

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.



Siphon: Rebar cage adjustments before outer form is set.

### OGWRP Under Construction

Mike Schwisow, Government Affairs Director

The largest federal reclamation project in the United States is finally expanding. In May East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) Directors received reports on the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program which is being implemented by the Irrigation District. The replacement program is a public-private partnership designed to address depletion of the Odessa

Aquifer by replacing 87,000 acres of groundwater irrigation with Columbia River surface water. The partners, working together since 2004, include the US Bureau of Reclamation, the Washington Department of Ecology, ECBID, the Columbia Basin Development League, and landowners.

#### Lind Siphon #1 & #2 Update

The pace of work is ramping up on the largest single element funded with the current Ecology \$26 million grant. After contracts were issued in January to construct two siphons in Lind Coulee, the expansion of the East Low Canal portion of the Columbia Basin Project is underway. The East Low Canal delivers water to landowners in the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District and provides the source of water for the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program. This expansion makes ground water delivery possible to land east of the entire length of the canal. The first 13 miles of added capacity, starting at the Weber siphon which crosses I-90, to the Lind Coulee siphons is completed as a million cubic yards of material was pulled from the canal last winter.

On May 6, Rotschy, Inc., a family-owned construction contracting company located in Vancouver, placed the first concrete in a test section on the two Lind Coulee siphons. Once the concrete had set, a giant saw was used to slice the siphon section for observation. The forms which were used on the Weber siphon project were modified to provide better access to the intricate rebar network to improve the concrete consolidation. The test section demonstrated that the

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**From the Chair**

*Orman Johnson*

**OGWRP Under Construction... *Continued from page 1***

modification worked and Rotschy approved the start of actual construction. Similar to the Weber project, work will be ongoing on both Lind siphons simultaneously with sections being added on four headings.

*County Road Bridge Update*

County road bridge modifications are a necessary part of the East Low Canal expansion. There are 12 bridges that need modification. Two are located in Grant County and the remaining 10 are in Adams County. The ECBID Board has requested that each county abandon one bridge that receives little use and where land-owners have access to alternate routes.

*Continued on page 3*

In the following pages, you will read about significant progress on the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program, impactful leadership changes at Ecology's Office of the Columbia River and the Department of Agriculture, updates on the Columbia River Treaty, and the final Waters of the United States rule. In the midst of so many developments it can be beneficial to step back and review the big picture. CBDL's primary mission is to raise support and awareness for the Columbia Basin Project. While

CBDL supports full development of the Columbia Basin Project, we are currently focused on preventing a crisis through the rapid decline of the Odessa Aquifer. The beginning of a solution to this decline is being implemented: Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP). OGWRP, the result of an exemplary public-private partnership, is a negotiated, vetted solution that provides for the greatest public benefit.

CBDL represents the stakeholders' interest in this process by giving them a voice.



*Foundation, or "rat slab," being placed on Lind Coulee siphon No. 2 next to original siphon barrel.*

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## OGWRP Under Construction... *Continued from page 2*



*Pressure testing rubber seal in siphon test sections.*

Since a typical bridge may cost around \$1 million the savings associated with abandoning one bridge is significant. Two of the Adams County bridges are in the section between the Weber siphons and Lind siphons. The ECBID Board decided to use a portion of the current grant to replace these bridges so the system would be fully operational to the Lind siphons. Work will be completed on the Leisle Road Bridge in June and the Calloway Road Bridge in 2016. The current challenge is to find funding for the remaining eight bridges. When the Columbia Basin Project was first being constructed, Reclamation signed a uniform crossing agreement with counties in the Project service area that identified construction and maintenance of bridges as a county responsibility.



*Placement of interior form and rebar cage for first new siphon barrel section on Lind Coulee No. 2.*



*Continued canal expansion on Booker Rd., south of Warden, waiting on new bridge construction.*



*Canal expansion on Hatton Rd, southwest of Othello, waiting on new bridge construction.*

County transportation budgets are already hard pressed to meet all existing construction and maintenance demands without the need for eight new bridges.

