

## **Columbia River Policy Advisory Group December 4, 2013**

The meeting began at 9:30 a.m. Facilitator Neil Aaland welcomed attendees and said this was his first official meeting as the new facilitator for the CR-PAG. He reviewed the agenda with the group, and mentioned some usual attendees were at the Washington State Water Resources Association conference in Spokane.

### **Yakima River Basin Implementation Plan - Update**

Walter Larrick, Bureau of Reclamation, and Derek Sandison, Office of Columbia River, provided an overview. Walter showed a PowerPoint presentation that discussed the schedule of environmental review for the integrated plan project the Bureau of Reclamation is working on, which is YRBWEP phase III (Balanced Package #1). Two EIS' are being prepared. One will cover the Keechelus to Kachess conveyance and Kachess Drought relief pumping plant, and another will cover the Cle Elum Pool Raise. Final EIS' are expected in spring of 2015. An EIS on the Cle Elum Fish Passage project is already complete. Additional projects being analyzed include:

- Wymer Dam and Reservoir
- Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement
- Manastash Creek Conservation and Tributary Enhancements

Walter reviewed a set of slides on each project. The desire is to have a decision in 2015 whether the Wymer proposal or the Bumping proposal move forward for feasibility study before the end of "balanced package #1."

Derek Sandison commented that this is a 30-40 year plan. At this point, they are scoping the next decade of the project. He reviewed SSSB 5367 (Yakima River basin Water Resources Act). It includes a provision that, by 2025, permitting must be complete to provide 214,000 acre-ft. of water supply (which can be achieved by building Kachess Pumping + Cle Elum pool raise). If this provision is not met, the Teanaway Valley Acquisition may be transferred from Community Forest Trust to Common School Trust. This would provide for more active management of the forest.

The Department of Ecology and the State Treasurer are working on a cost estimate and financing plan. Support looks good from the congressional delegation. They are hoping for a 50/50 match with federal funding. The initial federal ask is \$20 million.

Members of the implementation team present in the room were asked to comment.

- Urban Eberhart: Agrees that we got a good response from the federal delegation We're already 30 years into a plan authorized in 1979, so this is really a 60 year program
- Tom Ring: the near unanimity is impressive
- Mike Leita: Response from federal delegation is good, the challenge is some projects may not be practical, have to work through that
- Paul Jewell: Momentum from legislative session is good, share the optimism. People are saying the right things. Teanaway community forest planning will start soon, there is some local concern. Co-management is between WDFW and WDNR.
- Lisa Pelly: Process is going well

- Mike Leita: There's a tradition of taking potshots at individual plans, but this is an integrated plan, there is a new cohesiveness

CRPAG members and the audience had the following questions and observations:

- What kind of legislative vehicle in DC can be used, since earmarks are not allowed? [the President does not have "no earmark" rules; he should be able to use agency budgets in his budget]

### **Canadian Treaty: Status Report on draft recommendations**

Derek reminded attendees of the basic background on the Treaty. Recommendations are due to the U.S. State Department from the Sovereign Review Team by December 9. It's unknown what State will do at that point. In 2024, the provisions for flood control (Canadian management storage) go away, and become "called upon". The U.S. can ask for flood control assistance, but Canada will not be required to provide. We have to be making "effective use" of U.S. storage first.

Residual issues include:

- Canadian entitlement: power interests are concerned about the payments to Canada for the power entitlement; believe U.S. is over-paying
- Ecosystem function: tribes are adamant that this be added
- The Sovereign Review Team (SRT) may go away after December
- State Department MIGHT push recommendations back to our region
- Initially, the thinking was recommendations could be specific, but the SRT has made them more general
- Washington would like to see it brought back to the region for further work

CRPAG members and the audience posed several questions and observations:

- Was the U.S. Entity formed by the State Department? [It was established by the Treaty]
- The State Department has interacted with the SRT and other. The message from them is Canada is the closest thing the U.S. has to a friend, and State is not likely to push them hard
- State isn't necessarily sold that something needs to be done; if there is no regional agreement they might go away
- Who makes the determination on how far to go before it's a Senate confirmation? [It's not clear; the U.S. Attorney will have to make a determination]
- The interests in the U.S. seem to have different perspectives
- For Canada, B.C. Hydro (as a unit of the B.C. Provincial Government) is in the lead for Canada
- Is there legal recourse on decisions to extend or not? [No, not with a treaty]
- How will the State Department respond if no regional consensus? [Likely outcome is State would go away; this concerns Derek, as some pieces need to be changed]
- 2024 is the first year the treaty can be modified; every year thereafter would be an opportunity to modify

### **Columbia River Projects update**

Derek reviewed this topic. Major projects currently being funded are Odessa, Sullivan Lake payments (first payment moved 2,500 acre-feet) and the second half of Kennewick Irrigation District/Red Mountain project. At the end of 2015 for Odessa, we'll be at the Lind Coulee wasteway. The laterals and pumping plants/projects are privately funded; state funding is focused on the canal improvements (canal widening and siphon installation).

A new integrated plan is starting up in the Icicle Creek watershed. That has been somewhat contentious. The hatchery is situated in a way that affects the basin. A workgroup was formed to discuss options.

