

Oregon Water Resources Commission Work Session
April 29, 1999
Salem

Members

Mike Jewett
John Frewing
Jim Nakano
Dan Thorndike
Tyler Hansell

Staff

Martha Pagel
Geoff Huntington
Dwight French
Weston Becker
Tom Paul
Bruce Moyer
Barry Norris
Doug Parrow
Fred Lissner
Bonnie King
John Wynn
Bob Devyldere
Cecil Baird
Karen Moynahan
Diane Addicott

Others

Prof. Jack Corbett
Portland State Univ. students
Roger Bachman
Ed Henricks
Kimberley Priestley

Written material submitted at this work session is part of the official record and on file at the Oregon Water Resources Department, 158 12th Street NE, Salem, Oregon 97310. Audiotapes of the work session are on file at the same address.

Geoff Huntington, Deputy Director; and Doug Parrow, Field and Technical Services Division, led this discussion on the Department's prioritization and implementation of Oregon Plan measures. Using maps of the coastal basins, Huntington pointed out areas of stream flow restoration priorities. Most of the Department's measures under the Oregon Plan are built around tools to apply in individual basins, working with local groups to improve stream flows.

Using an enlarged computer screen display, Parrow demonstrated a computer program that allows watermasters to connect to the WRD web site and create a work plan for improving flows on a particular stream. Parrow explained that this particular program is currently available only to Department staff, but there are several other sources of information on the WRD web site available to the public.

In reviewing the written staff report, Huntington explained that in January 1999 the Governor signed an executive order expanding the scope of the Oregon Plan. This executive order directs state agencies to pursue actions which protect and restore salmonids on a statewide basis, and to

minimize and mitigate adverse impacts of actions not primarily for the purpose of restoring salmonids and habitat. Agencies must submit their modified work plans to the Governor by June 1, and include public involvement during preparation of those plans. Huntington said Attachment 2 of the staff report is an initial draft of proposed revisions to the Department's Oregon Plan measures; public comments are welcome on this draft report until May 14, 1999.

Frewing asked why WRD Measure 20 relating to water use measurement and reporting was placed in the "Medium Priority" category. Huntington agreed that this is an important issue; a commitment has been made by staff to spend the remainder of 1999 developing an approach to increasing and improving water use measurement and reporting. In the meantime, watermasters are currently able to identify in their work plans an area needing a head gate notice to improve distribution and flows.

Hansell suggested that the WRD Measure 13 relating to the agricultural water conservation program be moved from medium priority to high priority. Jewett agreed.

Hansell asked if there might be a way the Commission and Department could recognize various conservation projects. Parrow said this would happen under WRD Measure 17.

Public Comment

Roger Bachman, Oregon Trout, said he would be submitting detailed comments within the next two weeks. He agreed with the Commissioners' discussion about moving some items up to a high priority. He recognized that it will take a lot of planning to come to agreement on new water measuring and reporting requirements because of the fear expressed by farmers. The biggest problem is for the people who grow the low value crops because there is no way to recover the cost of converting to sprinklers from flood irrigation. Bachman spoke of the fish screening program where the owner of the diversion either received financial help or later the Department would install screens and charged the owner 40 percent automatically. He suggested considering incentives for measuring and reporting and perhaps an annual draft lottery in watersheds. The strategy is to bring together a work group representing various interests so that a program will be established with ownership by all. (tape 2, mark 10)

Hansell suggested considering tax credits as an incentive. Bachman said this would be fine, but only for those people with taxable income.

Kimberley Priestley, WaterWatch, said she too would be submitting detailed comments. WaterWatch would like to see added to the work plan a measure that would call for the closure of either basins or subbasins to further appropriation. This would greatly help stream flow restoration efforts. For example, the New River Basin would benefit from this. If such a measure were in the Oregon Plan it would highlight the state's ability to implement it. She said

WaterWatch would like to see the following moved to the "High Priority" list: WRD 20, Measurement and Reporting; WRD 10, Inventory Water Diversions; WRD 5, Water Availability Model; WRD 2, Water Right Transfer Review for Fish Concerns; WRD 12, Improving Efficiency and Prohibiting Waste; and WRD 13, Agricultural Water Conservation Program.
(tape 2, mark 128)

Thorndike suggested that perhaps WRD 30 and 32 might be moved down in priority. Jewett suggested that perhaps WRD 18 might also be moved down.

The Commissioners agreed that all the measures are important and that the prioritization of them could depend upon available money and staff time.

Following this discussion, the Commission went into an Executive Session under 192.660(1)(h) to consult with counsel concerning legal rights and duties regarding current litigation and litigation likely to be filed.

Following the Executive Session, the meeting was adjourned.

Sincerely,



Diane K. Addicott
Commission Assistant