### *EL 47.5 Delivery System Update*

Work is ongoing for the EL 47.5 Delivery System. EL 47.5 is the Columbia Basin Project naming protocol for a facility on the East Low Canal at canal mile 47.5 from its starting point. The route for the pipeline is being firmed up through consultation with landowners regarding turnout locations. Surveying on the route is underway by District staff. The Board approved a request to advertise for a Bond Underwriter, a Cultural Resource Survey for the pipeline route, an Environmental Engineer, a Geotechnical Engineer for the pump



## OGWRP Under Construction... *Continued from page 3*

station site, an Electrical Engineer for the pump station design, and a Surge Protection Consultant for the pump plant design.

The ECBID Board also had an extended discussion of operational issues. Managing East Low Canal deliveries that involve gravity flow on the west side, and pumping operations on the east side, presents District staff with a new set of challenges. Maintaining safe canal operations while meeting landowner system demands for water is complex. Widespread power outages would cause significant amounts of water being pumped out to remain in the canal with little room for error. Directors made decisions on what levels of instantaneous demand capacity would be designed into the new pipelines. This will allow staff to move to a final design product to take to landowners sometime this summer.

## Governor Picks Sandison to Head State Ag Department

*Gregg Herrington*

For nearly a decade, Derek Sandison has been one of the key figures in the complex, economically crucial and politically sensitive process of determining who gets how much water in the Columbia Basin and exactly how it will get to them. Just about anything having to do with water development, distribution, and use in Washington's Columbia Basin, involved Sandison.



*Derek Sandison.*

But now Sandison, the calm, collaborative, and highly respected head of the state Ecology Department's Office of the Columbia River, is moving on. He has been selected by Gov. Jay Inslee to head the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA), beginning June 15. Bud Hover of Winthrop resigned in March.

Interviewed in his Wenatchee office a few days after his appointment, Sandison said, "I'm very excited to have this opportunity presented by the governor. I intend to bring the same energy to it that I brought to the Office of Columbia River position".

"Our Department of Agriculture helps support a multi-billion dollar industry and works closely with growers, workers, tribes, and communities around the state," Inslee said in late May when he announced Sandison's appointment. "Derek has a successful record of leading incredibly complex and large-scale projects and brings a commitment to innovation and collaboration that is exactly what we need to maintain and grow Washington's world-class agriculture industry."

## *Collaborating To 'Build Bridges'*

Another trait Sandison will bring to the new job is his collaborative approach to tackling issues, usually with numerous and widely varied interest groups at the table.

John Stuhlmiller, chief executive officer for the Washington Farm Bureau, said, "What makes Derek stand out is his ability to build bridges and work with others to find answers to very complex issues." He cited Sandison's "work with agricultural, environmental, and tribal interests to find answers that work on the ground."

Sandison said, "The first step is to get agreement with stakeholders on the problem we are trying to solve. If you don't get agreement on that, your solutions won't make sense to anyone involved."

"Then you look for solutions that will benefit a broad range of interests: all that takes time and a lot of work. You've got to have your eye on the ultimate prize and know what you're trying to accomplish."

He said his first order of business in the \$126,000-a-year Agriculture Department post will be "to get firmly grounded with the WSDA management team and get grounded with the industry and achieve a common understanding of the problems they face."

## *'Strong Focus' On Water For Irrigated Agriculture*

At the Ag Department, Sandison will oversee an annual budget of about \$158 million and a staff of 750 that can grow by 200 during harvest season. He politely declined to discuss specific opportunities and problems he might face on Day One. But, he said, water issues will be a big part of where he puts his time and energy.

"I believe it is important to continue with a strong focus on the water supply for irrigated agriculture," he said. "It'll be important to work with the Ecology Department and other agencies and stakeholders in coming up with viable approaches to shoring up water supplies in our state."

Sandison will have plenty on his plate besides agricultural irrigation. The department's responsibilities also include pesticides, fertilizers, inspections, dairy nutrient management (i.e., disposal of cattle waste), county fairs and weights and measures (the department is responsible to ensure you get a gallon of gasoline when the pump says one gallon).

