

DECEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 11

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.

CBDL Takes Issues to State and National Water Conferences

Mike Schwisow, CBDL Director of Government Relations

Throughout November, League representatives were active participants in Annual Conferences for the Washington State Water Resources Association (WSWRA) and the National Water Resources Association (NWRA). Both organizations share League interests. CBDL Program Manager Sara Cornell, Government Relations Director Mike Schwisow, and League Trustees Kevin Lyle and Benjamin Leavitt, attended the 71st Annual WSWRA Conference in Spokane. League Executive Director Vicky Scharlau, Schwisow, and Lyle attended the 85th NWRA Conference in



Estevan López, Lorri Lee, and David Palumbo, Reclamation; Kris Polly, Water Strategies, LLC; Mike Schwisow and Kevin Lye, CBDL.

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Coronado, California. Throughout the conferences, the League delegations took advantage of every opportunity to highlight CBDL priorities, increasing awareness and sharing information with decision makers with the goal of League issues being included in the advocacy plans of WSWRA, NWRA, Reclamation, and Ecology.

WSWRA represents irrigation districts on the State level in Olympia and Washington, DC. During the three day Conference, Cornell, Schwisow, and Lyle heard from speakers addressing important issues to Columbia Basin Project irrigation districts. They shared League priorities with Reclamation's Regional Director Lorri Lee and several of her key staff as well as Washington State Department of Ecology officials.

NWRA represents irrigation districts at the national level in Washington, DC. The CBDL delegation spent the three day conference learning how others across the country are addressing water issues. The group networked with those facing and solving similar problems. They also met privately with Commissioner of Reclamation Estevan López and Regional Director Lorri Lee to advocate for CBDL priorities.

Preparations Underway for 2017 Legislative Session

Mike Schwisow, CBDL Director of Government Relations

With the election in the rear view mirror, the successful candidates are busy preparing for the start of legislative session in Olympia and a new Congress in Washington, DC. The final count retained previous majorities in both the Washington, DC House of Representatives and Senate.



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From the Chair
Orman Johnson

It has been a privilege to serve as Board Chair for the past two years. I have witnessed firsthand the League's mission being put into practice and the resulting successes and continued development of the Columbia Basin Project.

2016 alone has seen many victories, from the completion of construction projects such as the Lind Coulee Siphons, continued canal expansion, and bridge work, to CBDL's many presentations to business groups and elected officials, participation in public events and coalitions, policy trips to Olympia and Washington, DC, OGWRP advocacy, press releases, weekly and monthly communications, the annual conference, and more. All of these achievements have increased awareness of the importance of the Columbia Basin

Project to the region's economic vitality. It has been incredible to see what can be accomplished through collaboration, commitment, and determination as government agencies and irrigation districts work together and alongside the landowners and individuals who live, work, and recreate in the Columbia Basin Project.

As I pass the torch to new CBDL Chair, Kevin Lyle, I charge you, as a Columbia Basin Project stakeholder, to help preserve, protect, and continue the League's important work, for your benefit, and for future generations. Become a 2017 member at www.cbdl.org.

Preparations Underway for 2017 Legislative Session Continued from page 1

In Olympia, the house remained the same with 50 Democrats (D) and 48 Republicans (R). In the Senate, the Democrats were able to pick up one seat, reducing the Majority Coalition Caucus' lead to just one vote with 24 Republicans and 1 Democrat holding the majority.

While the Washington State majorities are unchanged, every general election brings a number of new faces. The Senate will have eight new members, while the House will welcome 17. The R/D split in the Senate is an even four and four while in the House there are nine new Democrats and eight new Republicans.

Preparation for the session begins after the election when the four caucuses, the House and Senate Caucuses for Democrats and Republicans, meet to prepare by electing their leadership team. All four have had those meetings and will be returning the same top leaders from last session. House Democrats have designated Representative Frank Chopp of Seattle as their choice for Speaker. Representative Dan Kristiansen of Snohomish will lead the House Republicans. Senator Mark Schoesler of Ritzville will be the Senate Majority Leader while Senator Sharon Nelson of Maury Island will continue as Minority Leader.

