

Oregon's 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 local advisory committees to develop Water Quality Management Area Plans and Rules throughout the state. Area Plans are reviewed and updated by ODA and the local advisory committee every two years. The original Curry Area Plan and Rules were approved by ODA in 2004.

### » The Area Plan

The Area Plan guides local landowners and their conservation partners on how to prevent pollution. It includes information on agricultural water quality concerns and recommendations for addressing them.

The Area Plan does not tell anyone how to farm, ranch, or otherwise use natural resources. Rather, it includes recommended practices that a landowner can choose from. The practices can help meet their business and conservation goals, while also preventing water pollution.

Agricultural water quality concerns in the Curry area are primarily:

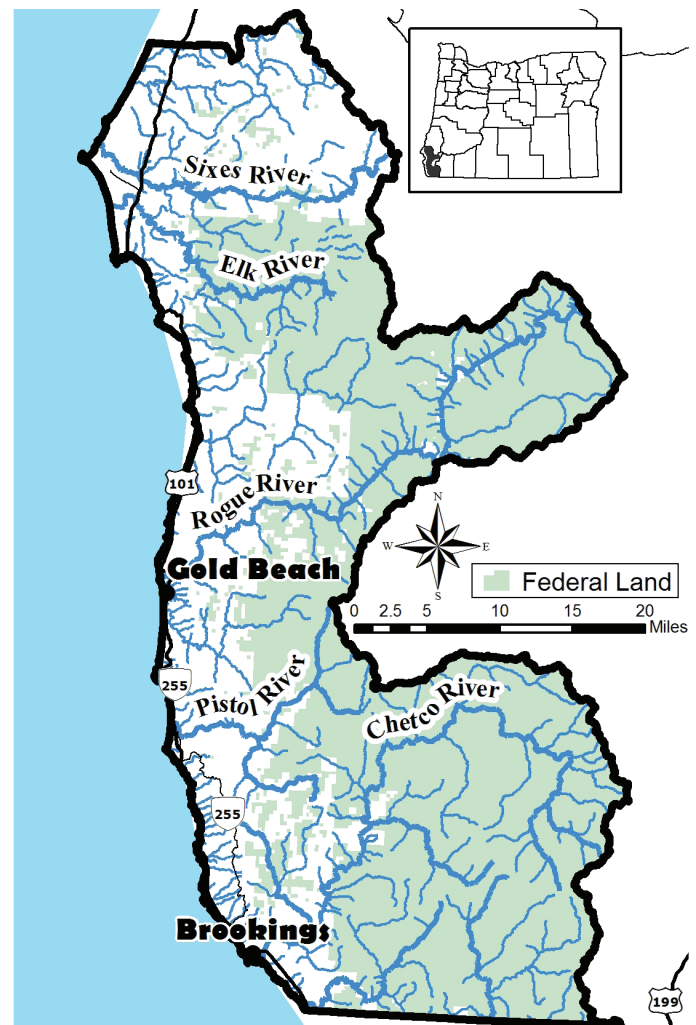
- Water temperature
- Dissolved oxygen
- pH
- Aquatic weeds or algae

### » The Area Rules

The Agricultural Water Quality Program focuses on voluntary and cooperative efforts by landowners and others to protect water quality.

However, the Agricultural Water Quality Management Act also includes enforcement to ensure prevention and control of water pollution from agricultural sources.

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## » The Area Rules

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Area Rules allow landowners flexibility in how they protect water quality. Area Rules describe conditions that landowners must achieve on agricultural lands, rather than practices they must implement.

All agricultural landowners must allow vegetation along:

- Year-round streams to provide shade, stabilize banks, and filter out pollutants from overland flows.
- Seasonal streams to stabilize banks and filter out pollutants from overland flows.

In addition, landowners must not pollute ground or surface water by discharging wastes\* into waters of the state or placing any wastes in a location where they are likely to enter waters of the state.\*\*

*\* Wastes include excess soil, manure, fertilizer, or other substances that can pollute water.*

*\*\* Waters of the state include ponds, groundwater, canals, ditches, and rivers.*

The local advisory committee helped ODA develop Area Rules (Oregon Administrative Rules 603-095-3540) specifically for the Curry area. These Rules address water quality issues identified in the Area Plan.

The following is a summary of regulations that apply to the Curry County area:

- 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.
- Agricultural activities shall allow the development of riparian vegetation to control water pollution by providing erosion control, sediment and nutrient filtering, moderation of solar heating, and water infiltration into the soil profile.

## » Do the Area Plan and Area Rules apply to me?

The Area Plan and Area Rules apply to all agricultural lands. This includes lands in current agricultural use and those lying idle or on which management has been deferred. They also apply to agricultural activities within incorporated city boundaries, urban growth boundaries, and non-federal forest lands.

### » What should I do?

Landowners should evaluate their agricultural activities and try to determine if they might:

- Pollute streams, canals, or groundwater.
- Prevent growth of appropriate vegetation along streams.

Then change any problem practices to ensure compliance with the Area Rules and to protect water quality.

### » Who can help?

The Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) is the primary source of landowner assistance to address water quality concerns. SWCDs are non-regulatory local organizations that can help or direct landowners to additional sources of help.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- » Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District: **541.247.2755**
- » Beth Pietrzak, ODA Water Quality Specialist: **541.414.8797**, [elizabeth.pietrzak@oda.oregon.gov](mailto:elizabeth.pietrzak@oda.oregon.gov)
- » ODA's Agricultural Water Quality Program: **503.986.4700**, <https://oda.direct/AgWQPlans>