

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
March 9, 2017
Washington State Farm Bureau Office
Lacey, Washington

Welcome/Introductions

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. Facilitator Neil Aaland reviewed the agenda. Introductions were made around the room. Kat Brigham was welcomed to the PAG as the new representative of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR).

Declining groundwater levels in domestic wells

Mike Dexel, Washington Department of Health, presented this topic (see PowerPoint presentation on the OCR website). He last came to the CR-PAG in February of 2014. He noted that Ginny Stern is retiring; Sheryl Howe is taking her place. The focus of this project is on municipal wells. A 2013 USGS report on declining water levels triggered the conversation. The DOH strategy is to provide targeted planning assistance in the focus counties of Franklin, Lincoln, Adams, and Grant.

It is the responsibility of the municipalities to identify and implement solutions. He listed several short-term strategies. In 2014, DOH hosted an open forum. This was targeted to public officials that needed to know and understand the issue. In 2015, they completed a municipal supply assessment (can be found online at WDOH's website). The conclusion was more information on water level data is needed for municipal wells.

Kat Brigham is concerned about the compatibility of data collected; Tom Tebb agreed with this. Steve Malloch asked what assumptions were made. Mike said assumptions are based on information from the utilities; the numbers could change dramatically if aggressive conservation measures are used.

He reviewed long term strategies. They want to identify the 10 most vulnerable water systems, install water level measuring devices, and provide depth to water measurements. They are also targeting 100 non-municipal water systems to see about collecting data. He was asked what happens after the data is collected; if they don't measure water levels following DOH's measurements; and if there is a standing request of purveyors. Ginny Stern said this is the beginning of the data collection process.

Options when wells actually run dry include drilling deeper, switching to shallow aquifers, and trucking in water. Some jurisdictions are looking at a hauled water system. There is a set of WDOH regulations about this option. Mike also suggested looking at Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) and using reclaimed water.

Questions and comments from CRPAG members included:

- There is individual responsibility; conservation is also important. We need data and to educate people
- The identified solutions are costly, how do municipalities consider costs? [Systems over 1,000 connections must consider using reclaimed water]
- A solution is needed soon, running out of time

Tom Tebb asked PAG members what the role of the Office of Columbia River should be in this. OCR could add to outreach, help with specific conservation targets. OCR has been working with specific local communities; is that what he should be doing?

PAG member's responses:

- Outreach is needed and counties need to step up; common data is needed, need to protect water
- Yes, there is a role for OCR; municipalities need help with planning efforts, and as demand increases, new connections and infrastructure
- Not sure this is an OCR responsibility; OCR was charged with specific responsibilities in the statute and this issue is being addressed with counties
- Keeping related issues together has made the Columbia River program successful
- Municipal needs are included in the statute; OCR can engage. Best to get ahead of this, if it comes as a crisis is harder to address. OCR should facilitate a thoughtful approach
- OCR is in a good position to help
- Addressing this is a collaborative process, not only farmers and producers but the whole community

Tom thanks the PAG and said he really appreciates this meaningful advice, and encouraged the PAG to hold him accountable.

Updates from OCR: Budget and Legislative Session

Tom has been asked by Senator Honeyford to propose cuts in an exercise of 15%, 20% and 25%. He is approaching this by making across-the-board cuts, not cutting whole projects. He will come back when he knows the budget. Finishing work in the Odessa sub-area is a top priority. Senator Honeyford did not like having to ask for this. Senate budget will be out next week.

Melissa Downes reviewed the status of OCR request legislation regarding consulting on Columbia River mainstem water rights. The legislation is HB 1394 and the Senate companion bill 5269. OCR currently has a consultation process, want to put it in statute so it can continue. Commissioner Leita said Senator Honeyford has been a champion. Another mechanism is needed to deal with these issues.

BREAK from 11:00 to 11:15

Public Comment

Shelley Spalding, from the federation of western outdoor clubs, described a resolution from their 2016 convention that supports conservation and water banking.

David Ortman, Sierra Club, handed out a report from a consultant they hired. Water developed is not necessarily new, and a performance audit of the Columbia River Program should be done. He suggested looking at the state of Oregon's 2017 audit as an example.

Cathy Reed said every fall in Wenatchee there is an infrastructure convention attended by over 300 people. They are working on the agenda now, and there may be some interest in the Columbia River Program.

State of Oregon approach to Water Supply

Kim Ogren from the Oregon Water Resources Department (WRD) presented this topic. She showed a PowerPoint presentation which has been loaded to the OCR website. Oregon and

Washington have similar challenges. She is responsible for leading Oregon's water development program, and special projects including interstate and federal issues. WRD is the state's water quantity agency. She reviewed a history of Oregon water law.

