

#### **OCTOBER 2015 NEWSLETTER**

Volume 5, Issue 10

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.



University Prep School students at Friehe Farms.

#### **CBDL Hosts School Farm Tour**

In early October, CBDL Board Member Heath Gimmestad of Friehe Farms in Moses Lake arranged a farm tour for 80 students from University Prep School in Seattle. Pascal Bolduc and Travis Meacham of Friehe Farms served as tour guides. The tour included an overview of the Columbia Basin Project and a brief history of the Columbia Basin Development League. Pascal and Travis were impressed with how much students already knew and understood about irrigation and farming. The group then got a first-hand look at potato harvesting, East Low Canal irrigation

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water, and center pivot well irrigation. They also discussed the future of irrigation in the Columbia Basin region. The school group went on to visit Grand Coulee Dam.

#### Quotes from the tour:

"I never knew that a French fry potato was different from a potato chip potato!" – *Madeline W., student* 

"Wow, so many potatoes in one place!" – August C., student

"I was impressed with the power of the machines loading potatoes into the warehouse." – Sloan G., student

"The potato farm was a highlight of their trip to Grand Coulee Dam." – Jess Klein, teacher

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From the Chair

October is here and with it comes the 2015 CBDL Conference and Annual Meeting. A full recap of the conference will be available in the November newsletter! A big thank you goes out to our 2015 sponsors, especially our Presenting Sponsor, the Washington State Potato Commission for helping to make our event possible.

The League has been busy this fall with a D.C. visit, planning the conference, facilitating a farm tour for 80 students, and more! We are

also kicking off our 2016 Membership Campaign. Your support is essential to continued progress in the Columbia Basin Project. Membership provides the critical resources necessary to ensure facts are shared and attention is focused on protecting our water. Become a 2016 member today online at www.cbdl.org or fill out the included membership form.

And thank you for your support.

#### **CBDL Advocates in DC**

Mike Schwisow, CBDL Director of Government Relations

CBDL Vice Chair Kevin Lyle and Trustee Matt Hawley along with Mike Schwisow, CBDL's Director of Government Relations, traveled to Washington, D.C. during the last week of September for a round of meetings arranged by Water Strategies, CBDL's Washington D.C. consultants. This trip is another example of the League's commitment to keeping the continued development of the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) a priority among members of Congress and the Executive Branch. The delegation's purpose was to keep key staff, committees, and officials informed and up to date on the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Project (OGWRP) progress and the CBP as well as to encourage continued engagement and advocacy in related issues.

Water Strategies President, Kris Polly, and Director of Federal Affairs, Ian Lyle, arranged a packed schedule. The meetings started with a visit to Governor Inslee's Washington D.C. office staffed by Sam Ricketts. Ricketts stays in close touch with the Governor's Policy office and the Department of Ecology on projects that have Federal connections. He offered the delegation a Washington State perspective on what's currently happening in D.C.

Next was Jason Herbert, Congressman Dan Newhouse's Legislative Director. Jason was well informed on the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program after participating in an August tour of the Lind Coulee Siphon construction site. He offered insight on the uncertainty surrounding Speaker Boehner's resignation.

The delegation then went to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). As the budget arm of the White House, the path for all Federal appropriations leads through the OMB. The OMB's approval has become even more important since Congress decided to forego the use of earmarks to fund priorities of the Legislative branch. While there may have been some highly publicized abuses of the earmark system, Congress in effect gave up Constitutional control of the purse string when it gave up earmarks. While there, the delegation met with Alex Hettinger who works in the Water & Power Branch and is responsible for the Reclamation budget oversight.

At Senator Murray's office the group met with Josephine Eckert who works on natural resource and water issues. Josephine had also taken the August Lind Coulee Siphon tour. The delegation requested support for Federal funding for East Low Canal completion and for Senator Murray to encourage Reclamation to expedite the completion of contract negotiations with ECBID on the final water supply element. Ms. Eckert explained the need to get in the Reclamation budget as a starting point for securing more East Low Canal funding.

The group then met with Eric Ffitch and Melanie Stansbury at Senator Cantwell's office. They are committed to staying informed on the CBP as Senator Cantwell is taking a more active role in water related issues.

