

APRIL 2015 NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, Issue 4

Since 1964, we have supported the Columbia Basin Project and its future development. We protect its water rights and educate the public on the renewable resource and multiple-purpose benefits of the project.

Legislative Update

Mike Schwisow, Government Affairs Director

A delegation representing the Columbia Basin Development League was in Olympia in March to provide briefings on progress being made on implementation of the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) and to seek support for the ongoing effort. The group included Alice Parker, Royal City; Dale Pomeroy, Warden; Clark Kagele, Odessa; Jeff Schibel, Odessa; Kevin Lyle, Connell and Chair, Orman Johnson, Connell. All are members of the League Board of Trustees, with Johnson wearing two hats as a League Chair and East Columbia Basin Irrigation District Director.

The round of meetings began at the Department of Ecology with Director Maia Bellon and Office of Columbia River Director Derek Sandison. The group thanked Bellon for her past support and encouraged the agency to stay the course on OGWMP implementation. They also recognized the outstanding work of Sandison leading the Columbia River Program, noting his participation in League sponsored trips to Washington DC on behalf of the effort.

Those the group met with were reminded of the complexity of developing a Federal Reclamation project and what has been accomplished over the past nine years. Milestone accomplishments by Reclamation, Ecology and East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) were recognized including a complex EIS, an Endangered Species Act Sec. 7 consultation, securing enough water rights for 87,700 acres and initial implementation by ECBID. The group stressed the need to stay the course on implementation.

The State of Washington's investment of over \$75 million during the

past decade was recognized as a key factor in the development of the OGWRP and initial implementation. The group also reiterated a current CBDL goal to find funding for the remainder of the East Low Canal expansion portion of the project, with particular emphasis on helping Adams County fund new bridges required by expansion of the East Low Canal.

After meeting with Bellon and Sandison, the group moved to the Capitol. The first meeting there was with Senate Majority Leader Mark Schoesler of Ritzville and Representative Joe Schmick of Colfax. Meetings were also held with Representative Matt Manweller, Ellensburg and Representative Tom Dent, Moses Lake of the 13th District, Representative Susan Fagan, Pullman of the 9th District and Representative Maureen Walsh, Walla Walla.

The next day the group met with Senator Judy Warnick, Moses Lake, Chair of the Senate Agriculture and member of the Water & Rural Economic Development Committee and Senator Jim Honeyford, Sunnyside, Vice Chair of the Senate Ways & Means for Capital Budget. Those meetings were followed by a meeting with JT Austin, Natural Resources Policy Advisor in Governor Inslee's Executive Policy Office. The final meeting of the trip was with Representative Hans Dunshee of Snohomish, Chair of the House Capital Budget Committee.

The group was successful in maintaining awareness of the OGWRP program and continued need for legislative engagement in the implementation of the solution to Odessa Aquifer Depletion.

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From The Chair Orman Johnson

The work being done to develop the Columbia Basin Project is a public benefit that sometimes gets lost in the shuffle. As the Odessa **Ground Water Replacement Program** is in its second year of implementation, the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID), in step with Reclamation and Ecology, has been careful to ensure that public benefit is kept at the forefront. First and foremost, the program begins to address the issue of the declining Odessa Aquifer and prevent an environmental and economic crisis.

Within the parameters of replacing deep well irrigation with surface water irrigation, ECBID is working to serve as many landowners as possible. While efforts to meet this goal may take time, the ability to offer all qualifying landowners the opportunity to participate in the program is of greater public benefit than other quicker methods that only address the needs of a select few. With public dollars funding the steps necessary to lead up to and begin implementation, I appreciate that public benefit is an ongoing criteria.

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Reviewing Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program

The Odessa Subarea Special Study (OSSS) was initiated in 2005 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and the Department of Ecology Office of Columbia River (DOE OCR). The public policy purpose of the study was to sustain the economy of the region and avoid environmental degradation by developing a feasible plan to maximize conversion of acres eligible to receive Columbia Basin Project water supplies from aquifer depleting deep wells to Project surface water supply.

The OSSS took seven years to complete at a cost of over \$13 million in Federal and State funds and is considered part of the continued development of the Reclamation Columbia Basin Project. The study included a detailed environmental impact statement and a Sec. 7 Endangered Species Act consultation by USBR on impacts to listed Columbia River salmon species.