A significant amount of a lobbyist's work focuses on the committees that care about their issues. Even though the overall numbers remain the same, there will be new members on the key committees that consider CBDL issues. The 13 member (seven D's – six R's) House Ag and Natural Resources Committee will have at least three new Democrat members. The nine member (five D's – four R's) House Capital Budget Committee will have two new Republican members. On the Senate side, the Senate Ag, Water, Trade & Economic Development Committee saw all of the previous members returning. Significant changes will occur in the leadership of the Senate Ways

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The Districts are Hard at Work for You

During the winter months, after water delivery is done for the year, work doesn't slow down for the three Columbia Basin Project Irrigation Districts. Each District is in the throes of operations and maintenance (O&M) that will keep water delivery running smoothly come spring. Carefully balancing budgets, staff, and schedules while prioritizing infrastructure needs, each District tackles many projects to ensure water delivery for irrigation customers.

Here are just a few of the projects happening around the Columbia Basin.



South Columbia Basin Irrigation District (SCBID) excavates the head of the WB5G Headworks after sink holes and separated pipe joints were discovered under the O&M road.



SCBID repairs an eroded bank on the PE16.4 Waste Way near its terminus.



Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District (QCBID) completes a pipeline project at Blyth. This project entails adding a pipeline to a lateral in Block 85 that delivers to four farm units. There are multiple benefits to piping a lateral including reducing the cost of maintaining the lateral by eliminating the need to mow, spray, or control aquatic weeds, lessening the liability of a potential canal breach, allowing landowners more flexibility on the use of their land, and ultimately conserving water.



QCBID works on a canal lining project in the W33B lateral in Block 72 in Quincy section. Benefits of canal lining are similar to the pipeline project and include reducing the chance of a canal breach and conserving water by reducing the possibility of seepage.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CBDL Board Meeting
Tuesday, January 17, 2017
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
ATEC Building, Big Bend Community College
Moses Lake, WA

The Districts are Hard at Work for You

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East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's (ECBID) Pump Department crew pulls an 800 horsepower, 26 cfs pump out of the Saddle Gap Pumping Plant located in Block 49 with a 50 ton crane. The Pump Department will be pulling a total of six pumps at different locations and taking them to their shop for routine inspection and repairs as needed.



ECBID is cleaning silt out of a lateral in Block 44 near Warden. ECBID's Water-master averages approximately 10 miles of lateral and drain-cleaning a year.

Ag Industry Prioritizes Water Supply Legislation

In late November, Washington ag industry leaders gathered for their annual Ag Summit meeting. League Program Manager Sara Cornell and League Trustee Dale Pomeroy represented CBDL at this year's meeting on Snoqualmie Pass. Other attendees included representatives from the tree fruit, dairy, potato, wheat, and sheep industries as well as representatives from Safe Family Farming, Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers'

office, Washington Friends of Farms and Forests, Washington Farm Bureau, and more.

The purpose of the Ag Summit is to formulate a list of priority issues to communicate with legislators during the 2017 legislative season. The day-long meeting provides the opportunity for each group to identify their priorities so the ag industry can speak with a united voice.

These priorities will be included in a letter sent to legislators. The issues include addressing the challenges the Hirst Decision creates for ag, supporting Washington State University's capital budget request, supporting funding for Conservation Districts, protecting tax preferences, and supporting transportation infrastructure legislation. The group also supports water supply legislation including funding for Ecology's Office of the Columbia River.

Preparations Underway for 2017 Legislative Session

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and Means Committee. Chairman Senator Andy Hill, R-Kirkland, passed away in late October. Vice Chairman Bruce Dammeier, R-Puyallup was elected Pierce County Executive and Ranking Minority Member Jim Hargrove, D-Hoquiam retired after more than 30 years in the Legislature. The early part of the session will be spent meeting with new members to bring them up to speed on CBDL issues and priorities.

