

**Columbia River Policy Advisory Group**  
**October 15, 2015**  
**Hal Holmes Center**  
**Ellensburg, Washington**

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

**Perspectives from new Office of Columbia River Director; update on legislative/budget issues**

Neil provided some introductory comments regarding Tom Tebb, the new Director of the Office of Columbia river. Tom then introduced himself to the PAG. He discussed his history with Ecology and with Columbia River issues. He then reviewed budget issues. He mentioned there is a lot invested in the program; the original \$200 million is largely spent.

Tom reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that provided information on the funding to date (see presentation on OC website for details). The legislative session that just ended was a long one, lasting till the end of June. OCR was fairly successful with budget requests, which were primarily in two capital requests: OCR and Yakima Basin Implementation Plan. They did not quite get what is needed in the OCR budget to carry out remaining projects.

There are several capital budget provisos. One of them provides that future funding requests will have to include certain information, including estimates of the total cost of developing and delivering water, identifying project beneficiaries, estimated timeline, and estimated public vs. private costs.

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

- Lisa said there are a couple of Yakima projects that might fit into the CR program; what is Tom's thinking about that? [Tom said those projects need to be highlighted and figure out which funding bucket to place them in]
- How does Tom view the relationship between OCR and Yakima? [These are two areas of the state needing attention regarding funding for water projects; Yakima is part of the Columbia basin]
- The CR Program has done a lot of great work, and all of us need to think about projects we want to get done. [Tom wants to have continued back and forth engagement around potential projects]

**Update: Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program**

Melissa Downes, Office of Columbia River, and Levi Johnson, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation. They provided background on the Odessa aquifer issues and the Columbia River Initiative (superseded by Office of Columbia River). They noted that the use of Odessa groundwater was intended to be interim until the second half of the Columbia Basin project was completed. The aquifer level has been significantly declining, and part of the mandate of the CR Program has been to address this issue.

Melissa and Levi provided details on the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's projects (see OCR website to review the PowerPoint presentation and see details).

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

- Will this work reverse the decline? [We will not know for some time.]
- Any requirement to shift off surface water? [This is not required.]
  - Since the water use was issued as a temporary water right, it's curious why they're not required to shift
  - Craig Simpson said this is a temporary solution to buildout of the Columbia River basin project
- Darrell Olson, CRSIA, provided some comments and copies of correspondence and other information related to a lawsuit filed by his organization against the District and the BOR
  - The District has proposed a normative cost structure
  - There is less federal and state funding; private sector funding is important and they want to see that working here
  - The east low canal was proposed to be serving north of I-90 in the original draft of the EIS but that was pulled out
  - They have concerns about the cost structure
  - He does not see this use of groundwater as a temporary fix
  - They worked with some landowners and developed some different thinking on financial systems, stressing private financing
  - They brought these ideas to the District and BOR about a year ago but they were not acted upon
  - Still would like to work collaboratively with the District and BOR on the financing issue
  - He explained that one of his handouts is a proposed fee structure, and they believe this would get the systems up and running
- Neil asked if BOR and District representatives want to add anything; they said they could not respond due to pending lawsuits
- Mike Schwisow said Dr. Olson has a good record in finding more water. The District has been successful in developing water and has to operate in accordance with state and federal law. It's a public water system and has to treat all landowners the same. It's been a long rigorous process, and it's a complicated public policy issue
- The cases are in Adams County Superior Court and in Federal Court
- A landowner in the audience stated that financially this is difficult; cannot make a living and finance this [ECBID work] at the same time

**Update: Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) Budget issues; federal funding; latest projects; what's the future**

Tom Tebb reviewed a PowerPoint presentation discussing the Yakima Basin plan (see the PPT presentation on the OCR website for details). He discussed the origin of the program, and some details on the initial development phase. One slide showed the set of projects that have been funded in this initial development phase. Pending federal legislation would fund the first ten year increment; this legislation is the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Act. We are still waiting to see a mark-up of that legislation.

Commissioner Paul Jewell, Kittitas County, participates in the YBIP process. He is excited about the plan and says there is a lot of local support for the Teanaway Community Forest component in particular. Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited, said this was a good summary. Senator Cantwell is very supportive, and Lisa noted that it's been great for Trout Unlimited to work with the Kittitas Reclamation District. Urban Eberhart from KRD spoke and added his support for the work being done.

