

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
January 29, 2015
Washington State Farm Bureau Offices
Lacey, Washington

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

Ecology Director Maia Bellon

Director Bellon is two years in to her term as Director. She discussed some personal connections she has to the Columbia River Program, and reflected on the CR-PAG's success. The PAG is used as a model of how to do this type of work. And now, it's time to think about how we've been using the funding. The Yakima funding was the first piece of request legislation from Governor Inslee. During the 2015-17 biennium, the bonding authority for water supply projects out of the OCR will be at 90% used of the \$200 million authorized. And in the current legislative session, these issues are active again. Work sessions on water have been happening.

CRPAG members had these questions and made these observations:

- Commissioner Mike Leita said that early meetings of the CR-PAG were difficult, people held to their positions. Over time it became more collaborative. The potential state water bond might have people reverting to previous positions.
- Lisa Pelly said it was good to hear from Maia about the collaboration; that's one of the important things.
- Leo Steward mentioned that people will start moving to the northwest, an "oasis of water". How are we going to address demands?
- Maia mentioned that we're seeing that now. That's why we need to collectively discuss those issues.

Supply and Demand Forecast

Derek Sandison introduced this topic. The supply and demand forecasts are required every five years. The first one was "quick and dirty". The second one, in 2011, had a sophisticated approach. The desire was to have an independent third party prepare it. They went with Washington State University. WSU is also preparing the 2016 forecast.

Derek introduced the presenters:

Jonathan Yoder, School of Economic sciences, WSU

Jennifer Adam, Dept. of Civil and Environmental Engineering, WSU

Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting

The three presenters used a PowerPoint presentation, which can be viewed at the OCR website:
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/images/pdf/ForecastPAG01-29-2015.pdf>

The 2011 forecast looked at water supply through 2030, but did not include groundwater supply and demand. Surface water supplies were estimated to increase statewide by an average of 3% by 2030. The effects of climate change are expected to shift demand to earlier in the year – winter instead of the summer months. The presenters then discussed how the 2016 forecast is being designed, and the policy issues being addressed. See the PowerPoint presentation for details on the presentation.

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

- The forecast is going to review statewide climate change; how can OCR funding be used for a statewide issue? [OCR is just trying to do an early “what-if” look at possible impacts.]
- It’s not that easy for growers to shift from low-value to high-value crops, as mentioned in the presentation
- Can you discuss the analytics behind the hydropower forecast? [Those are available in detailed documents which can be provided]
- How were water losses calculated? [It’s based off of energy balance and similar mechanisms]
- What about the assumptions for new irrigation demand, especially in light of Director Bellon’s comments about climate migration? [That is primarily economics-driven; it’s one of the three primary issues they will be looking at for this forecast]
- Jon Yoder is the primary point-of-contact for the 2016 forecast; Ecology has established a website for this project; see www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/2016Forecast.html

Origins of the Columbia River Program

Neil Aaland introduced Gerry O’Keefe and John Stuhlmiller, who were both involved in the creation of the Columbia River Program during the 2006 legislative session. Gerry O’Keefe worked in the Ecology Director’s office and shared some of his personal experiences. It was a politically difficult time. He discussed working with tribes, farm bureau, and others as the legislative framework for the program was developed. Once the bill was passed, they created this Policy Advisory Group, as well as a separate Policy Advisory Group for county commissioners. When the Yakama Tribe brought in their list of projects for consideration, that changed the conversation. As time went on, trust was built and a framework for conversations was established.

John Stuhlmiller was involved on behalf of the Washington State Farm Bureau, and earlier as a staff member for the Washington State Legislature. He described his long-term interest in the Program, starting as a child. In the 1990s, there were numerous battles surrounding water. The Columbia River Initiative (CRI) that Ecology was pushing in the late 90s/early 2000’s was a crisis for his constituents. They all HATED the CRI. Litigation was happening. Then he saw an opening in 2006; the chair of the state senate committee dealing with water, Senator Bob Morton, reached out to the other side of the aisle and contacted Senator Polson. Conversations occurred and a bill was drafted. They decided to only talk about a specific list of project types; no amendments were allowed to the bill. John sat at the table to testify on the bill along with Rob Masonis of American Rivers; two organizations not typically known for working together. And it was passed, only about 19 days into session. That was an astounding accomplishment, hugely substantive public policy.

BREAK

Public Comment Period

Mr. David Ortman spoke on behalf of the North Cascades Conservation Council and Alpine Lakes Protection Society and their concerns about the Office of Columbia River and project impacts on the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest.. He provided a comment letter which was sent around to PAG members. His comments are described in that letter. He mentioned concerns about the Icicle project, particularly related to the Alpine Lakes Wilderness.

What has the Columbia River Program Achieved to Date?

