

WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION
WORK SESSION
GRANTS PASS

AUGUST 27, 1992

Commission Members Present:

Lorna Stickel
Jim Howland
Hadley Akins
Mike Jewett
Roger Bachman
Anita Johnson
Cliff Bentz

WRD:

Martha Pagel
Diane Reynolds
Cindy Smith
Steve Applegate
Tom Kline
Becky Kreag
Greg Nelson
Beth Patrino
Bev Hayes
Barry Norris
Rick Craiger
Doug Parrow
Bruce Sund
Jerry Lidz
Fred Lissner
Mike Zwart
Donn Miller
Reed Marbut
Steve Brown
Doug Woodcock
John Borden
Al Cook
Bob Pierce

Others:

Larry Stout
Rep. Chuck Norris
Trish Carroll
Bob Steimer
Glenn Welden
Dennis Lewis
Bruce Buckmaster
Barry Snitkin
Mark Thomas
Brian Day
Tony Juttora
Norman Daft
Paul Eheide
David Newton
Tory Walker
Dave Duncan
Bruce Sund
Kip Lombard
D. L. Spickler
Jack Anderson
Kevin LaStrapes
Merle Soden
Stephanie Burchfield
Jerry MacLeod
Susan Black
Robert Hamilton
Darlene Haugen
Mark Wiest
Rob Kendall
Bill Caldwell
Bev Wright
Janet Adkins
Lisa Zavala
Todd Heidgerken
Audrey Simmons
Karen Russell
Anne Perrault
Bob Hunter
David Moon
Lyle Woodcock
Bev Woodcock
Jennifer Rodger

Robert Derids
Jan Boettcher
Gary Gilmore
Mary Gilmore
Roger Lyle
Bob Louse
Keith Nelson

The staff reports presented at this meeting, which contain the Director's recommendations mentioned in these minutes, are on file in the Office of the Director of the Water Resources Department, 3850 Portland Road NE, Salem, Oregon. Written information submitted at this meeting is hereby made a part of this record and is on file at the above address. Audiocassette recording tapes of the meeting are also on file in the Water Resources Department office.

1. BRIEFING ON ILLINOIS BASIN STREAM RESTORATION EFFORTS

Bob Pierce presented this informational item on the Illinois River. The Water Resources Department authored and circulated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which acknowledges the existence of problems in the Illinois Basin and agrees to work cooperatively to solve those problems. This MOU has been signed by 21 agencies and organizations. The Siskiyou National Forest and Rogue Valley Council of Governments sponsored two symposiums to study the Illinois River. From the symposiums came 14 action committees and one coordinating committee. The action committees are comprised of citizens who have taken an interest in a specific area; these committees have set up goals and objectives and will report to the coordinating committee which will report to the Illinois Basin Work Group twice a year. Josephine County hired two stream walkers to inventory the Illinois Basin for water use and non-use, general stream conditions, water temperatures, riparian zone conditions, and return flows back into streams.

Pierce reported that the Water Resources Department, Josephine County, Siskiyou National Forest, Fish and Wildlife Department, and the Bureau of Land Management have been working cooperatively on the basin. Other agencies which participated in the study are the Division of State Lands, Oregon State Police, Josephine County Sheriff's Department, Dept. of Environmental Quality, and Rogue Valley Council of Government. The study includes water use, a temperature profile, flow study, study of riparian zone conditions, general stream conditions, water sampling for turbidity and dissolved oxygen, and fish population density. An additional study to collect macroinvertebrates will be undertaken in the fall. The goal is to gather data by late October, organize it and compare it with historical data, and formulate long-term and short-term recovery plans. Monitoring of stream conditions will continue.

A petition was filed and accepted that would list winter steelhead on the Illinois as possibly threatened or endangered. Hopefully, ongoing efforts by the Illinois Basin Interest Group will help the National Marine Fisheries Service with any future recovery plans.

Trish Carroll, Siskiyou National Forest, reported on the work of the Agency Committee (one of the 14 action committees). Carroll distributed a written summary of the committee's initial task of data collection and explained the process.

Mark Thomas, member of the Emergency Action Committee, reported on the recovery process. The committee plans to offer the community an informational report on water quality and turbidity, including suggestions for water conservation and regulation. This group was active in researching the cause of a dam failure on the west fork of the Illinois River in July. They contacted the Division of State Lands and corrective measures were taken. The committee contacted the Water Resources Department for assistance when they received a request to investigate the drying up of Sucker Creek, a tributary on the Illinois.

