

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
June 1, 2017
Kittitas County Event Center, Armory Hall
Ellensburg, Washington

Welcome/Introductions

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

Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program – Update

Craig Simpson, ECBID, and Melissa Downes, OCR, presented this topic (see PowerPoint presentation located on OCR website at https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/CRPAG/OGWRP.pdf). Melissa provided an overview of the Columbia River Program and history as it relates to Odessa:

- 2004: Columbia River Initiative and MOU (MOU mentions Odessa as a priority)
- 2006: Establishment of Columbia River Water Supply Development Program (Odessa mentioned as a priority in the legislation)

She showed a map of the declining aquifer. An EIS, Biological Opinion (Bi-Op), and Record of Decision were prepared and issued. The project only looks at existing groundwater users in the Odessa aquifer area.

Craig Simpson took over the presentation at this point. He showed a map of improvements, and reviewed specific projects:

- Lind Coulee Siphons 1 and 2
- Warden Siphon
- Radial Gates (Lind Coulee)
- East Low canal widening
- Leisle Road Bridge replacement
- Calloway Road (increasing the hydraulic capacity)

There are additional improvements needed to the East Low canal. Melissa noted that OCR wanted to help with the main backbone of the system, then delivery to property owners is handled by the district. There is an MOA signed with landowners for additional delivery systems; this is more driven by the landowners than the EL 47.5 process. Commissioner Leita noted this is all funded by the taxpayers; that's okay but need to acknowledge there is still the need for an overall funding strategy for water. The state and federal governments need to come to terms with the costs of this. Future funding sources might include state, federal government, landowner, and ECBID bond sales.

CR-PAG members and alternates had the following questions:

- What's the plan for shifting the water use in the Odessa are off the aquifer? [Ecology says they need to keep this in mind as work continues; they are having conversations with landowners. They need to figure out how many years the landowners have to shift their water use]
- A landowner in the audience pointed out they have invested \$900 million so far; they can't afford to pay a lot more

Public Comment: No public comment was provided.

Methow River Instream Flow Improvement Project:

This project update was presented by Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited; Soo Ing-Moody, Twisp Mayor; Sandra Strieby, Methow Valley Irrigation District; and Melissa Downes, Office of Columbia River. Their PowerPoint presentations are posted at <https://www.ezview.wa.gov/?alias=1962&pageid=37050>. Melissa Downes noted that this project is close to the Canadian border, and provides water for people, fish, and farms. She provided some history and noted there was a lot of litigation in the 1980s and 1990s. Some parts of the canals were only 10% efficient, now it's 90%.

Sandra Strieby discussed the Methow Valley Irrigation District component of the project. A settlement agreement had them work with Ecology and Trout Unlimited. The district had an inefficient open canal system that was converted to a piped system; some users were moved to individual wells. The project reduced the size of the district from 2000 acres down to a little over 1,287 acres.

Lisa Pelly discussed the construction aspect. They started working with MVID in 2012. In 2013, the MVID Board decided to proceed. She reviewed the details of the agreement and the construction.

Mayor Ing-Moody talked about the municipal water aspects. She reviewed how the town's water rights problems started. Back in 1997, the state Supreme Court issued a decision that meant the Twisp water right shrunk from 610 AFY to 224 AFY. They worked for many years to reduce their use to meet that lower figure.

CR-PAG members and alternates had the following questions and comments:

- Are exempt wells used in the town? [They are not allowed.]
- It was difficult to find solutions, but were able to land on this program
- This is why the Columbia River program is so important
- The water came out of the MVID water bank (which used original water rights from early 1900s)
- Were the landowners receptive to the "right-sizing" of the MVID? [Some were upset but found they did have enough water.]

OCR Budget and Legislative Updates

Tom mentioned they are soliciting ideas for new projects. He noted that OCR prepares an annual water supply inventory for the legislature. Its purpose is to compile a statewide list of completed conservation projects and potential water supply and storage projects. If you have any such projects of which they may not be aware, please contact Tim Hill or Melissa Downes to add your projects to the report.

OCR dropped a bill this year, the 2017 legislative session, to provide clarify for the process they use in issuing Columbia River water rights. This involves a consultation process, which is a reasonable idea but recent court cases have created uncertainty. The bill passed the Senate but was stuck in the House.

A PowerPoint presentation was shown that illustrated the problems (see https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/CRPAG/6-17-CRPAGleg_budget.pdf). Tom showed Columbia River instream flows, and then Melissa

reviewed what is currently “permissible”. One example of a right issued under consultation is the Kennewick General Hospital. She reviewed that permit process.

Tom asked for feedback on this issue. CR-PAG members offered the following:

- Can we pursue additional water through the Columbia River Treaty process with Canada? [Potentially, that is being pursued]
- Lisa Pelly noted that the statute says that current interruptibles should be addressed; out of 329 about 11% have been addressed. 2001 was the last time they were affected
- What were the concerns in the House? [general worries about the future, with staff and administration changes]
- A non-political advocacy group needs to help advocate on this, and other related issues – water issues are not being adequately addressed. The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) has an advocacy group
 - Tom said if anyone is interested in advising him around this, contact Neil and let him know

Tom moved to the budget update. He reviewed the different budgets – Governor, House, and Senate – in play during this session. Commissioner McCart asked if there is more water available behind Grand Coulee Dam (more than the 18” currently available to the state). There may be, but that water would come with a lot of strings attached. Lisa Pelly wonders how we get away from the legislature providing project-specific allocations, instead of the lump-sum funding initially received (the \$200 million in state bonding capacity originally authorized in 2006). Tom would like to get back to that. Commissioner McCart heard that the capitol budget may not be adopted. If that’s the case, then Tom thinks OCR will need to start shutting down. For the YBIP budget, Tom noted the senate gave some flexibility.

It was suggested that Paul, Lisa, and Craig would assist with a letter that Neil could draft. It would show support for the program, support for funding, need for flexibility, and mention the bond authorization is nearly at an end. Scott Cave noted that follow-up meetings in Olympia would be helpful.

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m.
The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on September 7 in Ellensburg, WA.**

Attendees:

CRPAG members and alternates:

- Jim Brown, WDFW
- Jon Culp, WSCC
- Christi Davis-Kernan, BOR
- Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner
- Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
- Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner
- Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
- Mike Schwisow, CBDL/Irrigation Districts
- Evan Sheffels, WSFB
- Jeremy Weber, ACOE

Others in attendance:

- Neil Aaland, Facilitator

Jacob Anderson, Klickitat County
Scott Cave, City of Quincy
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
Jeff Dengel, WDFW
Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology
Bernie Erickson, ECID
Jon Galow, WA Department of Commerce
Jennifer Hickenbottom, BOR
Sarah Higgins, CBDL
Tim Hill, OCR
Sheryl Howe, DOH
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County
Michele Kiesz, 47.5
Liz Klumpp, BPA
Ben Lee, Landau Associates
Chris Marks, CTUIR
Tom Myram, WSWRA
Meghan O'Brien, Aspect
Mike Poulson, Rep. McMorris Rodgers
Joye Redfield-Wilder, Ecology
George Schneider, George Schneider & Associates
Caitlin Shulan
Marika Sitz, Oregon Water Coalition
Jennifer Stephens, OCR
Tom Tebb, OCR/Ecology
Bill Wagoner, NFFC
Eric Weber, Landau Associates
Jake Wollman, Jr., WHR