David E. Ortman, North Cascades Conservation Council and Alpine Lakes Protection Society, expressed concerns about the 2012 Yakima Plan's negative benefit/cost ratios; informed the PAG that Yakima Workgroup member (former Rep.) Sid Morrison has requested that the Yakima Workgroup drop the Bumping storage project from the plan; and provided a copy of a letter signed by 19 organizations to Sen. Cantwell, opposing the Yakima Workgroup's Yakima Plan. In addition, he expressed concerns about the OCR's Icicle Workgroup's proposal for water supply projects located in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area..

**Update: Columbia River Treaty**

Tom Tebb provided this update on the Treaty. Regional recommendations were delivered to the U.S. State Department in December, 2013. These are still with the State Department. Tom recently discussed the status with Tom Karier, who is one of Washington's Representatives on the federally formed Sovereign Review Team (which managed the process of developing regional recommendations). A new staff member with State, Brian Doherty, has been visiting stakeholders within the northwest. Tom mentioned that he went to eastern B.C., along with Eastern Washington County Commissioners, who met with their local government counterparts in B.C. to discuss common interests in the treaty. Paul Jewell also mentioned that several county commissioners went to D.C. back in May and met with federal agencies. They stressed their concerns that local voices were not being heard in the process.

**Water bill: discussion for upcoming legislative session – potential bills, potential drought-related legislation**

Neil Aaland, Facilitator introduced this topic by explaining that the PAG has had several conversations about future water bills. Funds are running low, and people are wondering about the future of the program. Several legislators have attended PAG meetings in the past to discuss this, and we will invite them for future conversations. There are already some discussions occurring in Olympia. As Tom Tebb discussed earlier, the original \$200 million approved by the Legislature in 2006 is nearly spent. Questions are being asked about the future of the CR Program and how work to increase water supply will continue. Several huge funding needs were discussed including water supply, stormwater, and floodplain management. A bill introduced by Senator Honeyford in previous session has provided a vehicle for discussion.

Tom Tebb reviewed the presentation given by Ecology Director Maia Bellon to the Washington Waters House Task Force on October 5, 2015 (for details from the presentation see the OCR website).

Lisa Pelly noted that she also testified at this meeting. It's a big question how future projects will be funded, and it's important to continue the conversations about future funding. We need the funding to continue to make progress.

Tom Tebb asked the PAG to think about whether this format (for the meetings) is working, and to let either him or Neil know any thoughts.

Prior to adjournment, Michele Kiesz, a landowner in the audience, noted that she was not part of the lawsuit against the BOR or the District.

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 12:45 p.m.**

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**Attendees:**

*CRPAG members and alternates:*

Jim Brown, WDFW  
Wendy Christensen, BOR  
Jon Culp, WCC  
Jim Fredericks, COE  
Perry Harvester, WDFW  
Holly Harwood, BPA  
Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner  
Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner  
Rick Miller, Franklin County Commissioner  
Darrell Olsen, CSRIA  
Nicky Pasi, American Rivers  
Garry Passmore, Colville Confederated Tribes  
Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited  
Mike Schwisow, CBDL  
Craig Simpson, ECBID  
Rich Stevens, Grant County Commissioner

*Others in attendance:*

Neil Aaland, Facilitator  
Bob Anderson, Golder Associates  
Jim Browitt, Schroeder Law Offices  
Tom Buchholtz, IRZ Consulting  
Mark Charlton, KR D Grower  
Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology  
Tim Flynn, Aspect Consulting  
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County  
Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting  
Jennifer Hickenbottom, BOR  
Tim Hill, OCR  
Trevor Hutton, Ecology  
Mitt Johnston  
Al Josephy, Ecology  
Sue Kahle, USGS  
Mike Kaputa, Chelan County  
Agnes Ketchen, Yakama Nation  
Michele Kiesz  
Chuck Klarich, UBSA  
Mike Krautkramer, Robinson Noble  
Brian Kuest, Clifton Larson Allen  
Ben Lee, Landau Associates  
Kevin Lindsey, GSI  
David McClure, Klickitat County  
Chris Marks, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
Teresa Merriman, BOR  
Dave Nazy, OCR  
David E. Ortman, ALPS/NCCC  
Sharonne Park, Brown & Caldwell  
Joel Purdy, GeoEngineers

George Schneider, George Schneider & Associates  
Mark Schuppe, Department of Ecology  
Jim Skalski, Department of Ecology  
Tom Tebb, Department of Ecology  
Ed Thomas, CH2M Hill  
Steve Thurin, HDR  
Chris Voigt, Potato Commission  
Bill Wagoner, National Frozen Foods  
Rich Walpole, CNWE  
Brian Walsh, DOH ODA  
Andrea Watson, DOH ODA