2. GRANTS PASS IRRIGATION DISTRICT WATER MANAGEMENT STUDY

Panel members included Doug Parrow, Water Resources Department (WRD); Bruce Buckmaster, Grants Pass Irrigation District (GPID); Dave Newton and Tory Walker, David Newton and Associates; and Bob Hunter, WaterWatch of Oregon.

Commissioner Jewett thanked Bruce Buckmaster and other GPID staff for all the work they are putting into this five-year study.

Parrow reported that the appropriations doctrine requires that all water users in the state use water beneficially for the purposes listed in their water right and do so without waste. This directive is the basis for the conservation policy adopted by the Commission and the water management planning rules which will soon be going to public hearing.

Background information was given by Parrow. In 1929, a permit was issued to GPID to irrigate just under 18,400 acres. The allowable quantity of water was 230 cubic feet per second. In 1979, the department conducted a survey and identified 7,755 acres of irrigated land which was less than half the original irrigated acres. Because less acreage was actually being irrigated, the district's certificate was issued for 97 cubic feet per second.

Buckmaster reported that in 1982 the GPID board of directors signed the certificate and obtained an agreement with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to apply for a permit to supply water in tributaries for fish. This would allow continuation of the historic diversions. ODFW has since re-evaluated the benefits of the spills into the tributaries and has discussed requesting

cancellation of the permit. GPID then applied for a permit to continue the historic diversions. GPID attended several WRC meetings which resulted in negotiation of a temporary permit. GPID then entered into a contractual agreement with David Newton and Associates.

Bob Hunter commented that WaterWatch did take part in the negotiations of the GPID permit. He reported the two main issues - a system that wasn't meeting modern day water efficiency standard and the tremendous fish losses at Savage Rapids Dam. The temporary permit that was negotiated was to provide an opportunity to make a smooth transition and to consider alternatives, funding sources, and a plan for implementation.

Parrow explained that GPID is required to present a plan to the Commission in March 1994. That plan will justify the quantities of water the district really needs, after implementing all feasible conservation measures. The Bureau of Reclamation has also participated in the study. GPID owes money to the Bureau for work on Savage Rapids Dam and the Bureau has been directed by Congress to deal with the fish passage problems at the dam.

Tory Walker described what the consulting firm of Newton and Associates has done. Over the last two years, they have been working on characterizing the district, defining water need, defining links of canals, and breaking up the district into small management areas to lay a foundation to determine what improvements could be made. They have broken down the permit task items into basic issues: what would be the role of GPID in the urban area, what types of physical and management conservation measures should be implemented; how to deal with the fish losses at the Savage Rapids Dam; what types of financing might be available to implement plans.

Buckmaster reported that Newton and Associates provided for improvements in scheduling and management of waters within the district. As a result, diversion has been reduced by approximately 20 second feet this year from historic diversion rates.

David Newton reported on the groundwater situation within the District. Newton stated that this is a public awareness issue. GPID has no responsibility or authorization to provide groundwater recharge. The water source in the area is primarily the Rogue River. Outside the urban growth boundary groundwater is primarily relied upon for domestic and household needs. GPID reduces the demand on the groundwater systems and provides replenishment during the dry season by providing water from the Rogue. The plan being developed will specify ways to reduce or eliminate about half of the diversion water, which will reduce seepage losses. System modernization will mean higher cost to the patrons of the district.

Parrow said that GPID has a certificate for the diversion of water for irrigation purposes and agrees to deliver water to the streams under a permit issued to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife for purposes of fishery enhancement. This must be done as efficiently as possible. Because of this groundwater recharge, wetlands enhancement, and other incidental uses that have built up from the waste of GPID's uses are now at risk.

Doug Woodcock reported that there is a substantial amount of water in the alluvial system adjacent to the Rogue River. There may be the opportunity for some people who are denied surface water through the irrigation district to use groundwater for irrigation from the alluvial system. However, complications could result from hydraulic connection with surface water sources near by. In the event that wells go dry due to modifications of GPID, people might try to utilize groundwater from the lower aquifer in the area which is limited. Woodcock agreed with the concerns that David Newton reported regarding groundwater.

After their presentation the panel members responded to comments and questions by the Commission and the audience.

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane K. Reynolds
Commission Assistant