Next, the delegation visited the Bureau of Reclamation where they focused on the budget process while meeting

#### **CBDL Advocates in DC** Continued from page 2

with Bob Quint, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner; Bob Wolff, Director of Program & Budget; and Christie Davis-Kernan, PN Regional Liaison to the Commissioner's Office. The three officials were conversant on the OGWRP and appreciated the update on program activities. Davis-Kernan is beginning her two year assignment as the Pacific Northwest Region liaison. She moved to that position from the Ephrata Field Office and in that capacity has attended numerous irrigation district board meetings representing Reclamation. It will be a benefit to have someone with detailed knowledge of the OGWRP and CBP in the Commissioner's office.

The delegation had several other meetings with staff on budget and policy committees with jurisdiction over Reclamation issues as well.

# WOTUS Implementation Blocked While Senate Reviews Drought Legislation

By Ian Lyle, Water Strategies LLC

Last month the U.S. District Court in North Dakota had issued a preliminary injunction preventing the implementation of the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers revised rule covering what constitutes a "water of the United States" (WOTUS) under the Clean Water Act (CWA). That ruling only applied to the 13 states that were party to the proceedings in the court (not including Washington State).

On October 9 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, in a 2-1 ruling, granted a petition from 18 states (that were not party to the District Court Ruling in North Dakota) to stay the rule nation-wide. This means that federal agencies will not be able to implement the newly revised WOTUS rule until a number of issues are addressed.

The Court of Appeals ruling found that "petitioners have demonstrated a substantial possibility of success on the merits of their claims." It also noted; "A stay temporarily silences the whirlwind of confusion that springs from uncertainty about the requirements of the new Rule and whether they will survive legal testing." The stay will remain in place until a further order of the court. It is not clear how long that could take. While the stay is in place the law of the land will revert to the Clean Water Act as it was written prior to the implementation of the new WOTUS rule.

On October 8 the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources met to discuss six bills, three of which related to drought and water supply:

- Western Water and American Food Security Act (H.R. 2898)
- California Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2015 (S.1894)
- New Mexico Drought Preparedness Act (S. 1936)

All three contain both nationwide and state specific provisions aimed at addressing drought. Water users in Washington State should be interested in this legislation because portions of these bills will likely be utilized to form a larger nationwide water bill and could include provisions aimed at addressing groundwater overdraft.

These bills are all aimed at addressing drought but contain significant differences in how that goal is met. Senate Energy Chair Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) noted in the October 8 hearing: "Both reflect some common approaches... But I think it's important to note that the bills diverge in some important ways." Chair Murkowski went on to state that: " we could talk about Goldilocks here and which one is too big, too small, and which one is just right but I think it's important to acknowledge that these are very complicated, some very complex issues, and we need to reach a unified legislative response."

Committee Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA) echoed the importance of addressing some of these issues, stating: "communities across the West are seeing the impacts of this drought – not just Californians. Towns and wells have run dry. Farmers have seen billions of dollars in losses. And, ecosystems have suffered." Senator Cantwell went on to highlight the impact that drought is having in Washington, noting: "In the state of Washington, we've had record-breaking temperatures, low snow-packs and catastrophic wildfires that I also know my colleagues here before us today care greatly about. Farmers are facing \$1.2 billion in crop losses this year in Washington alone, and nearly a quarter million sockeye-salmon died in the Columbia River this summer trying to reach their spawning grounds."

Discussions over what elements make up drought legislation will continue in coming weeks as members of congress and their staff work to address outstanding issues.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

November 4 - 6

NWRA Annual Conference – Denver, CO

Wednesday, November 18

CBDL Board of Trustees – ATEC Building, Moses Lake 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Wednesday, December 2 – Friday, December 4 WSWRA 70th Annual Conference, Spokane, WA

Wednesday, December 16

CBDL Board of Trustees – Simplot, Moses Lake 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

#### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

"Nothing will work unless you do."

– Maya Angelou

## Columbia Basin Herald reprinted by Tri-City Herald February 7, 1960 Basin Project Gets An Irrigator

Selection of William E. Rawlings of Billings, Mont., as fourth manager of the Columba Basin project may mark a major change in the Bureau of Reclamation approach to problems here – a switch in thinking form the construction engineer viewpoint to that of an irrigation and agricultural man.

Although he won't take over officially as successor to Philip R. Nalder until March 1, Rawlings is expected to get his first close up contact with Basin farmers – and vice versa—when Reclamation Commissioner Floyd Dominy visits the project in two weeks. No announcement has been made that Rawlings will accompany Dominy on the commissioner's visit to water users' meetings in each district, but that step is considered probable to acquaint the new manager with Basin personalities and with the situation here. His presence at the meetings would add importance to some of the most important sessions to be held here since the land limitation hearings of 1957.

