

Department of Ecology  
**White Paper on Forming the Columbia River Technical Advisory Group**

April 18, 2007

**Background:** Ecology is forming a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to aid in funding sound conservation and storage projects that will advance the goals of the Columbia River Basin Water Management Program. The role of the TAG will be to review and evaluate project applications using criteria set by Ecology with input from the Policy Advisory Group (PAG), and provide Ecology with funding recommendations.

**Composition and Organization of the TAG:**

Size and Membership: The size of the TAG will be kept to a workable number since members will have to be focused on reading applications, performing site evaluations and applying the funding criteria. Nine (9) members have been identified that will comprise the initial TAG workgroup. Alternates will be used to manage scheduling conflicts, and each TAG member may draw on other internal members of their organizations for additional expertise as needed. TAG membership is by invitation from Ecology and the PAG will provide input to ensure adequate expertise is provided for project review. The TAG will be chaired and facilitated by a representative of the Conservation Commission.

Qualifications & Desired Skills: The TAG is expected to review conservation, small surface water storage and aquifer storage proposals. To ensure a diverse and experienced group, Ecology has selected TAG members with technical expertise in engineering, hydrogeology, conservation, irrigation system design/implementation, fisheries, salmon recovery efforts or related fields.

TAG Members: A list of TAG members and a short bio follows.

- Jon Culp, Conservation Commission, TAG Chair

Jon Culp manages irrigation related efforts for the Washington State Conservation Commission. Jon received his bachelor of arts in English from Central Washington University in 1998. Jon worked for the Okanogan Conservation District as a natural resources technician and planner implementing a county-wide irrigation water management program and a water quality implementation grant program through 2001. Jon moved to the Conservation Commission in 2002 to manage the Irrigation Efficiencies Grants Program. Jon also developed and implemented a drought reaction strategy funneling state drought funds to conservation districts in affected areas during the 2005 drought. Jon has played an active role in the Columbia River Water Management Program coordinating with the Department of Ecology on its implementation team, policy advisory group, and funding criteria sub-group, and coordinated funding distribution to conservation districts assisting with the supply and demand forecast.

- Dan Haller, Department of Ecology

Dan Haller is an engineer in the Water Resources Program of the Department of Ecology. Dan received his Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering in 1994 and a Master's degree in Environmental Engineering in 1996 from Washington State University. Dan worked for a municipal engineering firm through 2001 managing water system infrastructure and planning projects and evaluating water right transfers. Dan moved to the Department of Ecology in 2001 to coordinate water right transfer reviews for the seven county water conservancy boards in

central Washington. Dan also served as the regional policy lead and Ecology's expert on irrigation and municipal engineering. In 2006, Dan began supervising staff charged with implementing the Columbia River Basin Water Management Program. Dan coordinates implementation activities such as permitting, trust water acquisitions, legislative reporting, policy development, metering, compliance and public outreach.

- David Cummings, Ecology, Dam Safety Program

David Cummings works for Ecology's Columbia River Water Management Program, focusing mainly on water storage engineering. He serves as Ecology's project technical lead for the Walla Walla River Pump Exchange Feasibility Study. He has performed a number of conceptual investigations for new multi-use and agricultural water supply projects. David has been the concrete dam specialist for Ecology's Dam Safety Office for twenty years, serving as Ecology's representative for joint inspections of concrete dams owned by the US Bureau of Reclamation and Corps of Engineers. David provides support for Ecology's Agricultural Water Supply Grant Program (Ref 38) and Water Storage Preconstruction Grant Program (Watershed Planning Implementation). David has a Bachelor of Science Civil Engineering Degree from St Martin's University and is a registered professional engineer in Washington State.

- Peggy Miller, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Peggy Miller is a fish and wildlife biologist with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife in the Major Projects section of the Habitat Program. She is responsible to coordinate and negotiate fish and wildlife mitigation efforts for large storage projects affiliated with the Columbia River Basin Water Management Program. Peggy returned to her native Washington in November 2006 after spending five years with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Aquatic Section, Native Aquatic Species Program. During that time, she had the opportunity to develop conservation strategies for native fish, amphibians and reptiles and participate in various multi-agency technical teams. For example, Peggy participated in the development and update of conservation plans for Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout, northern and southern leatherside chub, and Gila monster. Peggy graduated with a Bachelor's of Science in Wildlife Science from the University of Washington in 1993, and a Master's of Science in Biology from Utah State University in 1999. Her Masters thesis focused on the home range, or lack there of, of the flat-tailed horned lizard.

