through such programs as CRP, CREP or EQIP. (See article on these programs, Page 6).

Frequently asked Questions about some of the National Resource Conservation Service's Conservation Incentives

Q. What is the Environmental Quality Incentives Program?

A. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) works primarily in locally identified conservation priority areas where there are significant problems with natural resources. High priority is given to areas where State or local governments offer financial, technical, or educational assistance, and to areas where agricultural improvements will help meet water quality objectives. Activities must be carried out according to a conservation plan.

EQIP offers contracts that provide incentive payments and cost sharing for conservation practices, such as manure management systems, pest management, erosion control, and other practices to improve and maintain the health of natural resources.

Q. What is the Farmland Protection Program?

A. The Farmland Protection Program provides funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farmland in use. Working through existing program, USDA joins with State, tribal, or local government to acquire conservation easements or other interests from landowners. USDA provides up to 50 percent of the costs of purchasing the easements. To qualify, farmland must: be part of a pending offer from a State, tribe, or local farmland protection program; be privately owned; have a conservation plan; be large enough to sustain agricultural production; be accessible to markets for what the land produces; have adequate infrastructure and agricultural support services; and have surrounding parcels of land that can support long-term agricultural production.

Q. What is the Conservation Reserve Program?

A. The Conservation Reserve Program reduces soil erosion, protects the Nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reduces sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources it encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover, such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filter strips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices.

Q. What is the Wetlands Reserve Program?

A. The Wetlands Reserve Program is a voluntary program to restore wetlands. Participating landowners can establish conservation easements of either permanent or 30-year duration or can enter restoration cost-share agreements where no easement is involved. In exchange for establishing a permanent easement, the landowner receives payment up to the agricultural value of the land and 100 percent of the restoration costs for restoring the wetland. The 30-year easement payment is 75 percent of what would be provided for a permanent easement on the same site and 75 percent of the restoration cost. The voluntary agreements are for a minimum 10-year duration and provide for 75 percent of the cost of restoring the involved wetlands. Easements set limits on how the lands may be used in the future. Restoration cost-share agreements establish wetland protection and restoration as the primary land use for the duration of the agreement. In all instances, landowners continue to control access to their land.

Q. What is the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

A. The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program provides financial incentives to develop habitat for fish and wildlife on private lands. Participants agree to implement a wildlife habitat development plan and USDA agrees to provide cost-share assistance for the initial implementation of wildlife habitat development practices. USDA and program participants enter into a cost-share agreement for wildlife habitat development. This agreement generally lasts a minimum of 5 years from the date that the contract is signed.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Watershed Stewardship Education Program

There will be a Watershed Stewardship Educational Program (WSEP) coming this fall to Curry County. The program will be hosted by Frank Burris, our county watershed management agent, and is a series of 8 training weekends with topics covering:

- Watershed and Stream Processes
- Riparian Area Functions and Management
- Working Together
- Soils, Erosion, and Conservation
- Salmonid Biology
- Stream Assessment and Restoration
- Wetland Evaluation and Enhancement
- Water Quality Monitoring

Training sessions can be taken individually, but are designed as a full program. If you are interested please contact Frank Burris at the Curry County Extension office at 247-6672 or 1-800-356-3986.

Forest and Stream Education Program

The South Coast Watershed Councils, Lower Rogue Watershed Councils, and the Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District are hosting an education program entitled "Forest and Stream Education." The project is funded by Curry County Title III funds and will be provided free to the public. The classes will be taught once per month in Brookings, Port Orford/Langlois, and Gold Beach. Classes may be taken individually, or as a sequence to provide for a full program. Instructors specializing in the class topics will serve as instructors and all curriculum topics are designed to include indoor instruction and field visits. The tentative schedule for the course is outlined below. You can ask questions and sign up by calling Dana Hicks at 541-247-2755.

Topic	Dates	Instructor
Riparian Forest Ecology	Oct. 12, 19, 26	Chris Massingill
Road Management and Restoration	Nov. 9, 16, 23	Matt Swanson
Salmon Biology	Dec. 7, 21. Jan 4	Harry Hoogesteger
Forest Ecology and Silviculture	Jan. 11, 18. Feb. 1	Jennifer Wright
Water Quality	Feb. 8, 15, 22	Cindy Myers
Wildlife Biology	March 8, 15, 22	Frank Burris
Stream Processes and Aquatic Habitat	April 5, 12, 19	TBA
Landscape Scale Processes in Forested Watersheds	May 3, 10, 17.	TBA

Note: Dates are for Brookings, Gold Beach, and Port Orford/Langlois locations, respectively. TBA= To Be Announced

Free Money for Smart Farming Workshop

Watch for information on an upcoming workshop "Free Money for Smart Farming", tentatively scheduled for January 25th with two follow-up sessions; a tour and working session. Basically, it's a rundown of incentives for good conservation strategies for ag landowners. Curry and Coos SWCDs, NRCS, OSU Extension, ODFW are just a few of those working to bring this opportunity to the landowners.