

LUBGWMA Advisory Committee (Virtual)

August 26, 2026, 10 AM - 12 PM

MEETING PURPOSE: Reconvene LUBGWMA Advisory Committee for relevant progress updates related to the Nitrate Reduction Plan, hear updates from committee members, and announce the published updated Nitrate Reduction Plan.

ACTIONS and FOLLOW UP

ITEM FLAGGED	Follow Up? Engagement Opportunity? Who leads?
The next Advisory Committee meeting is set for November 9, 2026.	
OWRD will work to identify locations for new monitoring wells that recently received funding.	Members are encouraged to contact Chris Kowitz if they have ideas, or if they are landowners that are willing to have a well on their property. Agencies will collaborate with the OSU study team on this effort in the fall of 2026.

SUMMARY NOTES

Advisory Committee Attendees

Sylvia Ciborowski led introductions of the LUBGWMA Advisory Group members attending virtually and in-person.

Committee Members

Aaron Palmquist
Carlos Bonilla
Commissioner Dan Dorran
Greg Harris
Commissioner Gus Peterson
Ian Toeves
Jacob Kimiecik
Jake Madison

Jose Garcia
Karen Lewotsky
Kristin Anderson Ostrom
Neil Ferguson
Robert Waldher
Salini Sasidharan
Tamra Mabbott
Troy Baker

Agency Staff, Guests and Members of the Public

Amber Moore
Ann Farris
Bill Goss
Chris Kowitz
Isaak Stapleton

Jana Compton
Jared Tesch
Jeff Svedin
Jordann Krouse
Kerri

Kevin Fenn
Kevin Payne
Laura Fredrickson
Laura Gleim
Nick Sirovatka
Paul Poister
Ryan Krabill

Shiloh Simrell
Sylvia Ciborowski
Tessa Willburn
Tom Straughan
Trea Nance

LUBGWMA Committee Member Updates

Committee members were invited to share relevant updates and anything they are hearing from constituents. They shared:

Karen Lewotsky, Oregon Environmental Council: OEC's focus for the next few months is to working with agencies on budgeting issues to make sure there is funding for efforts in LUBGWMA and across Oregon.

Carlos Bonilla, OSU LUBGWMA Working Group: Oregon State University has made progress through an OSU LUBGWMA Working Group since April 2025, with the goal of providing science-based guidance and an independent perspective to decisions. Five OSU professors and researchers are part of the Working Group, and provide expertise in crop and soil science, groundwater management, soil and water quality, and other topics.

Carlos shared highlights of OSU's efforts in the LUBGWMA over the past year, which include:

- LUBGWMA Advisory Committee Science and Research Committee to provide input into the Nitrate Reduction Plan
- ODA LUBGWMA Rules Advisory Committee
- Monthly meetings with state agencies to find collaborative opportunities
- Monthly meetings convened by the Governor as part of the Agronomic Rate Working Group
- LUBGWMA SIA Monitoring and Assessment Proposal led by ODA
- Water Reuse Advisory Group meeting led by DEQ
- Responding to research requests to support several regional nitrogen management and water quality efforts

State Nitrate Reduction Plan Progress

The state agencies provided updates on implementation of the Nitrate Reduction Plan.

Oregon Department of Agriculture

Isaak Stapleton and Nick Sirovatka; Amber Moore, OSU

Water Quality Groundwater Rules: The rules were put into effect on March 13, and ODA will conduct targeted outreach this fall to all land management operations not currently under another permit. Outreach will include mailings to all individuals that need to document their nutrient management plan. The rules require that producers that operate 500 acres or more need a certification filed with ODA by May 2027. The nutrient management plan must be signed off by an irrigation or nutrient management specialist. Alternatively, a producer can self- certify

that they are following a nutrient management recommendation from the NRCS or a university, or certify that no nutrients are being applied to the land area.

Agricultural Water Quality Compliance Updates: Four compliance cases have been opened in the LUBGWMA since April 2026. All have been closed with letters sent to land managers identifying BMPs for those resource producers. A new complaint was received on Aug 17 that is being worked through the ODA complaint process.

