

# **Nitrate Reduction Plan Implementation & Nitrate Management Efforts in the LUBGWMA**

Oregon Senate Natural Resources and Wildfire Committee

May 13, 2025

# WATER FOR EASTERN OREGON



- Nonprofit coalition of local farmers and businesses working with local and state partners to ensure everyone in the Lower Umatilla Basin has access to clean drinking water
- Organized in 2022, officially formed in 2023
- Executive Director position created in 2024



# H2OEO's PERSPECTIVE



- Three Prong Approach
  - Drinking water response
  - Address current loading of nitrates
  - Address legacy nitrates



# DRINKING WATER RESPONSE



- Drinking Water Response
  - 2024 tests conducted
  - 599 results at or above 10mg/l
  - 247 filter treatment systems installed
  - 579 homes receiving water delivery



# DRINKING WATER RESPONSE



- Clean Water Consortium
  - Port of Morrow and Morrow County coalition designed to put pipes in the ground
  - Focusing on extending municipal drinking water infrastructure and non-connection solutions for remote homes
  - H2OEO Executive Director on Advisory Committee

# CURRENT LOADING OF NITRATES



- Oregon Nitrate Reduction Plan
  - ODA Strategic Implementation Area process
  - WRD well inspections
  - Septic system inspections and loan program
- ODA LUBGWMA Rulemaking Committee
  - H2OEO Executive Director and Members participating



# LEGACY NITRATES



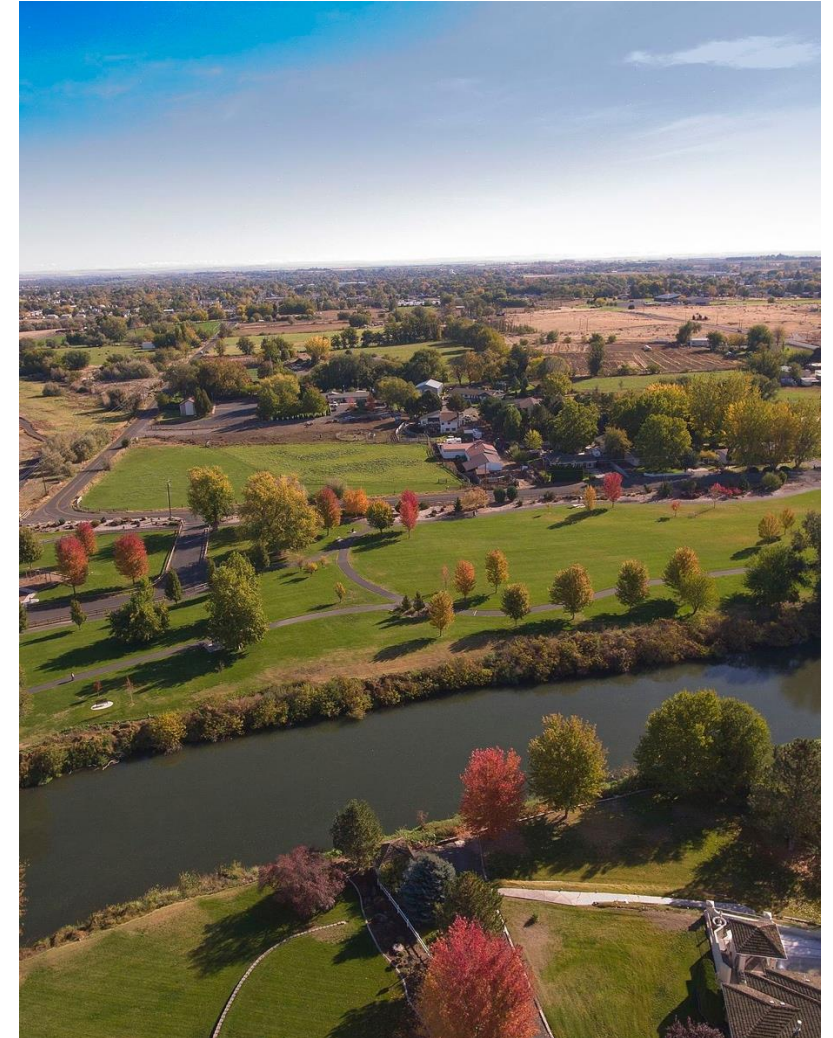
- Awareness of elevated nitrate concentrations prior to 1990 Groundwater Protection Act
  - Prior to significant advances in irrigation technology
  - Prior to development of additional acreage for agriculture
- Aquifer restoration via recharge
  - Remove water from areas with legacy nitrates and recharge with fresh water



