

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.

League Carries 960-Acre Exemption Request to D.C.

Earlier this month, Columbia Basin Development League (League) Board member Orman Johnson, Executive Director Vicky Scharlau, Director of Government Relations Mike Schwisow, and the League's federal advocate, Water Strategies, were joined by Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE) Office of the Columbia River (OCR) Director Tom Tebb, and Washington State Potato Commission Director of



Members of League D.C. delegation meet with Representative Dan Newhouse.

Government Affairs Matt Harris, for a focused trip to Washington, D.C. The subject of the trip was a request for a limited and focused exemption to the 960-acre limitation in the Reformation Reform Act (RRA).

In 1902, President Theodore Roosevelt signed the Reclamation Act into law. The Reclamation Act established terms and conditions for delivery of federal irrigation water to western farmlands. Among these was imposing a 160-acre limitation on Reclamation farmers. This issue became

IN THIS ISSUE

- League Carries 960-Acre Exemption Request to D.C. 1
- From the Chair 2
- Upcoming Events 3
- League Board Member Participates in Senate Water Roundtable ... 3
- Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Joins Conference Line-up ... 3
- CBP Subsurface Drainage Construction Incomplete 4
- Action Underway to Improve Defenses Against Invasive Mussels ... 5
- League Plans Attendance at NWRA ... 6
- CBDL Represented at AWB Policy Summit 6
- CRPAG Looks to Future of OCR. 7
- Brand Refresh Nears Completion 7

the focus of discontent that spurred Congressional action.

In 1982, President Reagan, recognizing the importance of western agriculture, signed the RRA to update Reclamation policy and keep pace with western growth. Section 204 of the Reclamation Reform Act expanded the limits that applied to the amount of land that could be irrigated with low-cost Reclamation project water. The new acreage limitation for qualified recipients was expanded to 960 acres.

The Columbia Basin Project (CBP), a Bureau of Reclamation project, is the source of water for thousands of farmers. The CBP is subject to the Reclamation Reform Act, as are the farmers that use its water. While waiting for full development of the CBP, farmers in the eastern part of the CBP service area developed over 100,000 irrigated acres using ground water. This use of ground water has caused the aquifer to decline at an unsustainable rate, jeopardizing the agricultural water supply for croplands in the area as well as the domestic water supply of many rural communities and private households.

The Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) was created as a solution to the unsustainable use of ground water by delivering

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From the Chair

Kevin Lyle

From a productive trip to D.C., to details on November's conference, to important, ongoing Columbia Basin Project development, we've got a lot to share with you this month. The League has been representing stakeholders at events, generating awareness of the Project, and

planning future opportunities to advocate for the Project. There's no question your membership dollars are being put to good use. If you aren't a member, consider joining us for 2018. And, for those who are members, thank you!

League Carries 960-Acre Exemption Request to D.C. *Continued from page 1*

CBP surface water to authorized lands as a replacement for ground water withdrawals from the Odessa Subarea aquifer.

But, the Reclamation Reform Act's current 960-acre limit reduces the opportunity for full implementation of the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program.

Within the boundary of the OGWRP area, most of the family farms are larger than 960 acres. Landowners will shoulder a major share of the capital cost of distribution systems for CBP ground water replacement supplies. Replacement water will cost significantly more than ground water so these farms will need more than 960 acres to remain economically viable. The 960-acre limitation will preclude some landowners from participating in the program. Broad participation in the replacement program is the only way to prevent this economic and environmental disaster in the making.

The League met with Congressional members and committee staff asking them to amend the Reclamation Reform Act to provide a targeted exemption from the 960-acre limit for participants in OGWRP specifically for environmental relief:

- Office of Congressman Dan Newhouse
- Office of Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
- Office of Senator Patty Murray
- Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
- Office of Management and Budget
- Staff for House Water and Power Subcommittee
- Staff for Senate Water and Power Subcommittee
- Staff of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



Members of League D.C. delegation meet with Senator Maria Cantwell.



League D.C. delegation L-R: Annick Rivera Miller, Mike Schwisow, Vicky Scharlau, Orman Johnson, Tom Tebb, Matt Harris, Ian Lyle. 2

Correction to September Newsletter

In the September newsletter, the article "Trip to D.C. Focuses on 960-Acre Limitation" included a comparison of the number of acres needed within the OGWRP boundary versus elsewhere in the Project to generate the same amount of revenue. The sentence, "The landowner within the OGWRP boundary would need roughly three times as many acres to generate the same revenue, all other factors being equal," should have read, "The landowner within the OGWRP boundary would need roughly three times as many acres to cover water costs, all other factors being equal."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"It is not in the stars to hold our destiny, but in ourselves."