The overshadowing issue for the 2017 Session with be funding for K-12 education. The Legislature is under the gun to increase state funding as a result of a Supreme Court ruling in the McCleary case. The Court-imposed deadline for completion is September 1, 2018 so many feel that this is the session to get the job done. How much money it is going to take to meet the Court's mandate is a subject of debate, but most agree the number is large so there won't be much revenue available for new programs of any kind. Sessions in odd-numbered years are 105 days to allow the extra time necessary to adopt the biennial budget. The McCleary decision influenced the budget deliberations in 2015 and that session wound up going until June 30th, the last day before the new biennium started. Many don't believe the 2017 session will finish in the allotted 105 days.

As we meet with legislators, CBDL will focus on the Capital Budget, seeking additional State investment in the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP). The Governor is required by the Budget Act to submit his proposal to the Legislature by December 20th preceding the session. We know the Department of Ecology's proposal to the Office of Financial Management was for an additional \$15 million for OGWRP and \$3 million for the Coordinated Conservation Plan. It's always better to be in the Governor's proposal and work to keep it there than to not be in and have to work to be added.

The curtain rises on January 9th, for what promises to be a long and difficult session. Stay tuned.

League Confirms 2017 Executive Committee

At the League's December board meeting, the CBDL nominating committee recommended a slate of Trustees for the 2017 Executive Committee. League Trustees then voted and confirmed the committee's recommendations. Trustees serving on the Executive Committee dedicate additional time and take on added responsibility to serve the organization.

The following individuals will serve as the 2017 Executive Committee:



Kevin Lyle *Othello, Chair*



Jeff Schibel *Odessa, Vice Chair*



Clark Kagele *Odessa, Secretary*



Jake Wollman Jr. *Warden, Treasurer*



Shawn O'Brien *Moses Lake, At-Large*



Matt Hawley *Pasco, At-Large*



Mark Stedman Lincoln City, At-Large



Dale Pomeroy *Warden, At-Large*

Congress Passes Significant Legislation for Water Users

Ian Lyle, Water Strategies, LLC

The 114th Congress ended with the passage of significant legislation for water users. Just after 1:00 AM on Saturday, December 10, the U.S. Senate passed S.612, the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act (WIIN/WRDA) before ending legislative business for the year and closing out the 114th Congress. The Senate passed WIIN/WRDA by a vote of 78-21. Earlier, on December 8, the House of Representatives passed WIIN/WRDA by a vote of 360-61.

WIIN/WRDA's passage is significant for several reasons. The bill authorizes numerous water infrastructure projects for the Army Corps of Engineers, it gets Congress back on track to pass regular WRDA bills, and also includes language authorizing significant funding for the Bureau of Reclamation aimed at addressing western drought. Section 4007 authorizes the establishment of a \$335 million dollar water storage infrastructure fund within the Department of the Interior (Interior). In order to qualify for funding the local project sponsor would be required to supply a 50 percent non-federal match.

Section 4007 utilizes a unique new funding mechanism that would increase congressional input in the funding process without violating the "earmark ban." Section 4007 states, "Projects can only receive funding if enacted appropriations legislation designates funding to them by name, after the Secretary recommends specific projects for funding pursuant to this section and transmits such recommendations to the appropriate committees

Congress Passes Significant Legislation for Water Users

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of Congress." In essence, this means that if a project is included on the Interior recommendations list to Congress a member can request funding without it being considered an "earmark".

The authorization for this new funding program expires in 2021. This could make shovel ready projects like those found in the Columbia Basin Project a good match for funds. It is not currently clear what criteria Interior will use in selecting projects to recommend to Congress. The Columbia Basin Development League has an opportunity to work with Interior to help identify these criteria.

This legislation will now head to the President's desk for his signature. The White House has not issued a Statement of Administration Policy on WIIN/WRDA but it is believed that the President will not veto the bill. WIIN/WRDA contains widely supported funding authorizations and passed with a strong bipartisan vote that exceeds the 67 votes needed to override a veto indicating that it will get signed into public law.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

The road leading to a goal does not separate you from the destination; it is essentially a part of it.

-Charles de Lint, Writer

CBDL Membership

Join or renew for 2017! Let's make history together.

Sign up at www.cbdl.org

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EL & JH Ray Farms LLC

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Columbia Basin Development League

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