

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
December 8, 2016
Hal Holmes Center
Ellensburg, Washington

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. Facilitator Neil Aaland reviewed the agenda. Introductions were made around the room.

Update: Columbia River Treaty

Tom Tebb, OCR Director provided a status report. Vice President Biden is visiting Ottawa this month. We are assuming that the new administration will continue down the same path with the Treaty. Tom noted that the System Operation Review workgroup has been formed, which includes stakeholders from both sides of the border. Currently they are focusing on modelling different alternatives. As part of the SOR, listening sessions are being held on this side of the border. These are intended to collect comments to inform “scoping” for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). He also noted that several state agencies are considering “cooperating agency” status – Ecology, WDFW, Agriculture. There is a lot of local interest on both sides of the border. The Washington State Association of Counties has a representative in D.C. helping them stay informed, and WSAC has connected with local governments in British Columbia. The SOR process will take about five years.

Comments and observations included:

- Commissioner Goehner wondered how much the open house/scoping meetings will really be able to affect things [Wendy Christensen said these are the required scoping meetings, being used to inform the EIS process]
- Holly Harwood with BPA provided a website link for people wanting to track this and sign up for a contact list: www.crsi.info

Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) Leadership Tour

Tom Tebb, Wendy Christensen introduced this topic. Leadership from federal agencies came out to Washington in mid-October for a series of meetings and tours in the Yakima Basin. The site visits occurred on October 12th and 13th to view projects. The purpose of the DC Leadership Group is to provide assistance with:

- Addressing national policy issues
- Clarifying and strategizing authority issues
- Identifying potential funding opportunities

A draft charter was reviewed by the group, and a set of recommendations was prepared by them. See the powerpoint presentation on the OCR website for further details on the tour and discussions: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/images/pdf/DCLG_2016.pdf

Nicky Pasi showed a “story map” that has been produced. The story map is a new way to present information that allows people to see maps, click on pictures and graphics to get more information. She noted that each slide has a general overview of the project being discussed. General comments were that this is an impressive new tool.

Public Comment

Grant Learned thinks there is limited representation in the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) workgroup from those who are negatively impacted by Yakima Basin Integrated Plan projects. He also noted that no funding is provided to allow private citizens with opposing perspectives to travel easily and interact with people in D.C.

Ann Lewis, Yakima Basin Coalition, likes the story map and said her group likes many of the projects, especially fish passage and conservation. However, she thinks there are major flaws with plans for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Bumping Reservoir storage projects. She presented a copy of a letter sent to Governor Inslee and the US Senate Energy Bill committee members, signed by 17 groups, that includes pictures and perspectives.

David Ortman, Sierra Club, handed out some information to the PAG. He would like to be able to comment after every item on an agenda. He recognizes there are existing water rights and structures in the Alpine Lakes wilderness, but is concerned about the Yakima Basin model moving to a small watershed like the Icicle Creek. He noted that the DC leadership group was not shown Bumping Reservoir and Kachess projects, which his group thinks are flawed.

Ecology Budget/Legislative Request

Tom Tebb opened this discussion. He reviewed the specific project request; the plan is to finish existing projects. As an example, they have invested in Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) – this is a promising technology, uniquely suited to Eastern Washington. The Columbia River total request is \$35 million in capital funding. There is also a list of projects for the Yakima Basin Implementation Plan totaling \$31.1 million. The total request from OCR is \$66.1 million. After the 2017-2019 biennium, there will be no money left out of the original funding of \$200 million. OCR plans to use “pay as you go”, but he hopes that in the future there will be some dedicated funding. The Governor’s budget is due to be issued by mid-December.

Melissa Downes, OCR, noted that for the next PAG meeting they will know the Governor’s budget. There may be a need to prioritize projects based on funding provided. Jim Brown asked if there were any identified legislative champions; Tom said yes, inside the Governor’s office and some elected officials.

He then moved to the proposed legislation, which is supported by the Governor’s office. It is related to two WAC rules that govern permit processing for water rights on the Columbia River. The driving force is state supreme court decisions that have called into question decision-making policy for permit issuance. The proposed bill would allow OCR to continue making decisions the way they have been doing. It would reaffirm the legislative direction for OCR to conduct consultation with tribes and other entities before issuing permits.

Icicle Creek Project

Commissioner Keith Goehner, Chelan County, provided some opening remarks and some history. Tom Tebb thanked the county for its leadership around these issues. Mike Kaputa, Chelan County Natural Resources, Director, introduced members of the Icicle workgroup and provided an overview. At the beginning, he was not sure if it would work. They started this project in 2012. The group developed a set of guiding principles, and has endorsed a package of projects. Some projects will be implemented in 2017 and 2018. He noted that the goal for drought years is to have 60 cubic feet per second (cfs) in Icicle Creek (this has gone as low as 20 cfs in drought years). During a regular year, they expect 100 – 250 cfs.

Melissa noted that the SEPA review process is underway. OCR has co-lead status with Chelan County. A Determination of Significance was issued in February 2016, which kicked off the scoping process. Mike said the list of projects could be different after the SEPA review. If one falls off, another would need to be added to meet all the principles. Mike then reviewed the list of alternatives, and the list of potential projects. Dave Irving, hatchery manager, reviewed projects related to the hatchery. Tony Jantzer, Manager of Icicle-Peshastin Irrigation District, said the

water rights for lakes in the basin date back to 1926. They were adjudicated in 1927. They have perpetual rights to maintain, enhance, and enlarge the lakes.

Questions and comments from CR-PAG members included:

- Are wildfires a problem in the basin? [Not really.]
- Does the Hirst supreme court decision affect the basin? [Yes; the legislature adopted a bill last year that helped protect a reserve of water; but some additional water in reserve is connected.]
- Farms receiving water are farmed by families, not corporate farms

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on March 2 in Olympia, WA.

Attendees: *CRPAG members and alternates:*

- Jim Brown, WDFW
- Wendy Christensen, BOR
- Jon Culp, WSCC
- Keith Goehner, Chelan County Commissioner
- Holly Harwood, BPA
- Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
- Steve Malloch, American Rivers
- Craig Simpson, ECBID
- Richard Stephens, Grant County Commissioner

Others in attendance:

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| Neil Aaland, Facilitator | Michele Kiesz, OGWRP Landowner |
| Debbie Carlson, BPA | Ben Lee, Landau Associates |
| Scott Cave, SC Communications | Grant Learned, Sr. |
| Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation | Ann Lewis, Yakima Basin Coalition |
| Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology | David Ortman, Sierra Club |
| Urban Eberhart | Nicky Pasi, AR |
| William Gale, USFWS | John Roskelley, CELP |
| Dan Haller, Aspect | Jennifer Stephens, Department of Ecology |
| Daryl Harnden, IPID | Tom Tebb, Department of Ecology |
| Tim Hill, Ecology | Arden Thomas, WWT |
| Dave Irving, USFWS | John Ufkes |
| Anthony Jantzer, IPID | Bill Wagoner, National Frozen Foods |
| Mike Kaputa, Chelan County | |