–William Shakespeare

UPCOMING EVENTS

CBDL Annual Conference and 53rd Annual Meeting

Thursday, November 2

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

ATEC, Big Bend Community College

Moses Lake, WA

National Water Resources Association

86th Annual Conference

November 15 – 17

Loews Ventana Canyon Resort

Tucson, AZ

Washington State Water Resources Association

72nd Annual Conference

December 6 – 8

Davenport Hotel

League Board Member Participates in Senate Water Roundtable

Ian Lyle, Director of Government Relations, Water Strategies

During a recent trip to Washington, D.C., Board member Orman Johnson was the voice of the League and the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) on a Senate organized roundtable on water issues.

Johnson joined representatives from Texas, Nebraska, Oregon, Idaho, and California to discuss challenges facing Western water. During his remarks, Johnson focused on the Columbia Basin Project (Project) and its economic importance in Washington State and the West. He discussed the need to complete the Project and fulfill a federal commitment decades overdue.

He also talked about the need to provide a sustainable supply of Columbia River water to the Odessa Subarea. Johnson emphasized the fact that the aquifer is in decline and that numerous farming operations, and the drinking water supply for multiple communities, depend on this aquifer. He discussed the State of Washington's significant investment in this federal project and ECBID's ongoing work to build the necessary infrastructure to deliver this water. He noted that the preservation of this aquifer would provide both economic and environmental benefits.

Other roundtable participants also noted the economic importance of water infrastructure to the West. Several themes were present in each participant's comments including the importance of respecting the role of states in water management, especially as it applies to groundwater, and the need for improved regulatory processes that would make the development of water supply solutions easier and more cost-effective.

Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Joins Conference Line-up

David Palumbo, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Deputy Commissioner of Operations, will be the keynote speaker for the 2017 League Conference, held at ATEC, Big Bend Community College campus, in Moses Lake on Thursday, November 2nd.

Palumbo oversees operations in Reclamation's five regions, the Native American and International Affairs Office, and Technical Resources, which includes the Technical Service Center, Hydro-power Office, and Dam Safety



Deputy Commissioner Palumbo.

Continued on Page 4

Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Joins Conference Line-up *Continued from page 3*

Office/Design, Estimating, Construction. He moved to this position from Reclamation's Lower Colorado Region, where he became the Deputy Regional Director in 2012. He joined Reclamation in 2005 as a project manager where he led the construction project of the Brock Reservoir Project in Southern California's Imperial Valley. In addition to his work for Reclamation in the Southwest, Palumbo worked in the private sector for Kerr-McGee Corporation for ten years. For four of those years he partnered with Canada's Hydro-Quebec, managing engineering and operations for manufacturing, water, energy, and research and development programs.

Palumbo holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Notre Dame. He also has Master's degrees in both Civil Engineering and Engineering Mechanics from Columbia University and in English Literature from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is a licensed civil engineer in California and certified project manager.

Palumbo joins the following line-up this year:

Panel: View from the Canals

- Darvin Fales, Secretary-Manager, Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Quincy
- Nate Andreini, Assistant Manager for Technical Services/District Engineer, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Othello
- Dave Solem, Secretary-Manager, South Columbia Basin Irrigation District (SCBID), Pasco
- Clyde Lay, Deputy Field Manager, Field Office, Ephrata

Panel: Potholes Supplemental Feed Route Update with Q&A

- Christina Davis Kernan, Technical Projects Program Manager, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Field Office, Ephrata
- Jeff Dengel, Environmental Planner, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Ellensburg
- Melissa Downes, Technical Project Lead, Office of the Columbia River, Washington State Department of Ecology, Union Gap
- John O'Callaghan, Assistant Manager, Technical Services, South Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Pasco
- Rich Finger, Lands Operations Manager, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

OGWRP Construction and Funding

Jed Crowther, Development Coordinator, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Othello

Panel: Exploring Funding Options for OGWRP Bridges

- Melissa Downes, Technical Project Lead, Office of the Columbia River, Washington State Department of Ecology, Union Gap
- Stephen McFadden, Economic Development Director, Adams County Development Council
- Mike Schwisow, Director of Government Relations, CBDL, Olympia

Office of the Columbia River: 10 Years of Accomplishments

Melissa Downes, Technical Project Lead, Office of the Columbia River, Washington State Department of Ecology, Union Gap

Columbia River Treaty Update

Derek Sandison, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Olympia

Federal Advocacy Update

Annick Miller Rivera, Senior Policy Advisor, Water Strategies, Washington, D.C.

