

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
December 13, 2018
Hal Holmes Community Center
Ellensburg, Washington
Final meeting notes

Welcome/Introductions

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

2019 Infrastructure Bill

Senator Jim Honeyford discussed the infrastructure bill he is introducing in the Senate. It provides \$500 million per biennium for 20 years, a total of \$5 billion. He is still looking for a Democratic sponsor. The funding will be equally split among four ways:

- Stormwater
- Culvert repairs – using the Fish Barrier Removal Board to allocate
- Flood control
- Water supply

The funding will come out of the capital budget. Tom Tebb noted that we are likely to hear today about the Governor’s budget.

OCR Budget and Legislative Updates

Tom Tebb said that the Governor’s proposed natural resources budget is likely to come out today. Melissa Downes showed a PowerPoint presentation on the OCR budget. The presentation included proposed OCR budget for 2019-2021; update on Odessa groundwater funding; and Yakima Basin Integrated Plan funding. [Presentation is posted at https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/CRPAG/12-18_Budget.pdf]

Tom said in 2019 OCR is preparing for the next iteration of the supply and demand forecast. He might bring a couple of issues to the PAG for discussion and advice.

Questions and comments included:

- Is the \$40 million proposed separately included as part of the \$300 million re-authorization? [Tom was not sure]
- Melissa noted that the strength of the original funding was its flexibility
- Lisa Pelly noted Trout Unlimited has worked with the Farm Bureau on projects, and appreciates the big picture approach
- Tom hopes that \$17 million proposed for Odessa spending will complete the water delivery “backbone”
- Senator Honeyford commented that groundwater recharge has some barriers
 - Tom agreed and noted there are water quality standards related to “anti-degradation”; OCR tried to lessen the cost to purveyors while still meeting those standards
- Craig Simpson agreed with Tom about Odessa spending and the “backbone”; he noted that \$30 million in bond sales will be supported by landowners
- For the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP), some additional funding has been proposed for fish passage

- Looking for a federal partner for some legislation; Senator Cantwell is a possibility
- The YBIP implementation committee is working on this
- Jeremy Weber, COE, said they have the go-ahead to fund the Bateman Island study

Public Comment

David Ortman asked for an update on the K to K project and the Alpine Lakes projects. Tom said they are in the middle of those processes. The received thousands of comments on both projects and are developing the comment response summary. He hopes to get the Icicle EIS out in the first quarter of 2019.

Strategic Planning Follow-Up: PAG Priorities for 2019

Neil presented a short PowerPoint presentation that described the strategic planning process from last year, and summarized the results [the powerpoint can be found at https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/CRPAG/12-18StrategicPlanning.pdf]. He explained that we wanted to re-visit this today. In preparation, Neil discussed this with three of the four Executive Committee members to get their thoughts.

Comments and questions included:

- Craig thinks it is useful for members to bring issues to PAG in addition to what Ecology brings
- Mike Leita thinks OCR is in the lead and the PAG needs focus from OCR
- Lisa agrees with Craig and thinks additional topics should be brought as necessary
- Wes McCart thinks we need to keep focused on things affecting CR System operations, such as the treaty; also, should continue tracking the Columbia/Snake River EIS
- Michael Garrity thinks it should be a two way street, good to monitor other topics. He wonders whether the supply and demand forecast could help identify what the Columbia River Treaty could provide, and thinks we need to consider how temperature and demand will affect the Treaty
- Mike thinks a PAG focus should be on how any funding provided by the Legislature will be spent
- Mark Stedman is concerned about going further than legislative focus, which might weaken legislative support
- Wes thinks the thinking around the original \$200 million in the original legislation was that would be a down payment, and more would be needed
- Craig thinks the newly requested \$300 million is to continue the current program, and it's not necessary to have the PAG look at specific projects; this is in line with what the PAG has been doing
- Several comments were made about coordinating with similar programs, such as the Office of Chehalis Basin
- Wes noted that initially Ecology went after big projects; it might be time to again consider the smaller projects that collectively add up
 - He noted that Tom has been successful in packaging small projects
 - Mike Leita agreed and suggested that the state look at these issues, such as water supply, as a whole, not just eastside and westside
- Mike Schwisow agrees with the “down payment” notion; he's not concerned with having a specific project list, other groups are active. He noted that www.wawaters.org is a good resource for a coalition of water interests.

The public attendees were invited to comment.

- David Ortman said there is no mention of fish in specific tasks in the strategic plan
- Scott Cave supports the Honeyford proposal, and thinks the PAG has done good work
- Bernie Erickson is a farmer with 2,000 acres. He could use more water, wells are going down. He's in the Odessa. They had to build more systems to take water from canals.

Walla Walla Watershed Management – highlights of the 10 year local pilot program and vision for the future

Tom Tebb presented this topic and noted that Chris Hyland was called away to a legislative meeting. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation [available at https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/Documents/CRPAG/12-18W2.pdf].

They are working on a final progress report for this ten-year pilot program. During the ten-year process, Ecology did not track it as it was established as a locally driven process. Tom, Mary Vernor (WR Program Manager), and Ecology Director Maia Bellon met with local people, including tribes. Legislation may be proposed that would provide OCR a two year transition to work with the Walla Walla Partnership on a strategic vision. This is a challenging area because the border with Oregon goes through the Walla Walla basin. They have been meeting with the OR water resources department. An interstate compact could be proposed, and OCR might be looking at some investments in Oregon due to the groundwater and surface water connections.

Chris Marks, CTUIR, is glad to see Ecology becoming more engaged. They are at a stage that something bigger needs to be done. In the early years, a \$300 million pump exchange project was proposed that ultimately was not funded. The initial focus was just the Walla Walla River.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 1:00 p.m. The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on Thursday, March 7 in the Olympia/Lacey area.

Attendees:

CRPAG members and alternates:

Ron Anderson, Yakima Co. Comm.
 Tom Davis, WSFB
 Michael Garrity, WDFW
 Christi Davis Kernan, USBR
 Mike Leita, Yakima Co. Comm.
 Lisa Pelly, TU

Wes McCart, Stevens Co. Comm.
 Mike Schwisow
 Craig Simpson, ECBID
 Mark Stedman, Lincoln Co. Comm.
 Jeremy Weber, USACE

Others in attendance:

Neil Aaland, Facilitator
 Nancy Aldrich, GeoEngineers
 Scott Cave, City of Quincy
 Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
 Jeff Dengel, WDFW
 Melissa Downes, OCR
 Bernie Erickson
 Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Cons.
 Sue Kahle, USGS
 Michelle Kiesz, EBIA/OGWRP
 Walt Larrick, Irrigation Districts
 Kevin Lindsey, GeoEngineers

Dave McClure, Klickitat County
 Chris Marks, CTUIR
 Rick Miller
 David Ortman, Sierra Club
 Tim Poppleton, Ecology
 John Reeves, Lake Kachess
 Ben Serr, WA Dept of Commerce
 Jen Stephens, Ecology
 Scott Tarbutton, Ecology
 Tom Tebb, OCR
 Bruce Wakefield, Colville Tribe

Rebecca Wassel, Mid-Col. Fisheries