- Mark Nielson (Primary), Franklin Conservation District and Mike Tobin (Alternate), North Yakima Conservation District

Mark Nielson is the manager of the Franklin and Benton Conservation Districts. Conservation Districts across the state promote the wise use and conservation of our natural resources. Mr. Nielson received a M.S. degree in Horticulture from Washington State University and has 20 years of experience implementing irrigation water conservation practices on private and public lands. Mark is the Co-Chair of the Snake River Local Working group, which prioritizes and allocates Federal funding for water conservation projects through the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Mark currently provides technical assistance to the Franklin County Water Conservancy Board. In this role Mark investigates water right change / transfer applications and gives assistance to applicants. Under Mark's leadership, the Franklin CD has been responsible for implementing the Columbia Basin Ground Water Management Area's (GWMA) Irrigation Water Management program since its inception in 2000.

Michael Tobin is the North Yakima Conservation District Manager. Mike has been with the District since 1989, first as a technician until 1995 at which time he took over the Management of the District. As the Manager of the District he's responsible for developing and implementing the Annual and 5 year Plans of the District. The District implements a diverse program of resource conservation ranging from water conservation, fish screening, riparian habitat improvement, water metering to water quality. Mike has helped to develop and modify several Conservation Commission programs as well as represent the NYCD in many local, county and State planning forums. Mike received his AA from Yakima Valley Community College and BA from Washington State University.

- Steve Martin, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board

Steve Martin coordinates salmon recovery planning efforts for the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board. Steve attended Eastern Washington University where he graduated with a master's of science in fisheries biology in 1991. Steve worked for the Washington State Department of Fisheries and the Department of Fish in Wildlife in various programs including hatcheries, fish management, research, and habitat from 1990 through 2001. Since employment with the state, Steve has worked as a consultant in the Snake River Region on various planning efforts including development of the Habitat Conservation Plan and the Watershed Plan for the Walla Walla basin. Steve has been a member of the Snake River Region Lead Entity since its inception in 1998. Steve's current focus is working with the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board to develop a comprehensive salmon, steelhead, and bull trout recovery plan that will be endorsed by the federal fisheries agencies, with the support of the communities that have the ability to implement the actions described in the plan.

- Tom Ring, Yakama Nation

Tom is a hydrogeologist with the Water Resources Program of the Yakama Nation. He has held this position since 1990 and, in that role, has worked on a variety of projects involving groundwater and surface water quantity and quality, water rights, irrigation and fisheries issues and planning for future water needs. Previously he worked for the Water Resources Program at the Washington Department of Ecology. Tom has Bachelors and Masters of Science degrees in geology from Central Washington University and Northern Arizona University respectively. He has taught geology and hydrogeology classes at Central Washington University and is a licensed geologist and hydrogeologist in Washington State.

- Bruce Beauchene, City of Kennewick

Bruce Beauchene manages water and sewer operations for the City of Kennewick. Bruce received his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from Washington State University in 1984. Bruce was licensed as a professional engineer in 1991. Bruce has worked as a design engineer, project engineer, and project manager for a variety of municipal street, water, and sewer projects since graduation from WSU. Bruce is active in water planning and is a member of the Washington State Department of Health Water Supply Advisory and WRIA 31 Planning Committees.

- Onni Perala, Civil Engineer

Onni Perala is a professional engineer licensed in Washington and Idaho with over 40 years of experience in water resource management. Onni worked as the manager of Roza Irrigation District, involved in water measurement, water supply forecasting, river operations and reservoir regulation to provide irrigation water supply, flood control, power generation, and court ordered

fish releases. Onni has extensive experience in long range planning of conservation measures and oversight of construction of piping of open ditches and laterals, re-regulation reservoirs and check structures.

**Timeline:** The 2007 TAG schedule will consist of several meetings in the summer to introduce the members, identify roles and responsibilities included in a TAG charter, and train TAG staff on scoring criteria for funding applications. The first full Columbia River funding cycle will begin in October 2007 for the 2008 funding year. The TAG will review funding applications in April and May of 2008 following an Ecology pre-screen of applications to meet initial project criteria.