

Oregon Water Resources Commission
Meeting
June 26, 2003
Salem

WRC Members

Dan Thorndike
Susie Smith
Tyler Hansell
Jim Nakano

WRD Staff

Paul Cleary
Phil Ward
Shannon O'Fallon
Debbie Colbert
Diane Addicott
Gary Ball
Barry Norris
Bruce Moyer
Dick Bailey
Kyle Gorman
Al Cook
Dave Jarrett
Marc Norton
Mike Ladd
Fred Lissner
Ken Lite
Juno Pandian
Bob Devyldere
Richard Marvin
Bernadette Williams
Karl Wozniak

Others

Mary Meloy
Roger Prowell
Steve Shropshire
Al Saul
Brad Harper
Marilyn Reeves
Ed Henricks
Tony Privratsky
Jan Lee
Rachel Walker
Keith Richmond
Todd Heidgerken
Anita Winkler

Written material submitted at this meeting is part of the official record and on file at the Oregon Water Resources Department, 725 Summer Street NE, Suite A, Salem, Oregon 97301-1271. Audiotapes of the meeting are on file at the same address.

A. Commission Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the April 17-18, 2003, meeting were offered to the Commissioners for their consideration. Smith moved to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Hansell. All voted approval.

B. Commission Comments

Hansell said sponsors of Senate Bill 820 regarding the Columbia River withdrew their support of the bill because it had been greatly modified in the legislative process.

Nakano said he met the person working on the feasibility study for a big reservoir in Black Rock located in the Yakima Basin; their biggest issue will be obtaining water rights.

Thorndike recently participated in an Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board conference call regarding distribution of federal Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Funds to various state agencies.

C. Director's Report

Cleary explained the status of Senate Bill 820 saying that staff had been working with stakeholders on options for improving WRD's process for evaluating new water rights out of the Columbia River. There were a number of suggestions incorporated into Senate Bill 820 that focused on a more fair percentage of water being withdrawn from the Columbia by Oregon, Washington, and Idaho. However, as Hansell mentioned, the bill became so greatly modified that it lost its initial purpose and was finally withdrawn.

A protest on the City of Boardman's permit extension was settled, allowing the City approximately 26 cfs of water to be developed over time. They used the very creative mitigation approach of contributing a one-time payment to the Federal EQIP water conservation program to offset 23 cfs of impact to the Columbia River.

Cleary said he, Phil Ward, and Debbie Colbert will be in Seattle July 16 for a meeting with water resource directors and state engineers from the states of Idaho, Washington, and Montana. The focus of the meeting is to discuss interstate coordination of Columbia River water management; and Washington's ongoing National Academy of Sciences evaluation of water withdrawals, fish flows, and mitigation approaches.

Cleary will participate on a panel at the July 17 Bureau of Reclamation Water 2025 Conference in Boise. The topic of discussion will be critical water issues in the West and ways to prevent conflicts in future decades.

Cleary updated the Commission on Klamath Basin water issues. He said in the last few days people worked hard to avoid what potentially would have been a complete cut-off of Project water to irrigators for the remainder of June. Under the biological opinions the Project is to be operated to meet certain lake levels on certain dates to maintain habitat for sucker fish; the lake level is measured at the end of each month. In April the Klamath Basin experienced a lot of rain,

as did most of the state, which led to the target lake level going up .6 of a foot. June followed as a very dry month, and since the water year type was triggered by a wet April, raising the target lake level, measurements showed the lake level would not be met in June. If there was no flexibility on changing the water year type to reflect the dramatic change in lake inflows, the likely remedy would have been to shut off the Project. Cleary said WRD staff are checking above the lake for illegal water use, and talking with users about conservation methods to improve the inflows into the lake. A benefit of the ongoing Klamath Basin ground water study is showing how much ground water influences the stream flows above the lake, but there is a big lag time between the ground water recharge and the actual stream flow effect. Completing the Klamath adjudication will help in this type of situation, allowing water to be moved via transfers and instream leases and allowing split season leasing to occur.

D. Budget and Legislative Update

Bruce Moyer, Administrator of Administrative Services, reviewed a written report on the development of the Department's 2003-05 budget and responded to Commissioners' questions and comments.

In the absence of Adam Sussman, Director Cleary discussed with Commissioners current legislative activity, reviewing a list of water-related bills that have either moved through the legislative process or may still move.

E. Information Report on the Unstable Ground Water Resource and Management Options for the Amity Hills/Walnut Hill Area

Using maps and a PowerPoint presentation, Barry Norris, Administrator of Technical Services; and Marc Norton, Hydrogeologist, reviewed, summarized, and shared conclusions of the Department's five-year ground water study in the Amity Hills/Walnut Hill area. They outlined management alternatives and suggested initiating a rulemaking process to propose restrictively classifying the Columbia River Basalt and marine sediment aquifers in the area for exempt uses only. This classification would stabilize the resource, provide for limited new domestic use, allow future modifications if necessary, and require Yamhill County to consider ground water as a Goal 5 resource when modifying their Comprehensive Plan. Other options may surface via the rulemaking process that will be evaluated by staff.

After discussion, Susie Smith volunteered to serve as hearing officer for the August 26, 2003, public hearing which will be held in the basin area. Staff plan to return to the Commission with final proposed rules for adoption at the November meeting.

Public Comment on Item E

Alvin Saul, Amity resident, expressed his concerns about the ground water resource in the Amity area. He said the water level in his well and the wells of neighbors has been dropping as additional homes are being constructed — and more new development is planned for the future.

Merilyn Reeves, Friends of Yamhill County, spoke in support of limiting further development of ground water in the Amity Hills/Walnut Hill area.

Mary Phillips, Amity resident, expressed her concerns about continuing new development in the area and local wells going dry.

F. Long-Term Water Supply Management: Water Management and Conservation Planning

Adam Sussman, Senior Policy Coordinator; Dwight French, Water Rights Manager; and Doug Parrow, Natural Resources Specialist, updated the Commissioners on the implementation of rules adopted in October 2002 related to permit extensions and water management and conservation plans for water suppliers. The permit extension of a community water supplier is closely linked to the development and approval of a water management and conservation plan.

Serving on a panel were Todd Heidgerken, Chair of the Oregon Water Utility Council; Willie Tiffany, League of Oregon Cities; and Wade Hathhorn, Economic and Engineering Services, Inc. (EES). Each panel member spoke on their organization's participation in the development of a guidebook for Oregon municipal water suppliers, "Water Management and Conservation Plans." This guidebook provides a summary of the Commission's rules, specific guidance, helpful tips, and two sample plans. The League of Oregon Cities also sponsored three workshops conducted by EES to provide community water providers guidance on how to use the guidebook. The Commission and staff expressed their appreciation for the League's efforts in development of the guidebook.

G. Public Comment

Roger Prowell, City of Bend, reported that Director Cleary and staff have agreed to meet with the Central Oregon Cities Organization and stakeholders to discuss Deschutes Basin municipal water management and tour water-related sites in the area. This is scheduled for July 23 and 24.

Prowell shared information on recent water-related activity and projects in the Deschutes Basin, and told Commissioners that Bend won two conservation awards for creativity at the American Water Works Association Spring Conference.

Prowell invited the Commission to Bend for their September 2003 or some other future meeting

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane K. Addicott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Diane K. Addicott
Commission Assistant