Dealing with multiple and varied stakeholders is something Sandison, by all accounts, does quite well. The stakeholders he has routinely worked with on Columbia Basin water issues have included irrigation districts, farmers, state legislators, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Native American tribes, county and city governments, fish and wildlife regulators, sportsmen, conservationists, and river-recreation interests.

## *Among His Resume' Highlights . . .*

Sandison has been heavily involved in Columbia Basin water policy and projects with the Ecology Department since 2006 when he worked as the Regional Director in Yakima. In 2008 the Office of the Columbia River was created within the Department and Sandison was named as lead, based in Wenatchee.

## Governor Picks Sandison ... *Continued from page 4*

Among the major projects Sandison has helped lead as director of the Ecology Department's Office of the Columbia River are the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program and the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan.

Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP)--This is a continuation of the original, early 1950s, Columbia Basin Irrigation Project to bring water from behind Grand Coulee Dam south to farms spread over a million acres.

The canal system didn't get totally built out, and farmers in the eastern part of the project have been reliant on deep wells tapping the Odessa Aquifer. But that supply is not infinite. Wells are failing or needing to go even deeper and the long-term outlook for some municipal water supplies has been a growing concern.

A major hurdle in serving more Columbia Basin farmers was getting a second siphon to carry water under Interstate-90, a few miles east of Moses Lake. "It was extraordinarily important in getting that bottleneck moved from north of I-90 to the south side," Sandison said. "Once south of I-90, all the other pieces could be done in manageable chunks".

"It took about eight years to get everything secured. The water is now available and canals are being widened and extended and siphons installed farther south along the East Low Canal."

Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan--"It was an enormously important milestone" when the "Yakima Integrated Plan," as it is commonly known, was approved by the Legislature in 2013, Sandison said.

The effort had been launched in June 2009 by the state Department of Ecology and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, with participation by the Yakama Nation, irrigation districts, environmental organizations, and federal, state, county, and city governments to help develop a consensus-based solution to the basin's water-resource problems.

The goals of this \$4 billion, 30-year plan are to "protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat; provide increased operational flexibility to manage instream flows to meet ecological objectives; and improve the reliability of the water supply for irrigation, municipal supply and domestic uses."

"We are dealing with drought issues this year," Sandison said. "A big part of the Yakima Integrated Plan is to provide water to get through years like this, so we won't see catastrophic losses."

One example is the current project to build a drought-relief pumping plant at Lake Kachess near Snoqualmie Pass. It will allow for withdrawing an additional 200,000 acre-feet of water and transferring that flow into the Yakima River for beneficial use by irrigators in a drought year.

### *Sandison's Successor*

Ecology Department Director Maia Bellon sought input from numerous stakeholders before naming Tom Tebb as Sandison's successor.

Tebb, a native of the Yakima Valley, has served as regional director

of Ecology's Central Regional Office in Yakima since 2008. He is an experienced geologist and hydrogeologist who began his Ecology career in 1992 with the Nuclear Waste Program.

No one is better prepared to take on the responsibilities of leading the Office of Columbia River than Tebb, said Maia Bellon, Ecology's director.

Sandison said his replacement will bring his "own personality to the position. You'd expect to see some differences in the way programs are put on the ground."

But, he said, "The mission is defined in statute. Overall, there shouldn't be a great deal of difference. Director Bellon and I share the same view in terms of collaborative partnerships. I would expect that to continue."

### *The Future of Ag*

At the Agriculture Department, new issues and challenges await Sandison. If the overwhelming reaction to his appointment is on target, he'll do very well indeed.

As The Wenatchee World editorialized on May 31, "Sandison has a track record working with the most complex issues in resource management, of finding solutions among conflicting interests and between factions accustomed to unmovable opposition. By evidence, this appears to be a fine appointment by Gov. Inslee."

*Gregg Herrington (glcbherr@yahoo.com) is a Wenatchee area freelance journalist and researcher who has written about Washington history, politics, agriculture, ecology, tourism, and irrigation.*

## Expanding Clean Water Jurisdiction – The Final WOTUS Rule

*Kris Polly, Water Strategies LLC*

Ensuring the reliable delivery of clean water requires regulatory certainty and reasonable costs of compliance. Producers and water providers in the Columbia Basin understand that excessive regulatory compliance can increase water delivery costs and thereby increase food production costs.