The Record of Decision signed by USBR Regional Director Lorri Lee identifying a feasible alternative allowed Reclamation to apply to DOE for the necessary water right permits to hydrate the project. Reclamation owns the water right and all irrigation infrastructure which currently serves 680,000 acres.

Once the OSSS was completed, implementation of the plan is the responsibility of Reclamation and East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) who is contracted to operate Reclamation facilities in that portion of the Project.

ECBID is working aggressively to implement the Preferred Alternative identified in the OSSS. Water rights have been secured to serve over 87,000 acres currently using deep wells. The plan calls for expansion of East Low Canal (ELC) to maximize delivery capacity and construction of seven pump station / pipelines systems off ELC to deliver water to the farms.

ECBID is in the second year of a \$26 million grant provided by Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River from funds the Legislature appropriated in the 2013-2015 Capital Budget. This funding will accomplish a major portion of ELC construction, but not fully complete this portion of the project. Funding to complete that

Contracts Approved for First New Water Since 2005

The first new water supplies since 2005 have been made available for land in the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) for groundwater replacement water through action taken by the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) Board of Directors.

The East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) Board of Directors issued the first five water service contracts to landowners, supplying water to 1,836 acres in the CBP, allowing for continued crop production and the preservation of groundwater for other uses. The action is part of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program, a public-private partnership designed to address the depletion of the Odessa Aquifer. The partners, working together since 2004, include the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), ECBID, the Columbia Basin Development League and landowners.

The partners have successfully collaborated at the state and federal level to permit replacement water to serve more than 87,000 acres of land. Landowners had accessed groundwater because full development of the CBP had not yet reached them. During the interim years, the Department of Ecology allowed landowners to drill wells.

The Odessa Subarea Special Study, developed by Reclamation and Ecology, is in its second year of implementation by the ECBID who continues to work with all eligible landowners and is designing pump stations and pipeline systems that will take water to larger blocks of eligible land beyond those in close proximity to the East Low Canal.

To fund the systems, the ECBID plans to issue revenue bonds secured by landowner water service contracts with long term repayment. The funding plan uses a normalized cost approach to pay for complete development regardless of proximity to Banks Lake, the East Low Canal and the proposed delivery systems. This equally shared cost approach is common for publically-owned water supply systems and consistent with the existing cost structure for the approximately 670,000 acres being irrigated in the CBP.

Reviewing Odessa Ground Water ... Continued from page 2

portion of the plan is being sought from the Federal government.

ECBID has developed a local funding plan for the pump station/ pipeline systems. The district would issue revenue bonds secured by landowner water service contracts with long term repayment. The funding plans uses a uniform rate approach were all landowners pay the same rate regardless of where there land lies in proximity to ELC. This equal shared cost approach is used in all publically owned water supply systems.

ECBID is working directly with landowners in the development of the seven pump station/pipeline systems. Landowners have been reviewing and providing input on the location of pipelines and have received initial cost estimates. The process is open to all landowners with land eligible to receive CBP water supplies.

State of Washington investment in Odessa groundwater replacement solutions.

- \$1,000,000 Weber Branch and Coulee Siphon designs and permits
- \$2,000,000 "Mini-widening" for Lake Roosevelt Water
- \$12,000,000 Potholes Supplemental Feed Route
- \$15,000,000 Coordinated Conservation
- \$8,223,000 Odessa Planning Report and EIS related activities
- \$30,750,000 East Low Canal and Lind 1 and 2 siphon expansion (Includes power revenue share offset and cultural resources mitigation for Colville Tribes)
- \$1,000,000 Odessa water right mitigation (for NOAA Fisheries)
- \$2,000,000 in EIS, permitting, and court costs associated with the Lake Roosevelt Incremental Storage Releases

See Map on Page 4



UPCOMING EVENTS

CBDL Board of Trustees Meeting - Wednesday, May 20, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. ATEC, Big Bend Community College, Moses Lake

