

**Columbia River Policy Advisory Group**  
**Meeting Notes**  
**August 13, 2008**

## Projects Review

Dan Haller reviewed the projects that were proposed for funding, including those which had come forward through the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) process and those which had come forward through the Columbia River Implementation Team (CRIT) process. Dan also provided information on the spending of money to date, including \$16 million from the State Construction Account which preceded the Columbia River account [studies, metering, SEIS] and \$2 million from the Operating Budget [climate change, legislative report, Conservation Commission.]

The CRPAG first focused on the overall funding picture, rather than the projects themselves. CRPAG members made the following observations:

- I am attentive that storage monies are not just covering out-of-stream values. What happens when you deplete the one-third non-storage piece?
- One of the legislative requirements was to address the Odessa. This is a hybrid; it is neither conservation nor storage but both.
- The conservation account should more appropriately be called the “non-storage” account because it is covering a blending of benefits, not just conservation. We are depleting a big portion of non-storage funds and ascribing them all to instream benefits which is not accurate.
- This is the first splitting of the dollars. Do we need to adjust the slices of the pie in the future? We need to address the policy issues.
- As time goes by, it is easy to erode our original intent. We need to keep the impetus on storage, to comply with the law. Storage projects tend to take longer.
- Does Ecology have the authority to change the one-third/two-third ratio? [No, that change would require legislative authority. An alternative would be to “grow the pot.”]
- Should some of the projects listed as conservation more properly be listed as storage? They are not just providing for fish needs.
- The one-third is supposed to be for immediate needs, not necessarily new storage. That means that it is not necessarily for fish benefits.
- We need to identify the benefits wherever they come from and keep them in front of us. We need to keep our caucus together.
- Some of these are hybrid projects. Storage should not just be thought of as new dams and new reservoirs.

The CRPAG then commented on some specific projects.

- The FDR construction project is hard to endorse, because the funding is “to be determined.” I also question the State share of this project.
- I am comfortable with the list except the reference to FDR.
- Regarding the Manastash project, it would be very helpful if Ecology would add more money in order to get more water. Ecology needs to be responsive to the increase in project cost.

- If you lessen the State percentage on a project, you reduce the amount of water that will go into trust.
- We should not micro-manage this list. Leave it to the discretion of the department to adjust the percentage of the funding.
- We need to support the Manastash project. It really addresses the larger issues at work here.
- WEC and American Rivers have some concerns about the KID proposal. It is a huge burn rate in the non-storage slice of the pie for a project that didn't go through the TAG process.
- I have some concerns, but I like the transparency of what Ecology is doing, especially by putting FDR on the list so we can all see that it is under consideration.
- I like the small storage. I am concerned that investing in the Colville proposal suggests that we are buying into far too much future demand than seems warranted at this point.
- Endorsement of these projects is not carte blanche approval. We need to get regular updates on all of these projects and keep the department accountable.
- We need to keep both the department and the recipients accountable.
- We need to think about lessons learned, to help prepare guidelines for future funding.

Dan Silver summed what he thought the CRPAG had decided: The CRPAG endorses the list as a package to be forwarded to the Director of Ecology even though some members have concerns about several of the projects. The CRPAG will be attentive to all the projects to assure that both Ecology and the recipients are held accountable. No objection was raised to this summary.

## Process review and WSCC Funding

Dan Haller announced that Ecology has decided to provide \$1 million to the Washington State Conservation Commission to help bring projects forward in the agriculture community. The pilot effort will focus on the Franklin County Conservation District.

CRPAG members provided this feedback on the funding process:

- It is rough when one-quarter of the money is allocated in a transparent, multi-disciplinary process and three-quarters is spent in a different way. I understand it, but it's rough.
- I still have some discomfort with the detail of the funding to the Conservation Commission. Also, the CRIT process was a surprise.
- This is an iterative process. It is most helpful to have clear, measureable goals established at the outset. As the process unfolds, we can revisit those goals to see if we have met them.
- It has been difficult, even for those working on the TAG, to understand what type of projects should go to the TAG and what type of projects should go to the CRIT. Now that we have seen a set of projects that will compete for money, we should be able to advise Ecology on which type of review should occur.
- The Conservation Commission pilot will help to expedite projects and get them funded as they arise, rather than waiting until the end of a funding cycle.

## Recognition of TAG

Rick Roeder and Gerry O'Keefe presented a plaque and memento to the members of the TAG for all the work they did in reviewing the project applications and ranking them for consideration by the CRPAG. The TAG included these people:

- Bruce Beauchene, City of Kennewick
- Jon Culp, WA State Conservation Commission
- Dave Cummings, Ecology
- Bill Eller, Chair, WA State Conservation Commission
- Dan Haller, Ecology
- Steven Hays, Chelan County PUD (alternate)
- Paul LaRiviere, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (alternate)
- Steve Martin, Snake River Salmon Recovery Board
- Peggy Miller, WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife
- Mike Nielsen, Franklin Conservation District
- Onni Parela, Roza Irrigation District
- Tom Ring, Yakama Nation Water Resources
- Mike Tobin, North Yakima Conservation District (alternate)

## Wanapum Pool Raise Concept Assessment

Joe Lukas presented an update on the review that has been underway for the last year on the potential for raising the operating pool level behind the Wanapum Dam on a permanent basis. The raise would be 3.5 feet and would provide approximately 70,000 acre feet of increased storage.