On May 28, the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, together called "the agencies," released the final rule on

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

CBDL Board of Trustees Meeting - Thursday, September 17, 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

ATEC Building, Moses Lake

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

ATEC, Big Bend Community College, Moses Lake



## LOOKING BACK

Tri City Herald, November 20, 1958

### Project Manager Tells Pasco Group: Basin May Benefit from Grand Coulee *(reprinted as originally published)*

There is possibility that flood control benefits as well as greater-than-anticipated power revenues can pick up some of the higher cost of building the Columbia Basin Project.

Project Manager Phil Nalder speaking at the meeting of the Pasco Chamber of Commerce basin development committee yesterday, said studies have shown utilization of Grand Coulee Dam for flood control is feasible. He expressed optimism that Congress will authorize major modifications in the dam for flood control.

If this is done it's likely a "substantial allocation" of the project costs can be made to flood control, he said. When repayment contracts for the project were signed in 1945 no use of the dam for flood control was envisioned.

Nalder explained the background of the project for members of the committee and a handful of Basin farmers at the session. Originally, he said, the repayment contracts between the federal government and the irrigation districts were designed to have the settlers re-pay 25 per cent of the cost of constructing the irrigation works.

All the rest of the cost was to be subsidized from power revenues from Grand Coulee electricity, except for a small portion allotted to navigation benefits. Because the cost of construction has soared with the inflationary spiral, Nalder said, power revenues actually are paying a large share of the cost than first agreed to. It is amounting to about 86 per cent, compared to the 75 per cent first allocated.

Since Grand Coulee power revenues are higher than anticipated, power has been able to make up most of the increased costs resulting from inflation. Annual revenues have amounted to \$12,800,000 approximately, well above the 9 million dollars which was anticipated.

"Power has picked up almost enough to keep our total pay off in balance. Power probably will pay more than double the 1945 pay-out" (allocated to it) Nalder stated.

But the Bureau of Reclamation has proposed renegotiation of the repayment contracts. This would increase the amount the settlers would have to pay for cost of the irrigation works

The current contracts bind them to repay about \$85 per acre toward the cost. Nalder said he cannot say now how much more the Bureau will propose they pay.

This figure is being determined in a "repayment ability study" to learn how much the settlers can bear. Asked what the figure might be, Nalder replied, "It isn't going to vary a great deal from what it has been in the past. I'm pretty sure it will be more than \$85 per acre. But not double."

One of the farmers present, Fred Holmes, Block 16, said others in this area than the settlers should help carry the burden, through use of electricity. "The farmer's doing his share out there. The squeeze is on him," Holmes declared.

There was mentioned the possibility of formation of a conservancy district in the Basin, to spread the cost through valorem taxes. The idea may have merit, but whether the people would want it is a question mark, Nalder replied.

Nalder's picture gave this as the nub of the Basin situation: the 281 million dollars authorized by Congress for construction of the irrigation works will not build the originally planned one million acre project. It will last through 1963, when about 455,000 acres will have developed.

With present costs, it will run to an estimated 487 million dollars to build the works for the million acres. In addition the needed drainage works for waste water will cost an estimated \$44,500,000, rather than the \$8,176,000 authorized.

## Expanding Clean Water Jurisdiction – The Final WOTUS Rule ... *Continued from page 5*

the definition of "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) for the purposes of Clean Water Act (CWA) jurisdiction. The explanatory text to the rule is 300 pages, while the economic analysis is 90 pages and the scientific study is more than 400 pages. There is a lot of information to digest and a large potential for uncertainty.

While the agencies have addressed some of the comments and concerns that agricultural and municipal water providers expressed, on the whole, the final rule remains expansive. With respect to western water features, the definitions of tributary and ditch will likely increase CWA jurisdiction over traditional conduits of agricultural water.

All tributaries of waters subject to commerce, interstate waters, and territorial seas are considered "waters of the United States." A tributary must (1) contribute flow, either directly or through another water, to a water subject to commerce, an interstate water, or a territorial sea; (2) have a bed and banks; and (3) have an ordinary high water mark.