# MEASURING PROGRESS



- Develop peer-reviewed hydrologic data set to determine what water goes where
- Identify areas of elevated nitrates
- Implement projects (Ag BMPs, septic repair/replacement, inspect well construction)
- Measure nitrate reductions
  - If projects are effective, implement elsewhere in LUBGWMA
- Recent OSU report indicates GWMA is likely multiple distinct compartments within the larger aquifer





# 2025 LEGISLATION



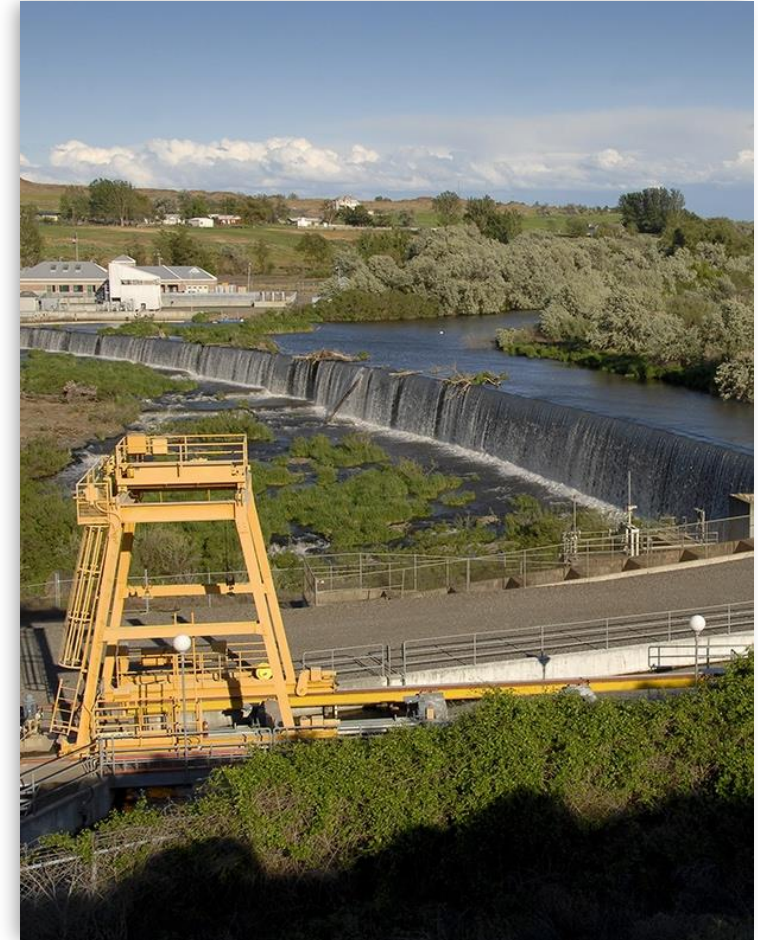
- SB1154
  - Working with legislature and a variety of stakeholders to improve GWMA response process
- SB830
  - Supporting expansion of DEQ Septic Financial Aid Program to include grants and expand eligibility
- HB2168
  - Capitalization of Septic Financial Aid Program fund
- HB2165
  - Funding for WRD well inspection and compliance program



# 2025 LEGISLATION



- SB5531
  - Funding for Morrow County Nitrate Water Project
- HB2169
  - Expansion of state water reuse policy
- HB3246
  - Support of symbiotic relationships between businesses



# TAKEAWAYS



- Unprecedented public health response regarding drinking water
- Local efforts underway to extend municipal drinking water to impacted well users
- Interagency Team is actively implementing the Oregon Nitrate Reduction Plan
- Further development of hydrogeology is needed to implement projects, conduct aquifer restoration, and measure progress
- H2OEO is here to be a collaborator, a convenor, and bring resources and expertise to our basin

