

**Columbia River Policy Advisory Group**  
**June 20, 2019**  
**Hal Holmes Center**  
**Ellensburg, Washington**

*Note: Powerpoint presentations from this meeting are available on the OCR website:  
<https://www.ezview.wa.gov/?alias=1962&pageid=37050>*

**Welcome/Introductions**

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. Introductions were made around the room. Facilitator Neil Aaland reviewed the agenda. Jeff Marti is delayed so the meeting will begin with the Office of Chehalis Basin presentation.

**Office of Chehalis Basin – Andrea McNamara Doyle, Director**

Andrea was asked to attend and discuss the OCB – its mission, how it connects to OCR. She started with a powerpoint presentation [see the OCR website] and explained the geography of the basin. It includes four legislative districts. It's 50/50 Democratic/Republican split. The basin has experienced serious flooding recently in 2007 and 2009. Doing nothing could mean \$3.5 – \$4.5 billion in economic damage. It's the only basin in the state without a federally listed salmon species, but the species are still struggling. Climate change/temperature are the largest impact on fish.

The legislative direction to OCB is long term flood damage reduction and aquatic species habitat restoration. Administratively, OCB is housed within the Department of Ecology. She has four core staff members; she reports both to a Board and to the Ecology Director.

The strategy: a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement was done in the fall of 2017. So far, they've accomplished some fish barrier removal, construction of farm pads (higher ground for farm animals and equipment during flooding), and some local flood reduction actions. Successes include opening fish habitat, among other things.

Commissioner Leita asked about the local Critical Areas Ordinances (CAOs) and whether they're adequate. Part of their strategy is to look at local CAOs. Their assumption is they operate within existing environmental regulations. They are aware of the Voluntary Stewardship Program being implemented by the counties.

Top take-away messages for species include:

- Facing a declining baseline of aquatic species
- Focus on improving habitat and capacity
- Are confident in the actions and decisions needed
- Will take a significant investment (\$480-900 million for the aquatic species plan)

Infrastructure issues include the North Shore levee (joint project between Hoquiam and Aberdeen), need to expand and raise the levee. In Lewis County, there is the flood control zone district project. This includes improvements to the airport levee; reducing closure of I-5 during flood events – this means building a dam that can store 65,000 acre-feet and is expandable in the future. It's a run of river dam, fish passage happens normally.

Preliminary cost estimates for the FCZD's levee and dam project would likely meet or exceed the costs estimated for implementing the aquatic species restoration plan. There is a multiple approach strategy. She said tribal engagement is good.

Comments and questions include:

- Commissioner Leita asked about the timeline [fall 2020 is the unofficial date for the strategy; it's not in statute]
- Michael Garrity thinks the Yakima Basin plan is easier to phase than Chehalis
- Lisa Pelly wondered what a flood retention facility is instead of a dam [Andrea said the flood retention facility stores water during a flood event; several weeks to a month of detention time]
- Wendy asked about the status of dam design. [in process, coming]

## **Drought**

Jeff Marti is Ecology's key drought staff member. He used a powerpoint presentation [see OCR website] and compared national status and state status for this year. Washington is in one of the top five worst droughts. May was above normal temperatures which greatly reduced the snowpack. He reviewed the process for declaring a drought, which starts with the Water Supply Availability Committee (WSAC). He also discussed the effect of a drought order. Jeff noted there is a survey online to submit information about how drought is affecting you. He also noted there is some emergency drought response funding available for public agencies.

Questions and comments included:

- Marti Canatsey and Janice Roderick from USDA Rural Development said they have some emergency water development funding available
- Kat Brigham asked about groundwater and wonders if Ecology is gathering that information as well
  - Jeff noted Ecology has some groundwater monitoring wells but this is something of a blind spot; Tom said the water supply and demand forecast has done some looking at this
- Lisa said until we understand the global picture, it's hard to know what we really need

**A break was taken from 11:35 to 11:50.**

## **Public Comment**

No comments were made.

