

**Water Resources Commission  
Meeting  
Salem, Oregon  
June 18, 2015**

WRC Present

John Roberts, Chair  
Jeanne LeJeune  
Bruce Corn  
Carol Whipple  
Bob Baumgartner  
Dennis Doherty

Staff Present

Tom Byler  
Tom Paul  
Cindy Smith  
Racquel Rancier  
Alyssa Mucken  
Ken Stahr  
Ivan Gall  
Dwight French  
Keith Mills  
Jen Woody  
Jerry Grondin  
Doug Woodcock  
Kris Byrd  
Brian Creutzburg

Others

Scott Oviatt  
Andy Bryant  
David Rupp  
Eric Stricklin  
Gil Riddell  
Craig Pope  
Alan Unger  
Amber McKinney  
Lisa Brown  
Leslie Bach  
Lauren Smith  
Kristel Fesler  
Ronan Igloria  
April Snell  
Peggy Lunch  
Tim Kuhn  
Derek Bradley  
John Clyde

Written material submitted at this meeting is part of the official record and on file at the Oregon Water Resources Department, 725 Summer St. NE, Salem, Oregon 97301-1271. Audiotapes of the meeting are on file at the same address. Staff reports and PowerPoint presentations are available on the Department's website.

**Tour of Salem Office**

The Commission toured the Salem office and met with Administrators and staff to learn more about how each division operates.

**Commission Meeting**

Chair Roberts called the meeting to order.

**A. Overview of Harney County Groundwater**

Ivan Gall, Groundwater Manager, briefed the Commission on groundwater development in a portion of Harney County, called the Greater Harney Valley. Gall noted that the Department had recently discovered that groundwater pumping is exceeding groundwater recharge. He provided an overview of the estimated recharged, allocated water use, and options that the Department is

considering for the future in the Greater Harney Valley. Gall responded to questions from Commission members.

Director Byler summarized the Department's plans for future efforts to engage the community to address the issue and to identify potential options to help them meet their water needs.

## **B. Drought and Climate Conditions for Oregon**

Ken Stahr, Hydrographics Manager, introduced a panel of climate scientists to discuss different elements of current drought and climate conditions. Stahr discussed current readings from stream gaging stations. Scott Oviatt from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Snotel Program discussed snowpack levels. Andy Bryant, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, discussed weather forecasts for precipitation and temperature. David Rupp from the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute at Oregon State University, discussed ocean conditions and influences on weather. Keith Mills, Oregon Water Resources Department's State Engineer, provided an update on state drought declarations. The panel responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

Director Tom Byler and Racquel Rancier, Senior Policy Coordinator, provided an overview of stakeholder outreach, communications, and work being undertaken with the Governor's office in regards to drought.

Commissioner LeJeune asked for DEQ to brief the Commission at a future meeting on the ramifications to water quality from long-term and sustained drought. Director Byler responded that he would arrange for a panel of other agency representatives to provide perspectives on drought, including agricultural, environmental and economic impacts.

## **C. Willamette Basin Reservoir Study Update**

Alyssa Mucken, IWRS Program Coordinator and Eric Stricklin, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided an update on the Willamette Basin Reservoir Study, and responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

## **D. Conversation with the Association of Oregon Counties Water Committee Co-Chairs**

Gil Riddell, Policy Director of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC); Alan Unger, Deschutes County Commissioner; and Craig Pope, Polk County Commissioner, talked about their perspectives on water resource issues and AOC's interest in place-based planning.

Riddell complimented the Department in having a staff member at all AOC Water Policy Committee meetings, and to Alyssa Mucken for her efforts to help county commissioners understand the Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS).

Commissioner Pope thanked everyone for their work on the IWRS, and reported on his work in this area.

Commissioner Unger talked about how crises motivate the counties to work with each other and the legislature.

