LOWER UMATILLA BASIN GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA COMMITTEE (GWMAC)

Scope: Regional/Watershed **Location:** Oregon

SCOPE:

- Within state ground water management areas
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) designates Groundwater Management Areas (GWMA) under the Oregon Groundwater Protection Act, when the groundwater has elevated contaminant concentrations resulting, at least in part, from nonpoint sources.
- Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA encompasses three counties
- Oregon has designated three GWMAs because of elevated nitrate concentrations in groundwater:
  - Lower Umatilla Basin GWMA,
  - Northern Malheur County GWMA
  - Southern Willamette Valley GWMA
- Oregon DEQ declared the Lower Umatilla Basin a GWMA in 1990 due to elevated nitrate concentrations on a regional scale.
- DEQ and the Groundwater Management Area Committee developed an action plan to address nitrate levels in the basin.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Phil Richerson,
Nonpoint Source Hydrogeologist
541-776-6029
Richerson.Phil@deq.state.or.us
http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/groundwater/lubgwma.htm

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- After Oregon DEQ declared the Lower Umatilla a GWMA, local Lower Umatilla area residents and governments formed the Groundwater Management Area Committee, comprised of affected and interested parties, to develop the action plan.
- The Committee worked with and advised the state agencies which were required to develop an action plan to reduce groundwater contamination.

MEMBERS:

DEQ, Oregon Department of Agriculture, local area residents, landowners, and local governments.

WATER CONCERNS:

Nitrates and nitrogen

STRATEGIES:

Goal of Action Plan

- To protect the area's groundwater by reducing the level of nitrate-nitrogen to below the Maximum Contaminant Level (10 mg/l) that originally triggered the state declaration of a GWMA.

Methods

- Implement the action plan in a manner that encourages voluntary actions by members of the community to protect groundwater quality.
- Maintain a viable economy in the area while reducing nitrate loading to the groundwater.