

Oregon Water Resources Commission
Work Session
April 17, 2003
Salem

WRC Members

Dan Thorndike
Jay Rasmussen
Tyler Hansell
Jim Nakano

WRD Staff

Phil Ward
Debbie Colbert
Shannon O'Fallon
Cindy Smith
Diane Addicott
Gary Ball
Barry Norris
Tom Paul
Mike Ladd
Kyle Gorman
Al Cook
Donn Miller
Doug Parrow
Juno Pandian
Fred Lissner
Marc Norton
Jerry Rodgers
Mike Zwart

Others

Scott Ashcom
Mark Rozin
Kimberley Priestley
Ed Henricks
Brad Harper
Emilie Wolff
Sally Anderson-Hansell
Mickey Killingsworth
Mary Meloy
Marge Wattier

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 97301-4172. Audiotapes of the work session are on file at the same address.

I. Echo Meadows Project

Fred Ziari, President of IRZ Consulting, gave the Commission an informational report on the Echo Meadows Project. This is an artificial recharge demonstration project designed to improve summer flows and temperatures in the Umatilla River.

II. Status Report on Water Measurement and Reporting

Barry Norris, Technical Services Administrator; and Gary Ball, Hydrographics and Measurement Manager, offered this update to the Commissioners and responded to their comments and questions. They reported significant progress on the Department's statewide water measurement strategies. The inventory of significant diversions in high priority streamflow restoration watersheds is complete, and staff are performing site visits of those diversions. Water measurement and reporting compliance has increased since staff began mailing reminder notices to users who are required to report. Interested parties can now access streamflow data through the WRD website; and a centralized ground water level database is also available on the web. The Department continues to look for funds for the water measurement cost-share revolving fund established by the 2001 Legislature. Staff reductions over the past two years have hampered pump test and static water level reporting efforts.

III. Long-Term Water Supply Management Follow-up

Debbie Colbert, Water Policy Analyst, led a discussion with Commissioners regarding stakeholder panel presentations held at the February 2003 Commission meeting. Key points raised by stakeholders at the February meeting were summarized in the written staff report. The stakeholders had agreed that long-term water supply management needs greater attention; but there was no consensus about how to, or whether to, move forward with a long-term water supply plan for Oregon.

Hansell encouraged the Commission and staff to support conservation projects such as the artificial recharge project Fred Ziari reported on at this work session. He expressed concern about the need for more measurement in order to better manage Oregon's water. He said he would like to see watershed councils receive more guidance and financial support if at all possible; and hopes the state of Oregon will be allowed to draw more water from the Columbia River. Hansell suggested that WRD staff might be able to provide Commissioners some guidance and suggestions on long-term water supply management.

Rasmussen said he is less interested in a comprehensive management plan; and more interested in working with staff to outline a framework based on values, visions, guidelines, enabling measures, flexibility, and education. Whatever planning is done should be under the umbrella of the Stewardship and Supply Initiative. He said the Department and Commission will obviously be encumbered by budget, staff, and changing conditions such as the economy — we need to be able to respond to these without having to continually update a comprehensive plan.

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Nakano agreed with Hansell in support of subsurface storage projects such as that presented by Fred Ziari, and for the Department to help seek funding for such projects.

Thorndike agreed with Rasmussen's comments — rather than developing a specific plan, work on a framework that would identify issues to be addressed, objectives, and alternatives that might be taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane K. Addicott
Commission Assistant