Participants in that process made some observations:

- This process has been lacking data – e.g. flow needs for the river
- One of the parties in Icicle Creek watershed wants to get the hatchery out, it's hard to get to agreement on that topic
- The litigation has made it hard to look at issues

Another startup integrated plan is the Walla Walla watershed. The effort builds on previous efforts by the US Army Corp of Engineers in the Walla Walla Basin.

Lisa Pelly noted that the MVID project is at 30% design; plan to start construction later in summer 2014.

**Discussion: Funding for the Columbia River Program – strategy for the future**

Derek Sandison started off this topic and mentioned it's the start of discussion, this topic will continue in February at the Olympia PAG meeting. He gave background on the funding. The program started off with \$200 million. There are other basins with funding that dwarf that (e.g. Yakima basin funding). After the 2013-2-15 biennium, the program will have expended about \$170 million, leaving \$30 million. He posed the question: is there a way for future stable funding?

Rep. Bruce Chandler and Representative Judy Warnick joined the discussion. Rep. Chandler said the latest revenue forecast is there will be 8-9% more revenue at the end of the biennium, which indicates that the economy and revenue are stable. The goal for the upcoming session is to stay the course; they are looking at some potentially significant impacts on budgets. Examples are the gain sharing on pension funds and whether the COLA for Plan 1 was one time or permanent. We probably won't get a court decision till after this session; the potential cost could be up to ½ of the unanticipated revenue.

Rep. Warnick said they left \$300 million at the end of last session. The Legislature has \$900 million in requests for capital projects. She is no longer the ranking member on the Capitol budget committee. She recently brought Reps. Dunshee and DeBolt over for a tour, which was useful. One recommendation is the need to provide information on how the existing funding has been spent, focusing on the accomplishments. Rep. Dunshee likes to see "wet water" out of funded projects. Be sure to plan for all of the funding; there is a temptation to take any leftover funding.

Mike Leita, member of the CR PAG Executive Committee, provided some comments. He thinks the money has been well spent. Tributary needs are significant, and water is just as important – maybe more important – than transportation issues. We collectively need a broader understanding of the cost of water.

CRPAG members and the audience posed several questions and observations:

- This is a good program and needs more resources; having all of the different stakeholders in the Yakima process participating has been helpful

- One idea is a Referendum 38 type approach – referred by the Legislature to a vote of the people and divided into two or more specific shares
- This perhaps could be a referendum for water supply on both sides of the mountains
- Rep. Chandler thought an approach like that should be considered, gives the ability for secure funding
- Issues that occur to him include:
  - So many water issues, might be hard to focus it
  - The House has become less focused on the entire state
  - Agriculture is bigger economic driver than Boeing
  - Best comparison is to Puget Sound clean-up
  - With CR Program, we got ahead of the curve
- Rep. Warnick thinks the success of the CR and Yakima programs is because of balance; need to consider flood projects on the westside, fish issues
- The model needs to be many pay a little, not the few paying a lot
- Regions have different issues but still need water
- Any water bills for the upcoming session? [probably no big policy changes this year]

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

**The next meeting of the CRPAG will be February 27, 2014 at the Farm Bureau Office in Lacey.**

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**Attendees:**

*CRPAG members and alternates:*

- Dale Bambrick, NMFS
- Walter Larrick, BOR
- Jim Fredericks, USACE
- Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commission
- Mike Leita, Yakima County Commission
- Wes McCart, Stevens County Commissioner
- Carl Merkle, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla
- Gary Passmore, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
- Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
- Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner
- Richard Stevens, Grant County Commissioner
- Ron Walter, Chelan County Commissioner

*Others in attendance:*

- Neil Aaland, Facilitator
- Moroni Bennally, University of Washington
- Phil Brown, GSI Water Solutions
- Scott Cave, City of Quincy
- Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
- Charity Davidson, WDFW
- Melissa Downes, Department of Ecology

Urban Eberhart, Yakima Basin Joint Board  
Pony Ellingson, Pacific Groundwater Group  
Tim Flynn, Aspect Consulting  
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County  
Sean Gross, NMFS  
Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting  
Perry Harvester, WDFW  
Tim Hill, Department of Ecology  
Todd Hunziker, CH2M Hill  
Charles Klarich, YBSA  
Paul La Riviere, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Ben Lee, Landau Associates  
Kevin Lindsay, GSI Water Solutions  
Mike Livingston, WDFW  
Miguel Martinez, Blue Leaf Environmental  
Jason McCormick, WWT  
David McClure, Klickitat County  
Dave Nazy, Department of Ecology  
Steve Nelson, RH2 Engineering  
John O'Callaghan, BOR  
Mike Paulson, Rep. McMorris Rodgers' Office  
Joel Purdy, GeoEngineers  
Joye Redfield-Wilder, Department of Ecology  
Rick Roeder, Department of Natural Resources  
Derek Sandison, Department of Ecology  
Mark Schuppe, Department of Ecology  
Evan Sheffels, WSFB  
Paul Stoker, Groundwater Management Area  
Tom Tebb, Department of Ecology  
Stephanie Utter, BOR  
Bill Wagner, National Frozen Foods  
Bill Zachmann, Department of Ecology