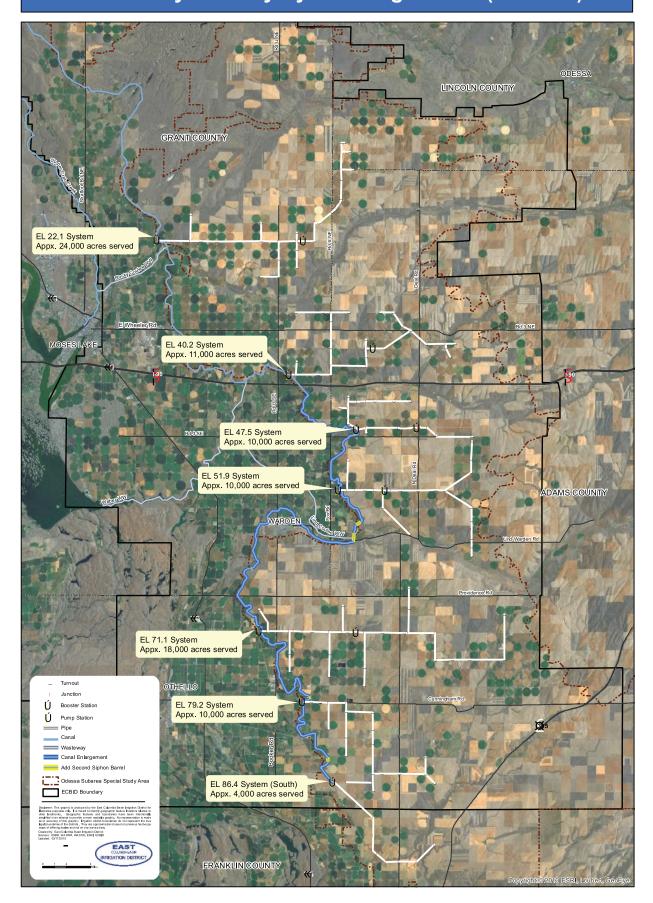
SAVE THE DATE! CBDL Annual Conference - Tuesday, October 27

ATEC, Big Bend Community College, Moses Lake

Proposed Changes to Reclamation Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines Unfavorable

The Principles and Guidelines (P&Gs) for Water and Land Related Resources Implementation Studies govern how federal agencies evaluate proposed water resource development projects. The Water Resources Development Act of 2007 directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to update its P&Gs, which were set forth in 1983. In 2009, the Administration, via its Council on Environmental Quality, moved to update the P&Gs for all federal agencies engaged in water resource planning— including the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation)—to promote agency-wide consistency.

East Columbia Basin Irrigation District Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) Preliminary Delivery System Alignments (03/17/15)



Proposed Changes ... Unfavorable... Continued from page 3

Reclamation is now proposing its Principles, Requirements, and Guidelines (PR&Gs) to supersede the 1983 P&Gs. These agency specific procedures are on track to be finalized in mid-June. The PR&Gs will impact decisions on all federal water resource infrastructure investments, including "new construction, modernizations and operational modifications, ecosystem restoration, land management activities, and grant and funding programs."

The PR&Gs will include non-quantified and non-monetized benefits in project justification." Reclamation is claiming that it does not anticipate utilizing non-quantified and non-monetized benefits in its economic calculus for irrigation and M&I water supply; however, it will consider those types of benefits for hydropower, recreation, flood control, and ecosystem restoration.

Reclamation's inclusion of non-quantified and non-monetized benefits may significantly alter the calculus of new water resource project selection and the analysis of ongoing water resources projects that receive federal funds. The new PR&Gs, as currently proposed, could jeopardize efforts and funds to complete the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) in the Odessa Ground Water Management Subarea by subjecting project analyses to unknown, non-quantifiable values and introducing a high level of subjectivity to the process.

The Columbia Basin Development League's Washington DC advocacy team has been in communication with Reclamation officials to express concerns and learn more. CBDL will continue to follow this matter closely.

Senate Budget Votes Show Increasing Support for Water User Concerns

Ian Lyle, Water Strategies LLC

Prior to adjourning for its April work period the United States Senate debated and passed S. Con. Res 11, the Senate version of the budget resolution for fiscal year 2016. Debate on the budget resolution went on into the late hours of March 26th and early hours of March 27th with S. Con. Res ultimately passing by a vote of 52 to 46.

The Senate budget resolution is a non-binding resolution. This means that the President doesn't sign it into public law. However, it is still significant because it sets forth the general funding levels that the appropriations committees must work within. The budget resolution, in addition to setting funding priorities and allocation levels, also provides a platform to discuss pressing policy issues and highlight areas of major concern.