State Advocacy Update

Mike Schwisow, Director of Government Relations, CBDL, Olympia

For information about registration, please call 509.782.9442.

CBP Subsurface Drainage Construction Incomplete

Darvin Fales, Manager, Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District

Subsurface drainage is a key component of the infrastructure that keeps the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) running smoothly and accounts for the efficient ability of CBP water to be reused as it travels from Grand Coulee Dam to Pasco. However, the funds allocated for drainage projects have nearly dried up, and surveys to identify and prioritize remaining future draining projects need to be resumed.

Throughout the CBP, a number of perched water tables—smaller aquifers that occur above the regional water table—exist due to a layer of impermeable rock or sediment that sits above the main water table but below the surface of the land. Effectively, this creates subsurface ponds, and during irrigation season, they fill up with excess irrigation water applied to crops, rain water, and other ground water. When the water in these perched water tables gets within three feet of the surface, they hit the root zone of crops, which prevents crop growth due to low oxygen content of the waterlogged soil.

To mitigate this problem, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclama-

CBP Subsurface Drainage Construction Incomplete

Continued from page 4

tion) started a project in 1960 to install 2,845 miles of subsurface drains that kept this water out of root zones of approximately 118,500 acres and returned it to reservoirs like Potholes where it could be reused. Reclamation engineers were able to predict where drainage was needed and they designed and installed multiple drains in three- to five-mile projects every other year until about 1985. The cost for each project could run in the millions, but working in economies of scale, Reclamation made significant progress in what otherwise would have been a cost-prohibitive endeavor.

However, in 1985, the need for these large contracts slowed to a pace of about every five years, and the last major project was completed in 1995 at which time only small drainage projects remained, scattered across the CBP.

In 1997, discussions began on how to continue needed drainage for these smaller areas, and in 2000, Reclamation turned over the remaining work to the three CBP irrigation districts, along with \$167,000 per district, for what became the Small Parcel Drainage Program.

Quincy Columbia Basin Irrigation District (QCBID) reports that between 2005 and 2015 four to five small drainage projects were completed—primarily in the Royal Slope area—and two specific projects are now being designed that will use up the remainder of their Small Parcel Drainage Program funds.



QCBID Subsurface Drainage project.

Unfortunately, there are more acres in need of drainage than there are funds. Furthermore, as the CBP development continues, the likelihood of the need for additional drainage projects will also continue.

Two needs must be addressed to continue development of this key piece of CBP infrastructure:

1. Reclamation needs to resume surveying landowners for potential trouble areas. The last survey in the QCBID occurred in 2005
2. Money needs to be appropriated in Reclamation's budget to keep these projects going.

QCBID plans to include

these requests in meetings with Reclamation's Pacific Northwest Regional Director and Commissioner this November, as well as with U.S. Representative Dan Newhouse in future meetings.



Excess water from perched water table.

Action Underway to Improve Defenses Against Invasive Mussels

Mike Schwisow, Director of Government Relations, CBDL

Zebra and Quagga mussels pose a major threat to Columbia Basin Project infrastructure that has the potential to increase operating costs by several hundred thousand dollars a year. Since making their way to the Great Lakes in ship ballast water, these invasive species have spread throughout most of the United States. The Pacific Northwest is the only area where these costly invaders are not established.



Display of invasive zebra mussels on a propeller. Picture courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Continued on Page 6

Action Underway to Improve Defenses Against Invasive Mussels *Continued from page 5*

The tiny mussels attach themselves to any flat surface, building layer after layer of shell, clogging pipes and fouling underwater infrastructure. Reclamation projects in the Southwest have seen increased maintenance expenses. In some cases, while cleaning infrastructure, they have needed to duplicate gates and other structures in order for clean structures to be substituted for fouled structures. The primary vector, or method for movement of mussels to Washington is on infested watercraft.

Invasive mussels are a priority species on the Washington Invasive Species Council's list of animals and plants that state government agencies work actively to prevent from becoming established in the State. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is the lead agency for this particular species. Efforts to field a high quality prevention and detection program have been hampered for some time by a lack of funding. Budget cuts during the recession reduced staff that could be devoted specifically to the mussel program. Idaho and Oregon both maintained a higher level of effort at intercepting watercraft from invested areas, particularly the Colorado River system reservoirs.

Changes are now occurring that will result in a high level of effort to detect the presence of mussels and prevent their introduction. On the Federal side, the Department of Interior was authorized to establish watercraft inspection stations in the 2014 Water Resources Reform & Development Act. Four million dollars was provided to the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) in December 2015 in the FY 16 Omnibus bill for this purpose. The ACOE delayed use of the funds until April 2017 when an agreement was put in place to distribute the funding to Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana ground inspection stations.