## **OCR Legislative Updates**

Melissa showed a powerpoint presentation [see OCR website]. OCR did well in the budget. It looks about the same as presented at earlier meetings; OCR got 97% of what was requested. \$40 million for OCR, \$40 million for YBIP, \$4.2 million for Yakima River enhancement efforts.

Some details:

- Proviso: \$15 million is spent on east low canal pumping plant and delivery system [getting large agricultural pumpers off the system helps municipal systems]
  - Othello, Quincy, Pasco, West Richland are all working on ASR
- Ice strategy: \$4 million for early implementation of project
- OCR project level mitigation of \$2.8 million

- Coordinated conservation in Columbia Basin was not funded; they'll continue to ask for this in future budget requests
- \$1.5 million in funding to engage in Walla Walla
- \$1.1 million for Potholes supplemental feed route
- Several new projects

She quickly reviewed the Yakima funding of \$40 million, noting the fish program got a big boost. Tom thinks we might organize a tour for the PAG of the secant vault, part of the Cle Elum fish passage project.

We then turned to the legislative update. The drought legislation did not pass; this would have been an update of Ecology's authority. It will likely be reintroduced next session. Some funding was included for adjudications; a report to the legislature is due in 2020 regarding where to go next for adjudications.

Melissa noted a draft relinquishment policy was issued. It was not well received; on July 8 a draft revision will be issued.

Tom reviewed the Walla Walla Legislation. This has OCR becoming involved and doing a review. A report is due at the end of the two-year review. Recommendations will be made on what will happen next. Kat said she is looking forward to this. Operating by consensus will be a change from the current process of majority rule. Michael Garrity said DFW is excited by the change. He asked about facilitation; Tom said they will hire a facilitator.

**Project Updates**

Ben Carr, OCR, reviewed the John Day/McNary interpretive statement. He reviewed the geography of this part of the basin. A water reservation is allowed by the Water Resources Act of 1970 (RCW 90.43). A 1980 rule established reservations of water. a 2020 date was referenced. Some have suggested this means the reservation goes away in 2020; Ecology's position is that is a planning horizon, not an end date. Ecology is seeking to amend the rule to clarify this. A petition was filed by CRSIA in October 2018 to amend the rule by extending the date and establishing 25,000 acre-feet bucket; funding from this would come back to OCR for a mitigation fund. Ecology denied this petition but moved to the interpretive statement to address some of the issues. A draft interpretive statement has been issued with comments due by July 1. Kat Brigham asked how this takes water quality into account; Tom said it really doesn't. This law is geared to water supply.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m. The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on Wednesday, September 25 at the Hal Holmes Center in Ellensburg, WA.

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**Attendees:**

*CRPAG members and alternates:*

Ron Anderson, Yakima Co Comm  
 Kat Brigham, CTUIR  
 Jon Culp, Conservation Comm  
 Jerome Delvin, Benton Co Comm  
 Doug England, Chelan Co Comm

Michael Garrity, WDFW  
 Mike Leita, Yakima Co Comm  
 Wes McCart, Stevens Co. Comm  
 Wendy McDermott, American Rivers  
 Lisa Pelly, TU

Mike Schwisow  
Richard Stevens, Grant Co Comm

Jeremy Weber, ACOE

*Others in attendance:*

Neil Aaland, Facilitator  
Marti Canatsey, USDA  
Debbie Carlson, BPA  
Ben Carr, OCR  
Scott Cave, City of Quincy  
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation  
Jeff Dengel, WDFW  
Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology  
Urban Eberhart, KRD  
Bernie Erickson  
Tim Flynn, Aspect Consulting  
Jennifer Hickenbottom, BOR  
Paul Jewell, WSAC  
Sue Kahle, USGS

Michele Kiesz  
Mike Krautkramer, Robinson Noble  
Ben Lee, Landau Associates  
Kevin Lindsey, GeoEngineers  
Dave McClure, Klickitat County  
Carl Merkle, CTUIR  
Tim Poppleton, OCR  
Joye Redfield-Wilder, Ecology  
John Reeves, Lake Kachess  
Janice Roderick, USDA  
Jennifer Stephens, OCR  
Tom Tebb, OCR/Ecology  
Bruce Wakefield, Colville Tribes