The panel responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

**E. Process Improvement Update**

Dwight French, Water Right Services Administrator, and Kris Byrd, Well Compliance Construction Manager, briefed the Commission on process improvement initiatives undertaken over the past year, and responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully,

Lorri Cooper  
Executive Administrative Support to the Director's Office

**Water Resources Commission  
Meeting  
Salem, Oregon  
June 19, 2015**

WRC Present

John Roberts, Chair  
Ray Williams, Vice-Chair  
Jeanne LeJeune  
Bruce Corn  
Carol Whipple  
Bob Baumgartner  
Dennis Doherty

Staff Present

Tom Byler  
Tom Paul  
Racquel Rancier  
Cindy Smith  
Tracy Louden  
Dwight French  
Doug Woodcock  
Tracy Louden  
Kris Byrd  
Diana Enright  
Brenda Bateman

Others

April Snell  
Amber McKinney  
Sarah Liljefelt  
Brian Posewitz  
Wade Peerman

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Chair Roberts called the meeting to order.

**F. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the March 12-13, 2015 meeting were offered to the Commission for consideration.

Commissioner Corn moved to approve the March 12-13, 2015 minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Whipple. Voting for the motion: Commissioners Roberts, Williams, LeJeune, Whipple, Corn, Doherty, and Baumgartner. Voting against the motion, none.

The minutes of the May 15, 2015 teleconference meeting were offered to the Commission for consideration.

Commissioner Whipple moved to approve the May 15, 2015 minutes as presented. Seconded by Commissioner LeJeune. Voting for the motion: Commissioners Roberts, Williams, LeJeune, Whipple, Corn, Doherty, and Baumgartner. Voting against the motion, none.

## **G. Commission Comments**

Commissioner Baumgartner reflected on the drought presentation from Thursday and expressed concerns about a potential drought declaration in Washington County. He posed a couple of questions about messaging and how to manage differently to reflect the new normal. He noted that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency completed a review of waters of the United States, and issues that might be raised. He also wondered what the new normal for water resources would mean for storage and beneficial uses.

Commissioner LeJeune gave an update on a planning meeting she attended for a water summit. A second meeting is scheduled for August 28, and the Department will be invited to give a presentation on the IWRS. She missed the last couple of Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) meetings, but briefed the Commission from notes from EQC Commissioner Colleen Johnson.

Commissioner Williams reported that he continues to fall further behind on farming activities. There was record rainfall in his area in May; had there not been, water conditions would be much worse. He noted that there is a lot of fear in regards to drought. Farmers need to work harder and smarter to have water available.

Commissioner Whipple reported that the drought has people's attention in her area. She feels that we can manage our way through this, although we may need to change our ways and engage local officials.

Commissioner Doherty particularly enjoyed meeting the staff on Thursday. He had also asked the Pendleton staff about what they were experiencing. He thinks that it is opportune time for people to discuss water issues. He talked to the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation District, who partnered on a grant application and received funding. Not many people are willing to take advantage of that funding to convert flood irrigation systems to something more modern. He recently read in the Capital Press about senior water right holders in California voluntarily giving up 25 percent of their water right to benefit drought efforts.

Commissioner Corn enjoyed the tour of the building and was very impressed with Department staff. He felt the drive to Salem from home was very sobering. His area had great rains in May, but the precipitation did not come at the right time or in the right form to ease drought conditions. He noted the apparent dryness statewide, not just on the eastern side.

Chair Roberts reported that the city of Medford's water supply should be in good shape this summer. The Rogue Basin had a water conservation summit on May 7, where he made a presentation on drought. It was a good meeting that brought several different organizations together to discuss drought issues, and could be a model for other meetings. He was a Hearings Officer on May 21 for the Senate Bill 839 Rulemaking in Grants Pass. He felt staff did a great job facilitating those meetings. He also noted that Oregon State University is starting a new program this fall to train international specialists in Water Conflict Resolution. Roberts continues to work on the WISE Project, and it now appears to have a 3:1 benefit-cost ratio.