U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke announced in June 2017 a new initiative to protect Western ecosystems and hydroelectric facilities, directing various Interior agencies to coordinate with the States in a new joint effort. The new effort will focus on risk assessment, watercraft inspection/decontamination, regional monitoring coordination, rapid response teams and Colorado River Basin containment activities. Northwest States continue to advocate for mandatory inspection of watercraft leaving that area as most infested intercepts originate from that area. Zinke's interest in the issue is no doubt related to discovery of larval stages of mussels in two Montana reservoirs last fall.

Reclamation's Pacific Northwest Region has begun a new risk assessment on the Region's facilities in an effort to focus prevention and detection effort for best results. A State of Washington 2014 Risk Assessment identified three Columbia Basin Project water bodies as among the most at risk in the State: Banks Lake, Potholes Reservoir, and Moses Lake.

The Washington State Legislature has also acted to upgrade the effort to keep mussels out. WDFW requested legislation during the 2017

session, which was a product of a work group put together at the Legislature's request to address invasive species funding. The proposal updated WDFW statutory authority and proposed a dedicated funding mechanism to provide consistent ongoing efforts. The dedicated funding was proposed to come from the Public Utility Tax on hydropower generation, based on the fact that those facilities are at risk from mussel infestation. The dedicated funding was not in the bill that passed, but the Legislature did increase regular appropriation for the program.

Washington appears to be moving in the right direction to protect itself from these costly invaders. For more information about invasive mussel see the Washington Invasive Species Council fact sheet at: <http://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov/documents/priorities/Zebra-QuaggaMusselFactSheet.pdf>

League Plans Attendance at NWRA

League Chair Kevin Lyle, Director of Government Relations Mike Schwisow, and Assistant Director Sara Higgins will attend the 86th Annual Conference of the National Water Resources Association (NWRA) in Arizona next month. The long-term vision of the NWRA is to achieve sustainable water supply for all beneficial uses in an economical and environmentally responsible manner. As a member, the League stays apprised of issues of importance to the Columbia Basin Project and is able to contribute to a unified voice on national water policy. The November Conference will provide an update on many federal issues as well as an opportunity to network with key stakeholders and policy makers, including the Commissioner of Reclamation.

CBDL Represented at AWB Policy Summit

The Association of Washington Business (AWB) serves as the state chamber of commerce, advocating for Washington business and economic prosperity in the state. Recognizing AWB's efforts to expand advocacy efforts to include agriculture in their portfolio, the League is a member of the association and was recently represented at AWB's 2017 Policy Summit. League Assistant Director, Sara Higgins, attended the event and had the opportunity to network with attendees including staff from congressional offices, Washington legislators, and business leaders from across the state, including the Columbia Basin.

League Board member, Matt Hawley of Lamb Weston, is participating in AWB's Leadership Washington program and was also in attendance. The Leadership program, set in seven different regions across the state, expose tomorrow's leaders to an array of industries and the political landscape in Washington State.

Summit highlights included comments from both Washington senators, and a forecast of some 2018 state legislative issues was outlined.

CRPAG Looks to Future of OCR

The League's Assistant Director, Sara Higgins, attended the September meeting of the Columbia River Policy Advisory Group (CRPAG). The CRPAG advises Ecology's Office of the Columbia River (OCR) on the implementation of a water resource management program for the Columbia River. Members of the CRPAG include irrigation district managers, county commissioners, representatives of state agencies, and others. During the September meeting, there was discussion of how the lack of a 2017-2019 state capital budget would impact OCR projects. Concern was expressed that political dynamics could stop progress on the work being achieved by the OCR. There was much discussion of updates to the Water Supply Forecast that Ecology completes every five years. Ground water is expected to be better incorporated into the forecast for 2021 and different options for how to do that are being considered. Finally, the future of the CRPAG was discussed. The original \$200 million authorized for the OCR has almost all been obligated. Projects to be addressed in the future and the role CRPAG will play are anticipated to be the subjects of a future strategic planning session.

Brand Refresh Nears Completion

Earlier this year, League staff undertook an effort to refresh the organization's brand. Specifically, this included an entire overhaul of the website and an update to the logo. Last year, the Board approved the project, and a designer was contracted earlier this year. The League will unveil the new logo at its November 2nd Conference in Moses Lake. The new website is also expected to launch in November. The website will provide a more user-friendly experience in terms of searching, navigation, and accessing both historical and current Columbia Basin Project information, regardless of the device being used to view content.

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Rod Rottinghaus Farms
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SAC Enterprises Inc
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