Derek Sandison Office of Columbia River, showed a PowerPoint presentation. This can be found on the OCR website:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/images/pdf/SAND115_CRPAG.pdf

He described the early years of the program, where initially the focus was main-stream centric. That shifted over time to include the tributaries. One of the key early decisions was for Ecology to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. At the same time, Ecology decided to form the Policy Advisory Group. This was not required in the statute but they thought it was necessary to have the stakeholders advise Ecology on implementation. He also described that they needed to address how to deal with the 1/3 for instream flow and 2/3 for out-of-stream use requirement as it pertained to the Odessa project, since that wasn't really appropriate for instream flow. There is a long way to go on un-met needs with tributaries, and it's harder to develop projects in tributaries. So far, the OCR has funded 33 habitat projects.

CR-PAG members and alternates had these questions and observations:

- Commissioner Leita remembers the beginning and when county commissioners were invited; he noted the PAG is nothing like a rubber stamp
- Michael Garrity thinks this has been a pragmatic program; early debates tended to be about large storage projects that were on the table; it was interesting discussing those and contrasting them to other issues

What thoughts do PAG members have about the current proposals in the Legislature?

Neil said that invitations were made to Senator Honeyford and several other key legislators and staff to attend today's meeting, but it is bad timing since things are happening at the Capitol. He reviewed past PAG agendas that addressed current and future funding issues related to the CR Program. He asked Michael Garrity and Lisa Pelly, both active in current discussions, to discuss what they know about current proposals.

Michael described the current proposal, which has been introduced as SB 5826. It is intended to address water quantity, stormwater, and flooding infrastructure needs. It would be funded by a combination of a parcel tax and a stormwater tax, not presently a bond measure. American Rivers supports it with some reservations; the criteria are pretty good. For floodplain issues, there is a lot of need around the state. We want good process around this. For stormwater, this will help Low Impact Development (LID) types of stormwater projects. Michael is not sure of the bill's prospects.

Lisa added that the initial bill had some new entities, but also is open to looking at existing entities. It's a big bill with lots of funding; concerns in several areas. This could end up being a referendum.

John Stuhlmiller said the three policy topics have great needs, funding is the issue. A parcel tax is very challenging, especially looking at other potential tax issues in this session. Michael said one role is to use the buzz around this bill to highlight Office of Columbia River and Yakima funding.

Paul Jewell thinks the fee is thoughtfully written, and sending it to the voters is the best way. Polling shows good support, but sometimes that doesn't result in support at the election. He looks forward to dialogue around this; exclusive funding is important.

Mike Leita thinks the political environment is not good for this proposal. They already have a local fee for stormwater. This proposal might be hard to get passed this session. It has some problematic language, and \$3 billion isn't enough to solve the problems.

Additional comments:

- PAG members need to stay engaged, and need to be kept updated
- PAG members need a short brochure they can use to discuss this topic with legislators at opportune moments.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the CRPAG will be on May 14, 2016 in Ellensburg, WA.

Attendees:

CRPAG members and alternates:

- Gregg Carrington, Chelan PUD
- Jon Culp, WSCC
- Jim Fredericks, USACOE
- Charity Davidson, WDFW
- Michael Garrity, American Rivers
- Holly Harwood, BPA
- Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner
- Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
- Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner
- Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
- Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
- Mike Schwisow, Irrigation Districts Association
- Craig Simpson, ECBID
- Leo Stewart, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Rich Stevens, Grant County Commissioner
- John Stuhlmiller, WA State Farm Bureau
- Jon Unger, Oregon Water Resources Department
- Stephanie Utter, BOR

Others in attendance:

- Neil Aaland, Facilitator
- Jennifer Adam, WSU/WRRC
- Bridget August, Geo Engineers
- Maia Bellon, Director/Ecology
- Jim Browitt, Schroeder Law Offices
- Hannah Castro, Session Aide for Senator Warnick
- Jeff Deason, GEI Consultants
- Nicholas Dosch, Landau Associates
- Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology
- Carl Einberger, Aspect Consulting
- Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting

Cathy Hubbard, Ecology
Trevor Hutton, Ecology
Tyler Jantzen, CH2M Hill
Al Josephy, Ecology
Sue Kahle, USGS
Liz Klumpp, BPA
Melody Kreimes, UCSRB
Mike Krautkramer, Robinson Noble
Sergio Madrid, Intern to Senator Warnick
Chris Marks, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Dave McClure, Klickitat County
Cynthia Nelson, DOH
David Ortman, North Cascades Conservation Council/Alpine Lakes Protection Society
Elaine Packard, Sierra Club
Troy Peters, WSU Extension Ed
Rick Roeder, DNR
Derek Sandison, Department of Ecology
Steve Thurin, HDR
Jon Turk, Brown & Caldwell
Jill Van Hulle, PGG
Andy Weiss, WDFW
Jon Yoder, WSU