For the agencies, a tributary is a body of water that is chemically, physically, and biologically connected to downstream waters. That rationale has driven the agencies to include perennial, intermittent, or ephemeral streams within the definition of tributary. Ultimately, this means that if your arroyo or dry wash has a bed and bank, has a high water mark, and runs once a year into a jurisdictional body, it may be considered jurisdictional.

Also of great import to agricultural producers is the status of ditches for the purposes of CWA jurisdiction. The agencies state that a ditch will "in many instances . . . meet the definition of tributary." The rule exempts only three types of ditches from jurisdiction: (1) ditches with ephemeral flow that are

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## Expanding Clean Water Jurisdiction – The Final WOTUS Rule ... *Continued from page 6*

not a relocated tributary or excavated in a tributary; (2) ditches with intermittent flow that are not a relocated tributary, excavated in a tributary, or drain wetlands; and (3) ditches that do not flow, either directly or through another water, into a water subject to commerce, an interstate water, or a territorial sea.

Despite the claims of the agencies and many media outlets, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which the number of jurisdictional determinations of water conduits in the West decreases. We recommend cataloging and categorizing any prior [non]determinations, along with any evidence used by the respective agency, to compare with any future [non]determinations.

## Commissioners Push for Columbia River Treaty Negotiations

*Mark Stedman, Lincoln County Commissioner*

The US Entity, made up of the Bonneville Power Administration and the US Army Corps of Engineers, along with the US State Department and the White House are on the verge of beginning Columbia River Treaty negotiations with Canada.

A delegation of county commissioners traveled to Washington DC on April 26 through May 1 to encourage negotiations to begin and to express concerns regarding the US Entity's addition of ecosystem to the negotiations. The team of commissioners consisted of Mark Stedman, Lincoln County; Wes McCart, Stevens County; Paul Jewel, Kittitas County; and Laura Merrill, Natural Resources, Washington State Association of Counties. Robert Weidner, Evergreen Forest County Group, helped plan and schedule meetings.

The delegation of county commissioners met with all four state Senators and Representatives or their Natural Resource staff members. They visited agencies responsible for helping move the United States position with Canada. Officials in the US Farm Bureau, US State Department, US Department of Interior, US Army Core of Engineers, B.P.A., Council of Energy Quality, National Association of County Officials, and the Heritage Foundation met with the delegation.

The delegation's talking points were:

- Start the negotiations now because Canada has more power at the table as 2024 draws near.
- County commissioners support hydropower and flood control as the primary purpose of the treaty.
- Ecosystem is a dangerous and slippery slope to be negotiated internationally. Water supply must be considered as part of the discussion if ecosystem becomes part of the U.S. position. Water supply impacts food production, food processing, transportation, recreation, jobs, and municipal water use. Including Eco-system

in the treaty will have an adverse impact on completing the promised 1.2 million acres replacement of ground water mining.

- Confine the negotiations to current treaty dams, do not add Grand Coulee and other non-treaty dams.
- Keep the treaty flexible using Memos of Understanding and side agreements.
- Bring the negotiations back to the Northwest and British Columbia: the interested parties of the region.

Previous to the trip, the US Congressional Delegation from the four Northwest states sent a signed letter to President Obama requesting that he begin treaty negotiations. During the trip, the county commissioners were informed that no response from the White House had been received. On June 1, Representative McMorris Rodgers updated the county commissioners. The State Department notified state delegations that flood, energy, and ecosystem will be the leading issues and final documents are being drawn up to be sent to Canada to kick off negotiations.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"Once we believe in ourselves, we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or any experience that reveals the human spirit."*

*-- e. e. cummings  
poet and playwright*

**COLUMBIA BASIN**  
DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE

## BECOME A CBDL TRUSTEE

In the coming months, a nominating committee will accept nominations to the CBDL Board of Trustees for terms which begin January of 2016. Terms are three years in length, and Trustees meet approximately once per month. Make a difference in the Columbia Basin Project area! Consider CBDL Board service!

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Ritzville Area Chamber of Commerce

Soap Lake Chamber of Commerce

Wenatchee Valley Chamber of Commerce