

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
May 14, 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. Neil explained the meeting was ending at 11:30 to allow a short site visit to a local project; the site visit will be at Kachess Dam.

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Board Snowpack Model

Melody Kreimes, UCSRB, facilitates the North Central Washington Forest Health Collaborative. They have received OCR funding to work on a model to evaluate the potential to increase snowpack through forest restoration. She showed a PowerPoint presentation (available on the OCR website) that presented work in the Methow sub-basin as an example. Within the presentation, she overlaid the fire boundary from 2014 over the snowpack model information. The phase 1 model will be done this summer; for phase two they'd like funding for a decision support tool.

Derek said he was intrigued by this subject. The health of the upper watershed affects water availability in the lower watershed. Phase 2 is on the priority list for 2015-2017.

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

- Do you have to thin to get the canopy reduced? [Yes; the need is great to improve the health of the forest. In the Teanaway community forest, they are finding that the growth is too thick.]
- Where will this fit in the planning process – there's a proposal for thinning that is not being well received
- Tribes manage their forests, if you don't treat uplands it affects salmon recovery below
 - Forests on the east side were once dominated by big trees; Yakama tribe is participating in this, it's a very important conversation
- In dry years like 2015, there is less snowpack
- How will less snow and more rain affect the model? [will have a climate change scenario in model; effect is reduction in canopy]
- Can a similar model be developed for Yakima? [This is a test run, would like to try and apply the same methodology; should work in other watersheds]
- UCSRB is working with the forest serve
- Is the information available yet? [Not yet but will be on website, and raw data can be provided]
- Did you compare with information from Colorado, ten years ago they had big fires? [Yes, a lot of data came out of Colorado]
- If the market doesn't do it will be difficult to do this
- DNR is investigating opportunities for biofuel generation to help make it financially feasible

Alternative Mitigation Strategies for New Water

Derek Sandison, OCR, provided an introduction to this topic. This is an initial introduction to the topic; he wants to see if there's interest in pursuing this. The panel for today is Mark Peterson, Peterson and Marquis; Steve Boessow, WDFW; and Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting. Each of them will present some information, and then take 5 minutes to respond to specific questions.

Mark Peterson reviewed his handout and discussed current mitigation policy. It's found in Ecology POL-2035. The policy currently is "in kind, in time, in place."

Steve Boessow, WDFW, reviewed WDFW's role in mitigation. They do look at mitigation for water rights. He presented a PowerPoint presentation (available on OCR website).

Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting, thinks OCR could provide a leadership role to advance the notion of providing metrics. He discussed three options: shrub steppe example (assessment following use of mitigation ratios); proportionate mitigation; crosswalk method (point based assessment) and showed some hypothetical metrics. Dan thinks we're presently just solving a bunch of smaller problems, we should look at a programmatic approach.

The three presenters then responded to two specific questions: What is challenging about current mitigation options; and what benefits could be realized by greater clarity on mitigation standards?

Mark Peterson said he doesn't know what to advise his clients. He would like some clarity. A programmatic approach gets more reliable results. Steve Boessow explained that, from his perspective, this is a big challenge. We're trusting that mitigation is going to have the desired impact. Dan Haller thinks that a market exists. There is demand, supply but the processes are inefficient. There are two models – a public and a private approach. The private market approach can help solve this.

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

- Phil Rigdon is not sure we want to institutionalize the approach to mitigation; the burden may fall back on tribal water rights. Tribes are willing to work through the issues and concerns on individual permits
- Mike Leita asked what the request is of the PAG [the request is putting together a small work group and test driving it]
- Mike supports Phil's concerns; he wonders if the PAG is the right group to champion this
 - It needs to be statewide
- How would trust water rights be affected? [These ideas are not suggesting that trust water rights would be diminished]
- How do you foresee this overlapping with OCPI? [Pressure from courts have resulted in some challenges]
- Phil is concerned that this will become "what we pay to get water"; the first step should be in kind/in place; he finds value in the project by project approach
- Paul Jewell finds this challenging; it's necessary to use a programmatic approach and we shouldn't oppose that; it's presently hard to go out of basin for mitigation

Derek summarize what he's heard. There are arguments for case by case, but he wants to continue the conversation on this. Lisa noted that having the conversations helps bring groups closer together.

Legislature/Budget update

Derek provided an update on drought. He reviewed the current declarations, and noted that Ecology has already sent out drought curtailment letters; they typically don't do that till later in a summer. The governor is about to announce a state drought declaration.

He noted that in the legislature, there is still a wide different between House and Senate capital budgets. They're first focusing on operating and transportation budgets, and then will turn to capital budget.

Tour

Neil explained that the meeting was ending early to provide time to visit a local project site. The PAG will be driving 45 minutes to Kachess dam.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30 a.m.

The next meeting of the CRPAG will be in August/September in Ellensburg, WA.

Attendees:

CRPAG members and alternates:

- Gregg Carrington, Chelan PUD
- Wendy Christensen, BOR
- Perry Harvester, WDFW
- Holly Harwood, BPA
- Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner
- Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
- Garry Passmore, Colville Confederated Tribes
- Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
- Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
- Craig Simpson, ECBID
- Rich Stevens, Grant County Commissioner

Others in attendance:

- Neil Aaland, Facilitator
- Susan Adams, Washington Water Trust
- Jacob Anderson, Klickitat County
- Steve Boessow, WDFW
- Jim Browitt, Schroeder Law Offices
- Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
- Susan Crawford, BOR
- Melissa Downes, OCR/Ecology
- Tim Flynn, Aspect Consulting
- Dan Haller, Aspect Consulting
- Todd Hunziker, CH2M Hill
- Trevor Hutton, Ecology
- Al Josephy, Ecology
- Mike Kaputa, Chelan County
- Mike Krautkramer, Robinson Noble
- Melody Kreimes, UCSRB
- Ilene Le Vee, landowner
- Kevin Lindsey, GSI
- Chris Marks, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Laura Merrill, WSAC
Rick Miller, Franklin County Commissioner
Mark Peterson, Peterson & Marquis
Mike Poulson, Rep. McMorris Rodgers
Joel Purdy, GeoEngineers
Joy Redfield-Wilder, Department of Ecology
Alison MacEwan Ridolfi
Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
Bob Rolfness, CWRE
Derek Sandison, Department of Ecology
Mark Schuppe, Department of Ecology
Tom Tebb, Department of Ecology
Bill Wagoner, National Frozen Foods
Rich Walpole, CNWE