

From: [Y Lind](#)
To: [COOK Nirvana * WRD](#)
Subject: Email to OWRD Commissioners
Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 1:29:55 PM

Hello Nirvana,

Looking at the OWRD website, I can't find an email address for OWRD Commissioners but I did find yours. If you could forward this I would greatly appreciate it.

Yancy

OWRD Commissioners,

After watching your most recent meeting on December 3, I felt compelled to reach out to you. I have been on the board of Central Oregon Flyfishers (the largest fly fishing club in the state) 11 out of the past 17 years, served on the board of the Association on NW Steelheaders, am currently on ODFW's Restoration & Enhancement board, have volunteered countless hours working on fisheries, fish passage, and habitat restoration efforts in the field, and have been involved in policy issues with various groups. I participated in the multi-year Deschutes Basin Work Group that examined flow issues in the Upper Deschutes River and am currently a member of the Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative including serving as a member of the groundwater subcommittee. I am the recipient of the 2018 Award of Merit from the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society. I write a blog called Central Oregon Informed Angler (www.coinformedangler.org) that I have been told is highly influential in our local "water world". I think I qualify as an informed citizen activist.

As was discussed in your meeting, it is evident that OWRD is in the business of extracting and delivering maximum consumptive use of water without concern for sustainability or environmental impact. It is commonly understood that there isn't a water application or development project that OWRD won't support. Equally problematic, there has been no effort on the part of OWRD to monitor water usage, enforce limits, or carefully examine water rights.

Consider the Thornburgh destination resort currently being developed near Redmond. A key water right obtained for mitigation is based on a paper right on a small creek that OWRD has admitted to never measuring for actual wet water. Clearly, there is damage to surface water from groundwater pumping when the paper right does not reflect real wet mitigation water. The result of decades of OWRD's lack of stewardship of the public's water is evident all around us. I understand why a public commenter at your meeting called OWRD's behavior "criminal".

OWRD is highly skilled at the art of obfuscation as reflected in the final draft of the Deschutes Basin Groundwater Mitigation Program. As you know, serious objections to the DBGMP have been raised from the outset by government agencies and NGOs. I will not repeat them here to highlight something even more fundamental: the mischaracterization of the DBGMP as a success to perpetrate the ongoing mismanagement of the program.

OWRD claims that the DBGMP has been a success, a statement that is not supported by the facts. If a river flows at 0 cfs one day and 100 cfs the next, then you can say it averages 50 cfs. This use of average flows is exactly what OWRD employs. As is plainly evident, this is complete nonsense. From a biological sustainability or recreational use perspective, the low flow number is all that matters. We humans need to breathe oxygen all day, every day, not just on average. The same goes for aquatic life as well as recreational users.

This discussion is not hyperbole. OWRD cites both the Crooked and Middle Deschutes rivers as

examples of program “success”. Well, this summer the Crooked River literally went dry below the North Unit Irrigation District diversion as spring chinook were attempting to come upstream to spawn. It is not uncommon for the Middle Deschutes to fluctuate wildly in the spring and fall. Drops from 800 cfs to 60 cfs in a single day don’t give aquatic life (or a kayaker) much time to find shelter if it is even possible. The averages might look like improvement, but biologically speaking both rivers remain on life support.

The bottom line is that since the DBGMP has been implemented, municipalities, agriculture, and developers have been able to obtain water while groundwater has continued to drop and rivers and streams continue to suffer. At the same time new wells continue to be drilled with no end in sight, most without monitoring. All while our population is booming and droughts are worsening. Unfortunately, meaningful change is not reflected in the latest version of the DBGMP. Our current and worsening water crisis continues to be ignored.

Regards,

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