

PSP Strategic plan

Background

Program Overview

The Pesticide Stewardship Partnership (PSP) program works with state agencies, local partners and pesticide users to evaluate water quality and provide education and outreach about pesticides detected in area streams and rivers. The program first started in 2000 in the Hood River watershed, and has expanded over time to numerous other watersheds around the state.

The PSP program has been successful in many areas of the state in reducing the levels and frequency of pesticide detections in surface waters. In other areas, particularly in areas with high crop diversity, we have not seen the same sustained anticipated improvements. Generally, the program has been very successful in areas with relatively homogeneous agricultural land uses.

The following strategic plan seeks to build on the program's successes and identify opportunities for continuous improvement. This plan has been developed with input from a PSP Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), which began meeting in November 2019, and the Water Quality Pesticide Management Team (WQPMT), which is comprised of agencies that have pesticide and water quality responsibilities in Oregon, and Oregon State University (OSU).

Through interagency agreement, the WQPMT ensures that all elements of the PSP is carried out in a uniform and coordinated manner. This is accomplished through the issuance of program guidance, standard operating procedures and technical assistance to watershed partners. The program accomplishes its work together with many local partners.

WQPMT Member Agencies

- Oregon Department of Agriculture
- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- Oregon Health Authority
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Oregon State University (OSU)

The Stakeholder Advisory Group was established to provide the WQPMT and member agencies with feedback and guidance on various aspects of the PSP Program. The Group

consists of numerous stakeholders interested in pesticide use and its potential impacts to Oregon's environment. Membership in the group is by appointment from the member state agencies of the WQPMT and is intended to represent a balance between various interests related to pesticide use.

Stakeholder Advisory Group members

Name	Affiliation
Brian Wolcott	Walla Walla WSC
Bryan Harper	Farmer/Board of Ag member
Chandra Ferrari	Trout Unlimited
Derron Coles	Blueprint Foundation
Jeff Jenkins	OSU
Jeff Stone	OR Assoc. of Nurseries
Karen Lewotsky	OEC
Scott Dahlman	OFS
Lisa Arkin	Beyond Toxics
Lisa Kilders	Clackamas SWCD
Mary Anne Cooper	OFB
Robin Harris	CTUIR
Seth Barnes	OFIC
Steve Stewart	City of Newport

Key Objective 1

Use data strategically to identify areas with potential or existing problems and focus the program's efforts in better understanding and addressing those problems. Use highest quality data to drive continuous water quality improvement and education efforts.

What does this mean?

At the watershed level, and through the development of strategic plans, require designation of critical areas which will be used to focus resources. At the state level identify those pesticides of most concern and that list revise every two years based on latest data.

Data forms the basis of all determinations made in the program, recognizing the criticality of this element, only data that has been collected and analyzed according to approved quality assurance plans and standard operating procedures will be used.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

Achieving sustained declines in both pesticide concentrations and frequencies (both at watershed critical areas and statewide levels). This will result in fewer pesticides being designated as either a pesticide of high concern or a pesticide of moderate concern.

Examples of actions in the next 5 years to achieve this objective

In coordination with local partners, use water quality data from each PSP watershed on an annual basis to develop messaging to pesticide users and technical assistance providers that is delivered through outreach, education, and training.

In conjunction with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Laboratory identify new laboratory methods to test for widely used, new pesticides that we do not currently have the ability to analyze.

Key Objective 2

Ensure transparency, accessibility, uniformity and integrity of program information at the local level and the statewide level, and involve key stakeholders in decision making.

What does this mean?

Local stakeholders continue to be regularly informed of the progress of the statewide program and potential impacts on individual PSP's. The program continues to strive to bring in new partners in each PSP watershed; the program continues to make decisions with the feedback of the WQPMT and the stakeholder advisory committee; and the program consults with WQPMT agency leadership on key decisions.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

Key decisions are informed by PSP data and results. Local partners, stakeholders and agency leadership are engaged throughout the process.

Local strategic plans are developed for each PSP watershed, such as those recently completed by the Middle Rogue and underway in Walla Walla, Clackamas, and Amazon. These plans help focus on priority needs, and help ensure communication between stakeholders and local partners.

PSP outcomes are informed and enhanced by information from both statewide and local levels.

There is good dialogue between stakeholders at the state level and the local level about opportunities to improve outcomes in each PSP watershed.

There is good dialogue between agency leadership, staff and managers about how the program is working and opportunities to improve outcomes.

Program activities and decisions are conducted according to Standard Operating Procedures designed to ensure uniformity within watersheds

Examples of actions in the next 5 years to achieve this objective

Convene agency leadership at least once per year to summarize progress and consult with them on key decisions. The key decisions include:

- Biennial spending plan
- Grant awards

- New pilots
- Pilot expansions into full PSPs
- Discontinuing pilots or full PSPs
- Major changes in the allocation of program resources between the 4 major components of the program, monitoring, development and implementation of management measures based on monitoring, pesticide waste collection, and technical assistance grants

Meet with the SAG at least once per year, but likely more often especially during the group's first one to two years.