Strategic Implementation Area (SIA): A monitoring plan is being finalized for SIA 1, which focuses on getting a better account of where nitrates are leaving fields.

Remote Evaluation for SIA 2 is just getting started. Agricultural fields covered under CAFO permits or DEQ permits fall outside of the jurisdiction of ODA's water quality program, but there is an opportunity for ODA to work with colleagues to see if anything in those areas needs attention. Remote evaluation of SIA 2 will occur August 31 through September 2.

Committee comment/request: Are small lots/rural residential parcels included in SIA work? ODA responded that all lots with agricultural uses within the SIA are evaluated.

Committee comment/request: What occurs in the remote monitoring? ODA responded that the agency evaluates the most recent aerial photo for each relevant tax lot to determine whether a follow-up visit is needed.

Small Block Grant on Crop Utilization: Amber Moore, OSU Researcher, provided information about a recently submitted proposal to seek small block grant funding for a project to better understand how much nitrogen is being removed from fields at harvest. The intent is to develop a robust, local database of nitrogen concentrations. The research would focus on onions and potatoes, with the hope of expanding to other crops in the future. ODA is a collaborator on the effort. The project would include commercial sampling in onion and potato fields and analyzing them for nitrogen concentrations.

Committee comment/request: Will the research consider different varieties of potatoes and onions? Amber responded that the research would pick up on that nuance, knowing that there are different nitrogen utilization rates depending on crop variety and season of harvest.

Committee comment/request: Some producers cut back into the field left over agricultural waste like potato residues. Will the research be able to distinguish whether people are using that approach? Amber responded that the project would focus on how much nitrogen was applied and how much was removed.

Department of Environmental Quality
Laura Gleim

Septic System Repair and Replacement Funding: Renewed funding for this program was proposed in a state agency package as part of the [Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund](#). If the package passes through legislature, the program would have renewed funding for two years.

Quarterly Sampling: DEQ sampled wells in March and May and will sample again this fall. All data is available online at [DEQs water quality database \(AWQMS\)](#).

Groundwater Data Portal – LUB Hub: A beta version of this joint program of state agencies and OSU is intended to be available in the next few months. The LUB Hub will layer various data from several agencies into one GIS-based mapping platform. Users will be able to toggle layers on and off and the portal will be dynamic and updated as more data becomes available.

Oregon Water Resources Department

Chris Kowitz

Federal Funding for Monitoring Wells and Monitoring Wells Placement: Funding for new monitoring wells in LUBGWMA was received due to Senator Merkley's work, and agencies are working to get contracts in place. OWRD hopes to work with LUBGWMA Advisory Committee members to identify areas with data gaps to propose wells in those locations. Members should contact Chris Kowitz if they have ideas, or if they are landowners that are willing to have a well on their property. The expectation is that 8-12 wells will be installed, with drilling work beginning in early 2027.

Committee comment/request: Can DEQ use those monitoring wells for their data collection as well? OWRD responded that yes, the intent is to share monitoring well data to answer any water quality or quantity question.

Committee comment/request: Would there be an opportunity to collect some soil samples and geophysics as part of installation? OWRD responded that agencies will collaborate with the OSU study team on this effort in the fall of 2026.

Backflow Program and Funding: OWRD continues to do work on the backflow device prevention program. Last year, OWRD committed to going to every site that had a groundwater well in the LUBGWMA. This year, OWRD is conducting re-inspections on some sites and also looking at the periphery of the LUBGWMA boundary. Unexpectedly, OWRD also received funding from the Oregon Environmental Restoration Fund that will likely be used to hire a staff member to work on a statewide backflow program initiative.

Nitrate Reduction Plan Update

Laura Gleim

The Nitrate Reduction Plan Update has been published and incorporates implementation progress, one newly added strategy, clarifications and language clean up, and an appendix of public feedback. The initial pages of the updated Plan outline what sections were updated. There are also updated maps in the plan.

Wrap Up

The next LUBGWMA Advisory Committee meeting will be held on November 9, 2026. Members are encouraged to reach out to the facilitator and agencies if they have specific topics they want covered at the next meeting.

Today's meeting summary and presentation will be posted to the multi-agency website designated to LUBGWMA efforts: lubgwma.org