Senators filed 791 amendments to the Senate budget resolution, less than 20 percent of these amendments were ultimately agreed to. Issues important to water users and CBDL were the topic of two amendments that were agreed to.

Senator John Barrasso (R-WY) offered amendment #347, which aimed to clarify that the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act should focus on water quality within traditionally navigable bodies of water. It also noted that Clean Water Act jurisdiction should be limited as it relates to features like irrigation ditches. Senator Barrasso's amendment passed by a vote of 59-40.

Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO) offered amendment #443. Senator Gardner's amendment was geared toward addressing concerns about the Forest Service's groundwater directive and ski area water rights directives. His amendment highlighted the importance of water rights and recognized that western states, not the federal government, have a long-standing authority to manage water rights. Senator Gardner's amendment was agreed to by a vote of 59-41.

Both the Barrasso amendment and the Gardner amendment passed with bipartisan support. These votes signify that water users are making their voices heard in the Senate and that there is a fair amount of concern among both Senate republicans and democrats. It also indicates that the amount of concern is growing. The level of support that both amendments received will also help raise the profile of these issues with the Administration and should serve as a message that action needs to be taken to address the concerns of water users like CBDL.

QCBID Begins Needed 0&M Expansion

Darvin Fales, QCBID Manager

Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District crews will begin construction on a much needed O&M Office Building Project. Work will begin on Phase 1 in the coming weeks, following years of discussion, research, and planning dating back to 2002. Additional staffing, due to increasing regulations and downsizing of USBR field office employees, caused QCBID to outgrow its original space. Early initial plans to add on to the existing office building were rejected due to costs of upgrading to current seismic and ADA standards. The Quincy and Royal Shop Mechanic buildings were expanded in 2009-10, the George Watermaster office was replaced in 2012, and the Quincy office building expansion plans were postponed, after being created and recreated with subsequent renditions over the years by MJ Neal Associates. The bids for a downsized O&M office went to the street in January, 2015. Bids received from contractors came in higher than the architect estimates, so the QCBID Directors voted that the construction work would be performed utilizing District forces, with associated oversight from the architect. The building will provide the supplementary space in addition to being ADA accessible which has been one of the driving concerns behind the desired goal from the project's inception. The collaborative and conscientious efforts over the years are now coming to fruition, and it's an exciting, albeit sometimes challenging, time to work at the Quincy District.

LOOKING BACK

Spokane Chronicle, December 2, 1937 Local Group Votes on Coulee Policy (reprinted as published)

Grand Coulee-Columbia basin under the supervision of the bureau of reclamation and Bonneville under continued supervision of the army engineers is the policy favored by local supporters of the grand Coulee project.

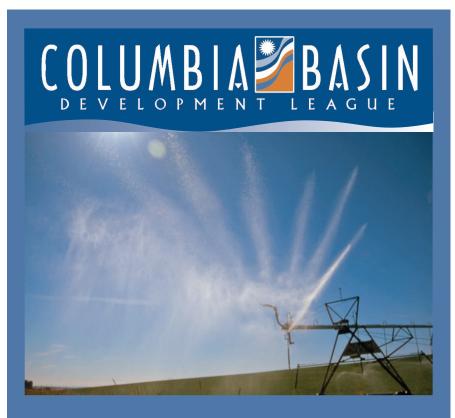
Meeting jointly Wednesday, members of the basin and legislative committees of the Chamber of Commerce voted this sentiment when balloting on three questions in a referendum sponsored by the United States Chamber of Commerce.

The vote was 28 to 3 in favor of: "the flood control act of 1936 continuing and projects thereunder should be prosecuted with vigor through the army engineers."

A vote of 24 to 5 was cast in favor of the following: the federal government should continue to utilize directly its regularly established agencies operating on a national basis to plan, coordinate and execute activities belonging to the federal government in relation to natural resources, including water resources, their utilization and their control."

The vote was 24 to 2 in favor of the question: "The federal government should in activities belonging to it in relation to natural resources proceed in cooperation with the states and preserve to the states all rights belonging to them in their resources."

The vote of the committee is referred to the chamber trustees.



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New members can also sign up at the site.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Great things are not done by impulse, but by a series of small things brought together."

> --Vincent van Gogh Dutch artist

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