Rawlings' predecessor, Nalder, and the late Frank A. Banks, who built Grand Coulee Dam, were primarily construction engineers, as is L. V. Downs now acting manager who was assistant manager under Nalder. H.A. (Hap) Parker, who served as manager between Banks and Nalder and who led in designing and building the project irrigation system, is considered primarily an irrigation man with long irrigation experience before coming here.

Without becoming involved in personalities, it should be pointed out that there is a pronounced difference in the approach of a construction engineer and an irrigation man. As a representative of the federal government, the construction engineer deals primarily outside his own organization with contractors. His job is to be sure that Uncle Sam gets 100 cents in construction for every dollar spent on a contract, and to accomplish that he may not take time to be diplomatic. IN other words, he can easily be inclined to become a driver instead of a leader.

An irrigation man, however deals primarily with farmers and water users and can't accomplish much with a whip-lash approach. If he drives too hard, the irrigation man faces the threat of rebellion and public disfavor, with little or nothing being accomplished. His approach must be through showing and leading.

Banks job was to build the dam, power houses, and pumping

#### 2016 CBDL Membership

Thank you to our 2015 CBDL Members! Your 2015 membership allows the League to continue supporting development of the Columbia Basin Project. This year brought significant progress on the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program with a strong focus on distributing facts through extensive public outreach and advocacy. The League facilitated awareness campaigns for stakeholders, landowners, legislators, the media, and the public including:

- Grand Coulee Dam tours for CBP landowners
- OGWRP construction site tours for media and legislators
- Local public events
- Release of OGWRP 'Frequently Asked Questions'
- Monthly newsletters and weekly emails of water related news
- Editorial board meetings with The Spokesman Review and The Wenatchee World
- Upcoming annual conference
- Farm tour for students
- Public policy trips to Olympia and Washington DC

Our messages have been well received as significant progress has been made this year:

- Lind Coulee siphon construction continues with over 100 concrete sections of the siphon placed
- Designs underway for East Low 47.5 pump station that can also be used for other pump stations
- Master water service contract renewal between Bureau and East Columbia Basin Irrigation District

State and Federal advocacy has been a priority this year. CBDL strengthens ties through regular contact with the Bureau of Reclamation, irrigation districts, and Ecology's Office of the Columbia River. Through our Washington DC visits and meetings in Olympia with state partners, the League is able to keep interested parties aware of Project progress and demonstrate broad support for the effort.

Your help is essential to continue progress. Your membership provides the critical resources necessary to ensure the story is told and that facts are shared –with attention focused on protecting our water.

Thank you for your continued support of the League. A membership form is enclosed. Please renew today! See Membership form on page 5.



#### 2016 Membership

Your membership directly supports specific efforts of the League.

Since 1964, CBDL has 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.

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#### **LOOKING BACK...** Continued from page 4

plan, and he did that, leaving the manager's post before irrigation had reached much importance. Parker's task was to plan and build the irrigation system, and he left the manager's office before water was delivered to more than a half dozen blocks. Since then, Nalder's job has been to continue the construction program, which necessarily was accompanied by the growing problems of irrigation development.

Both Nalder and Downs are considered top flight construction engineers, and they have shown increased understanding of the changing problems of the project. Nalder's selection as manager of foreign aid project in Afghanistan is proof of his professional standing within the bureau. Similarly, Downs' appointment as regional engineer for the bureau at Boise, Idaho, with the effective date still left open, shows that his talents, too, are valued by those in a position to evaluate them. But both Nalder and Downs came to maturity in their profession as construction engineers who started work at Grand Coulee while they were fresh from the college classroom. If they continue to hold to the construction engineer viewpoint as contrasted to the irrigation approach, it would only be natural.

Rawlings' experience has been almost entirely in dealings with farmers and irrigators. He's not an engineer but is a former extension agent and worked with farmers in Indiana and Idaho. During World War II he worked at a Japanese internment camp in Idaho and since then has been in the bureau's Billings office. His first bureau job in 1946 was as a project development supervisor, and he has been in that field since then. His long experience in dealing with farmers in general and with irrigation farmers in particular indicates he has ample background for helping Columbia Basin farmers with their problems.

His appointment very easily could indicate an important change in official thinking. It may be one of the most important events in the history of the project.

#### **Thank you to 2015 Conference Sponsors**

Watch for a recap of the conference in next month's issue!

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