Roberts visited with Representative Buckley and Senator Devlin about the WISE project. The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) met in Salem on April 28 and 29. OWEB is being asked to branch out from water restoration improvement projects to include sage grouse restoration and juniper removal. The OWEB board approved a focused investment grant program of up to \$3 million for three biennia beginning in October.

## **H. Director's Report**

Director Tom Byler thanked the Commission for meeting with staff, and introduced Diana Enright to the Commission. Byler briefed the Commission on recent activities and events, and responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

Commissioner Baumgartner asked if there had been a case where there was recovery of attorney fees on a frivolous lawsuit of a state entity. Renee Moulun was not aware of such a situation but would follow up after checking with Trial Division.

## **I. Budget Update**

Tracy Loudon, Administrative Services Division Administrator, briefed the Commission on the General Fund Revenue Forecast, the Governor's Recommended Budget, and bonding bills. He responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

Chair Roberts asked for an email notification to the Commission as to the final outcome of the budget packages and bonding bills.

## **J. Legislative Update**

Racquel Rancier, Senior Policy Coordinator, briefed the Commission on legislation and responded to the Commission's comments and questions.

Commissioner LeJeune reflected on difficult budget years, and although the budget is healthy right now, would like to see the Department pursue alternate funding sources. She asked that the Commission be kept informed if a Natural Resources Agency Task Force is formed.

Commissioner Doherty requested information on natural resources agencies and their funding sources, especially identifying funding generated from fees, and the total biennium budget and number of FTE for the September Commission meeting.

Commissioner Williams requested an update from the West Coast Infrastructure Exchange.

April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress, commented that it has been a pleasure to work with Tom Byler and Racquel Rancier on issues before the Legislature, and was particularly

appreciative of their work on SB 267. She is committed to supporting the funding programs still to be moved forward.

**K. Request for Adoption of Rules – OAR Chapter 690, Division 200, 205, 210, 215 and 240 – Special Area Well Construction Standards**

Brenda Bateman, Technical Services Administrator, introduced Kris Byrd, Enforcement Manager, who presented a request for adoption of rules to address Mosier water issues and other rule modifications to protect groundwater resources and water users. Staff responded to the Commission's comments and questions.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to adopt the final proposed rules. Seconded by Commissioner LeJeune. Voting for the motion: Commissioners Roberts, Williams, Whipple, Corn, Doherty, LeJeune and Baumgartner. Voting against the motion, none.

**L. Request for Adoption of Rules – OAR Chapter 690, Division 522, Deschutes Basin Water Management Rules**

Dwight French, Water Right Services Administrator, briefed the Commission on proposed amendments to the Deschutes Basin Water Management Rules and responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to adopt the final proposed rules. Seconded by Commissioner Corn. Voting for the motion: Commissioners Roberts, Williams, Whipple, Corn, Doherty, LeJeune, and Baumgartner. Voting against the motion, none.

**M. Request for Adoption of Rules – OAR Chapter 690, Division 93, Rules Governing Grants and Loans for Water Supply Development**

Tracy Loudon, Administrative Services Division Administrator, and Jon Unger, Water Supply Development Coordinator; briefed the Commission on the proposed Chapter 690, Division 93 Rules, and responded to the Commission's questions and comments.

Commissioner Doherty expressed his appreciation for everyone's efforts and participation that resulted in the final product as presented.

Commissioner LeJeune commented on her support for the rules, and that it is a historic moment. She hopes that it will serve as a model for more funding opportunities and continued efforts in conservation and planning.

Commissioner Doherty made a motion to adopt the final proposed rules. Seconded by Commissioner Williams. Voting for the motion: Commissioners Roberts, Williams, Whipple, Corn, Doherty, LeJeune and Baumgartner. Voting against the motion, none.

April Snell, Oregon Water Resources Congress, thanked the Commission for adopting the rules.

**N. Public Comment**

No comments were received.

**O. Other Business**

No other business.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Lorri Cooper  
Executive Administrative Support to the Director's Office