CRPAG members offered these questions and observations:

- How much thought has been committed to refill at the end of July? [It is a key part of the discussion.]
- Over what period would the refill occur? [Likely 1-2 days; we would model it over a week]
- Is there an instantaneous capacity to drop the level three feet, for example, for flood control? [It's possible. We have emergency operating scenarios].

Joe noted that six issues have emerged in the stakeholder discussions. The two with the biggest impact are recreation impacts (pertaining to the Crescent Bar area) and cultural resources (pertaining to inundation and dewatering of numerous sites). Joe also noted that without stakeholder consensus, it would be difficult to obtain a FERC license amendment.

There was a general discussion of whether the CRPAG was supportive of this project going forward, continuing to commit energy and resources. A primary dimension of this discussion was whether the pool raise was new storage or non-storage in terms of the Columbia River account.

- Is this new storage? [We may need an AG opinion after review of the Columbia River bill. It is an unsettled question inside Ecology. For example, we could say, if construction is necessary, then it's new storage.]
- This is definitely new storage. It provides 70K acre feet of water.

- What about the timing of releases: Are there multiple filling periods? [Storage is essentially refill. You could redraft the pool many times. We foresee two drafts, one in April (100% for fish), one in July (one-third for fish).]
- A big factor is financing. Delay drives up costs. Public works projects have been going up 30% a year. We need a near-term decision to keep down costs.
- This is definitely new storage. This project is compelling for what it allows you to do in July. Ecology should use the CRPAG as a group to resolve the issue of definition.
- Depending on what bucket the money comes from, it will have more strings. For example, the non-storage bucket has more flexibility between in-stream and out-of-stream values. If it's new storage, it's strictly a one-third/two-thirds allocation.
- Are there any power production benefits? [Yes, preliminary estimate of 5-6 MW. The benefit is mostly in capacity rather than energy and hydraulic modeling will provide a better estimate.]
- The Yakamas are looking at an agreement with Grand PUD on fall Chinook. We are also attentive to the cultural issues, and we intend to be part of the whole conversation.
- This is an exciting project. It maximizes our infrastructure. \$30 million for construction is not a lot of money, when compared to other projects.
- The timing of this project is great. It provides benefits within five years, compared to 20-25 years for other projects.
- Have you thought about sharing the power benefits? [A lot of the power benefit goes to Chelan PUD for RIS encroachment. But we like the benefit we are getting too.]
- Ecology should reconsider whether the Pinto project is also new storage.
- What is the purpose of this new storage? Will it provide out-of-stream water permits? [yes]

## Priest Rapids License

Joe Lukas briefed the CRPAG on the new FERC license for Priest Rapids. It took 14 years and \$50 m to get a license. The final application was 12,000 pages. There were a number of fish improvements to dam operations, including the Wanapum Dam future units fish bypass system which also reduces total dissolved gas from spill. Significant other issues were cultural protection, recreational resources, and shoreline management.

## Recognition of Gerry O'Keefe

Dan Silver read a letter to the CRPAG from Jay Manning, director of Ecology. Jay advised the CRPAG that Gerry O'Keefe would be leaving his position at Ecology as policy advisor on Columbia River issues. Jay invited the CRPAG to a special meeting in Moses Lake on September 25, where he wants to share his plans for the future of the Columbia River program.

## Attendees:

*CRPAG members and alternates*

Dale Bambrick, National Marine Fisheries Service  
 Jon Culp, Washington State Conservation Commission  
 Bill Gray, Bureau of Reclamation  
 Bob Hammond, City of Kennewick  
 Mike Leita, Yakima County Commission  
 Joe Lukas, Grant County PUD

Michael Garrity, American Rivers  
Michael Mayer, Washington Environmental Council  
Merrill Ott, Stevens County Commission  
Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation  
Dave Sauter, Klickitat County  
Mike Schwisow, Columbia Basin Development League, Irrigation Districts  
Theresa Scott, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Craig Simpson, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District  
John Stuhlmiller, Washington Farm Bureau  
Rob Swedo, Bonneville Power Administration

*Others in attendance:*

Neil Aaland, Washington State Association of Counties  
Bruce Beauchene, City of Kennewick  
Dave Burdick, Department of Ecology  
Carolyn Comeau, Department of Ecology  
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation  
Michael Crowder, Barker Ranch  
Kathleen Deason, Foster Creek Conservation District  
Bill Eller, Washington State Conservation Commission  
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County  
Andrew Grassell, Chelan County PUD  
Jennifer Hackett, Central Washington University  
Dan Haller, Department of Ecology  
Wally Hickerson, CH2MHill  
Tim Hill, Department of Ecology  
Perry Huston, Okanogan County Planning  
Al Josephy, Department of Ecology  
Paul LaRiviere, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Jason McCormick, Washington Water Trust  
Peggy Miller, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Jack Myrick, Washington State Conservation Commission  
Gerry O'Keefe, Department of Ecology  
Tom Ring, Yakama Nation  
Rick Roeder, Department of Ecology  
Jaime Short, Department of Ecology  
Dan Silver, facilitator  
Marissa Steketee, Sapere Consulting  
Paul Stoker, Groundwater Management Area  
Tom Tebb, Department of Ecology  
Chad Unland, Department of Natural Resources