Present case studies of PSPs to the SAG and gather input on how to build stakeholder engagement as part of those case study conversations.

Continue to support the development of watershed specific strategic implementation plans for PSP activities.

Data are analyzed in a consistent manner, and data presentations are made using consistent methodologies and formats.

Assemble current operational guidance documents and develop new ones as needed with the goal of a set of standard operating procedures for all major aspects of the PSP program

Key Objective 3

Base decisions about PSP watershed status on standardized, transparent criteria.

What does this mean?

For each existing PSP watershed and each pilot PSP, develop clear criteria that when attained, will result in a decision regarding the:

- (a) continuation of a full PSP or expansion of a pilot PSP into a full PSP;
- (b) discontinuation of a pilot PSP; or the
- (c) reduction of monitoring frequencies to a maintenance status.

Criteria should include pesticide detection frequencies and amounts relative to benchmarks or water quality criteria, and the level of stakeholder engagement.

Whenever a PSP watershed attains these criteria, the WQMPT should present the findings to the SAG and to agency leadership for input before a decision is made.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

The decision-making process is straight forward and based upon the established standard operating procedures.

Examples of actions in the next 5 years to achieve this objective

Have in place in each PSP watershed an approved Strategic Implementation Plan which addresses the nine major elements of the program, including watershed specific goals that include a baseline goal of no pesticide exceedances over 50% of an aquatic life benchmark and no detection frequency above 36% for a three-year period.

Transition current watersheds that have achieved water goals to either maintenance status or conclusion of the specific PSP activities.

As resources allow and in cooperation with local stakeholders establish new pilot areas meeting criteria for study

Key Objective 4

Use a progressive approach that focuses extensively on stakeholder engagement, outreach and education to address pesticide problems in water and that identifies other potential tools to deal with persistent problems.

What does this mean?

Pesticide user engagement strategies, Educational efforts and behavioral changes leading to success are documented. The program knows how specifically many pesticide users are being trained, and what types of training applicators are receiving.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

If we see a correlation between training and outreach with a reduction in the level and frequency of pesticides detected (documentation is required in the Strategic Implementation Plan) will know that we are "doing it right". When the outreach and educational efforts are successful, we can also adapt and use the specific training and outreach technique in other areas.

Examples of actions in the next 5 years to achieve this objective

Develop a foundational curriculum about pesticides and water quality that can be part of accredited training programs for pesticide certification credits.

Work with PSP partners annually in each watershed to use water quality data to develop key messages to specific PSP users and technical assistance providers that is delivered through outreach, education, and training.

Develop a strategy to better understand why there may or may not be improvements in water quality. When pesticide levels and frequencies have been reduced, determine if a reduction has occurred because of: successful awareness-raising, educational efforts and documented changes in behavior or attitude, improved application methods or technology; or due to different products being substituted for active ingredients that have been identified as problematic.

Apply lessons learned from one watershed to additional watersheds.

Key Objective 5

Expand our partnerships with other agencies and organizations to leverage resources to achieve beneficial outcomes/achieve multiple WQ objectives.

What does this mean?

Increase cooperation and coordination with WQPMT member agencies to enhance available expertise and expand availability of technical resources. Expand partnerships to include additional local, state tribal, and federal agencies with pertinent technical expertise and resources. Broaden the program's partnerships to environmental justice organizations in each area.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

We see additional beneficial water quality outcomes in areas where we leverage additional resources, both in terms of pesticides and other water quality issues.

Examples of actions in the next 5 years to achieve this objective

Stakeholders and local partners understand the different types of technical assistance available to them, and can leverage different funding sources to better quantify outcomes over time. For example, Strategic Implementation Areas (SIAs), which focus on water quality and landscape outcomes in response to agricultural improvements, generate watershed data that may be relevant to PSPs. Stakeholders and local partners benefit from sharing the data that is compiled for both PSPs and SIA monitoring.

Local partners implementing PSPs design projects strategically to focus on priority monitoring needs, and demonstrate increasing ability to quantify outcomes over time. Limited monitoring resources are focused strategically to address identified PSP goals.

Partner with PSEP to develop a foundational curriculum about pesticides and water quality that can be part of accredited training programs for pesticide certification credits.

Expand WQPMT membership to include other natural resource agencies such as Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Expand local PSP partnership base by engaging with environmental justice groups and others that can help achieve project goals.

Key Objective 6

Incentivize strategic planning and continuous improvement in local PSP program delivery.

What does this mean?

Several local PSP partners that currently receive grant funding through the program are developing local strategic plans to accomplish the water quality goals in their areas. We would like to expand strategic plan development opportunities to all participating local PSP partners, and provide additional funding to develop strategic plans.

How will we know if we are doing this right?

Local partners in each PSP watershed have an up to date strategic plan describing goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve water quality goals in collaboration with local pesticide users and other partners.

Before we designate a new watershed as a full PSP, there will be a strategic plan that identifies benchmarks for expanding to a full PSP, or discontinuing monitoring.

Examples of actions in the next 5 years to achieve this objective

Assist partners in PSP watersheds that have not yet started strategic plans in launching a planning process.

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