The mission of WRD is to partner to find solutions. Under their water development program, they offer:

1. Place-based planning, which is locally initiated. 4 pilot projects currently going on; by 2018 they want to have developed plans for these.
2. Feasibility study grants to identify additional information needed and determine feasibility of proposed projects.
3. Grants and loans: for development of projects, instream or out of stream.

\$14 million was authorized for 2015-2017. \$9 million was awarded in 2016, with \$5 million remaining. 2017-2019 governor's budget requested \$30 million for that biennium.

Questions and comments from PAG members:

- Why isn't the Klamath basin a pilot? [they did not ask]
- Army Corps of Engineers has a program for technical assistance, with a 50/50 share, for any water resources project
- Walla Walla basin is quite interesting, trying to figure out protection for ESA listed stocks
- Does OR have a common data base? [yes, WRD houses statewide data in their agency]
- Are any surface storage projects in the funding pipeline? [Kim has heard of some, but no applications are in the door yet]
- What is the role of WRD in the place based planning projects? [Different in each of the 4 pilots, depending on how they've been asked to participate]
- What does the statute provide as a test for meeting water needs? [Consistency with responsibilities of OR DEQ and ODFW is required, need to determine impacts on fish; when mitigating water use, have to have actual water there]
- How did the audit address this program? [Secretary of State does regular audits and it was the turn of WRD. Audit found a number of items; the department agreed with findings and is working on them. Doing a strategic planning process to address]

Neil asked Tom and Kim if there are any potential opportunities for collaboration. Tom said there is a draft MOU between OCR and Oregon; it is still in the formative phases.

Project update: Cle Elum pool raise and fish ladder

Wendy Christensen, Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Yakima, WA, presented this topic. Neil introduced this by explaining that OCR staff used to present updates on a number of projects at each meeting. We've decided to shift to going in-depth on one or two projects instead, to give the CRPAG more information and the ability to hear directly from project implementers.

Wendy presented a PowerPoint. She reviewed the YRBWEP timeline, Yakima Integrated Plan goals, and a short overview of the entire Yakima Integrated plan. The pool raise will provide an additional 3 feet of storage for Cle Elum Reservoir. The dam is not being modified rather, the radial gates are being modified to achieve the rise. The additional 14,600 acre-feet of stored water will be used for instream flows when shoreline protection is complete, approximately 5 years. Timeline is dependent on funding. Phil Rigdon noted the reservoir did not originally have passage; the tribe wants to restore fish passage. It's for more than just sockeye salmon

reintroduction. The Yakama Nation want this improvement. The helix is innovative science. An interim fish passage test has been done at the dam since 2005; the permanent fish passage facilities will mean fish can leave the reservoir earlier. Wendy provided a status on the fish passage facilities and showed Phase 1, the access road and bridge across the spillway, has been completed. Construction on Phase 2 will begin April 2017.

Tom Tebb said the state has front-loaded costs to get the project going, in anticipation of additional federal funding.

Wendy showed a video on the helix, which targets juvenile salmonid downstream passage. She then showed a second video on the “whoosh” system, for moving adults salmonids upstream. Tom Tebb noted that 1/3 of Yakima Integrated Plan funding is presently going to this project. Phil thinks it’s exciting to see this happening.

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.
The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on June 1 in Ellensburg, WA.**

Attendees:

CRPAG members and alternates:

- Kat Brigham, CTUIR
- Wendy Christensen, BOR
- Jon Culp, WSCC
- Michael Garrity, WDFW
- Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
- Steve Malloch, American Rivers
- Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
- Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
- Mike Schwisow, CBDL/Irrigation Districts
- Evan Sheffels, WSFB
- Mark Stedman, Lincoln County
- Jeremy Weber, ACOE

Others in attendance:

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| Neil Aaland, Facilitator | Mike Krautkramer, Robinson Noble |
| Susan Adams, WWT | Ilene Le Vee, landowner |
| Tami Black, GOBFW | Tom Myram, WSWRA |
| Jim Browitt, Schroeder Law Offices | Dave Nazy, Ecology |
| Debbie Carlson, BPA | Steve Nelson, RH2 |
| Scott Cave, City of Quincy | Kim Ogren, Oregon WRD |
| Mike Dexel, DOH | David Ortman, Sierra Club |
| Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology | Cathi Read, Commerce |
| Joel Elelof, Pierce CD | Toni Smith, Landau |
| Tom Fitzhugh | Shelley Spalding, FWOC |
| Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA | Jennifer Stephens, OCR |
| Sheryl Howe, DOH | Ginny Stern, DOH |
| Al Josephy, Ecology | Tom Tebb, OCR/Ecology |
| Sue Kahle, USGS | Jill Van Hulle, PGG |
| Ted Knight, Spokane Tribe | |