

Lower Umatilla Basin Groundwater Management Area (LUBGWMA) Committee

Scope: Regional/Watershed

Location: Oregon

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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SCOPE:

- Within state boundary ground water management area.
- 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 two counties.
- Oregon has designated three GWMA's 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.
- The Groundwater Management Area Committee developed two action plans to address nitrate levels in the basin.

COLLABORATIVE FORMATION:

- After Oregon DEQ declared the Lower Umatilla a GWMA, Lower Umatilla area residents and local governments formed the Groundwater Management Area Committee, comprised of affected and interested parties, to develop action plans.
- The Committee works with and advises the state agencies, to develop an action plan to encourage voluntary actions to reduce groundwater contamination.

STRUCTURE/FUNDING:

- Leadership: Committee Chair - Scott Lukas, Oregon State University
- Pooling funds from partnering jurisdictions/agencies
- Competitive grant programs
- A soil health grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation funds an outreach position to encourage producers to enroll in Natural Resource Conservation Service financial and technical assistance programs, using soil health conservation practices to help the ongoing effort to address high nitrates in the groundwater.

MEMBERS:

- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Oregon State University
- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Morrow and Umatilla Soil and Water conservation districts
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Water Resources Department
- Local area residents
- Landowners
- Local governments

WATER CONCERNS:


- Nitrates and nitrogen

STRATEGIES:

- Goal of Action Plan
<https://lubgwma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Second-Action-Plan-Draft-For-Public-Comment.pdf>
- To protect the area's groundwater by reducing loading of nitrate-nitrogen to below the Maximum Contaminant Level (7 mg/l) that originally triggered the state declaration of a GWMA.

RESULTS:

- 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.



Information current as of November 2020. Please check with the Collaborative contacts (or website if available) for the most up to date information. To find other source water collaboratives across the U.S. or to add yours to the list, visit the Source Water Collaborative's [How To Collaborate Toolkit](#)