

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
March 7, 2019
Washington State Farm Bureau
Lacey, Washington

Welcome/Introductions

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

OCR Updates

OCR \$300 million re-authorization request: Tom explained that Ecology decided last fall to request a re-authorization of bonding authority for \$300 million. Separately, Ecology asked for \$42.1 million for Yakima projects and \$40 million for OCR projects. The Governor's office, in its budget, decided not to seek bonding re-authorization. The Governor's budget ultimately included \$34 million for OCR (a 14% reduction in the request) and \$31.5 million for Yakima (a 25% reduction). Separately, Senator Honeyford decided to file a bill providing \$4 billion for several categories of infrastructure, including water projects.

Melissa Downes showed an updated budget powerpoint (similar to the one shown in December but updated). It included updated project numbers. One item that was zeroed out was new ASR projects; the perspective was that current project needed to be completed. White Salmon and Kennewick projects are hoped to be completed in the 2019 project year. County bridges affected by infrastructure in Odessa area need to be fixed; Tom is working to help with those. Another area for work is correcting unanticipated flooding caused by improvements to the Potholes supplemental feed route.

Craig Simpson noted that he is happy to arrange tours for groups wanting to see the improvements. Neil asked that anyone interested from the PAG (included interested parties) send him an e-mail and we'll see if we can set up a tour just for our group.

Scott Cave noted that he worked with a group of stakeholders to support OCR funding and they prepared and sent a joint letter. See the OCR website (<https://www.ezview.wa.gov/?alias=1962&pageid=37050>) for the detailed powerpoint.

Ecology's Drought Response Bill and Other Legislative updated

Carrie Sessions from Ecology's water resources program presented this topic. She also updated on several other bills:

- Sen. Honeyford's water infrastructure received a hearing in the Senate, but did not get referred to the floor for hearing
 - There was a House hearing on the companion bill
- The Walla Walla Partnership bill would extend them to 2021; this is not an Ecology bill
 - Tom will update later in this meeting

The drought response bill, SHB 1622, seeks to modernize Ecology's response legislation which dates back to 1977. There are many lessons learned from recent droughts. A stakeholder group was organized and recommended changes. She reviewed those changes in a powerpoint presentation (see OCR website for the powerpoint).

Another part of the bill is “building resilience”. This will allow funding of longer term projects, well ahead of a drought emergency. The bill does not yet ask for an appropriation. It also asks for authority for long-term water leases.

Comments and questions from the PAG included:

- Lisa Pelly noted the difficulty of paying a 10-year least with biennial Ecology funding
- Ilene LeVee noted California had some problems with water savings being encouraged and then available funding for conserving was used up quickly

A break was taken from 10:45 to 11:00.

Public Comment

No comments were made.

Watershed Restoration Program – Grant awards and Net Ecological Benefits

Bennett Weinstein and Annie Sawabini gave this presentation. Bennett had a powerpoint presentation about the program and reviewed that. The goal is to offset impacts from new permit exempt wells. Tom Davis noted that the Farm Bureau disagrees with Ecology’s approach to appointing agricultural members of the watershed groups. Bennett will provide to Neil a copy of Ecology’s response for circulation. *[Note: copy of the original letter from Farm Bureau and Ecology’s response is attached]*

Wendy McDermott asked for perspective on why WRIA 1 in Whatcom County was unable to complete their plan in time. Bennett said they were making progress but just ran out of time. They did prepare a robust project list and Ecology will take that into account during their rule-making process (to adopt a plan). WRIA 11 in Thursday County finished with a plan that has a bit less specificity. Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner said WRIA 59 is almost done; WRIA 55 crosses three county lines and is more complicated.

Bennett discussed the grants. There are participation grants awarded to tribes and counties. He showed a chart outlining those. He then reviewed pilot grants. Offer letters have been sent in January 2019 for the first \$20 million of those. The Ecology rule will be adopted in summer 2019, after which guidelines will be issued. Tom Tebb offered to participate in future grant rounds on behalf of OCR. Wes McCart asked Ecology to work with WDFW on related funding; his local habitat biologist for WDFW thought there might be coordination opportunities.

Annie Sawabini discussed Net Ecological Benefits. This is a mandate that is part of the authorizing statute, RCW 90.94. They have been working on guidance, this will be available at the end of July 2019.

Tom Tebb noted there is a range of ways to calculate consumptive use and asked how that would be addressed. Annie said they will have guidance on how to calculate, but it will be up to each planning group to determine how that will be done. They have to look out for 20 years.

Wes McCart pointed out that this program came about due to a Growth Management case, not a water case.

OCR Permitting update

Tyler Roberts, OCR, presented this item. This is primarily about industrial and municipal permitting related to Lake Sullivan and Lake Roosevelt. Tom explained that Lake Roosevelt

permitting does not apply to ag water because the dam was created for the Columbia River Basin project. There is also Federal statutory language precluding agricultural uses off the Project.

Tyler showed a powerpoint presentation. There is 39% of water left to permit out of Lake Roosevelt (9786 acre-feet out of 25,000 acre-feet). OCR is contacting applicants in line still around to see if they are still interested in proceeding. He noted that federal water rights are not the same as a state water right.

He then talked about Lake Sullivan. That water is reserved for six northeast counties, due to the sense that those counties were losing water to downstream permitted water uses. He reviewed the different buckets of Lake Sullivan water – irrigation, municipal, and industrial uses.

Walla Walla Update

Melissa and Tom presented this item. Melissa used a powerpoint prepared by the Walla Walla Partnership. Tom thinks an interstate compact with Oregon is likely needed to manage the basin. The Umatilla Tribe has been concerned about a lack of water during late summer in the Walla Walla River. They have indicated they might need to exercise tribal water rights. The Tribe has urged OCR to get involved. The idea of “putting the water code off to the side”, as envisioned when the Walla Walla Partnership enabling legislation was passed, has not worked out. Walla Walla has its own statute (RCW 90.92) so OCR need to be cautious about getting involved. There is legislation being considered during this session, as discussed earlier.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m. The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on June 20 at the Hal Holmes Center in Ellensburg, WA.

Attendees:

CRPAG members and alternates:

Ron Anderson, Yakima Co Comm
Tom Davis, WA State Farm Bureau
Rick Dinicola, USGS
Michael Garrity, WDFW
Wes McCart, Stevens Co. Comm

Wendy McDermott, American Rivers
Lisa Pelly, TU
Mike Schwisow
Craig Simpson, ECBID
Jeremy Weber, ACOE

Others in attendance:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator
Scott Cave, City of Quincy
Gary Cooper, Local Plng Solutions
Jeff Dengel, WDFW
Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology
Tim Flynn, Aspect Consulting
Cathy Hubbard, Ecology
Paul Jewell, WSAC
Deborah Johnson, WA Dept of Health
Al Josephy, Ecology
Ted Knight, Spokane Tribe
Mike Krautkramer, Robinson Noble

Ilene LeVee, Landowner
Dave McClure, Klickitat County
Jim Mathieu, NW Land & Water
Jacqui Brown Miller, WA DOH
Ann Peterson, Reg'l Fisheries Coalition
Cathi Read, WA Dept of Commerce
John Reeves, Lake Kachess
Tyler Roberts, OCR/Ecology
Carrie Sessions, Ecology
Tom Tebb, OCR/Ecology
Bruce Wakefield, Colville Tribes

