



SEPTEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

Volume 7, Issue 7

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.

Tour Focuses on Bridges and Last Siphon

Mike Schwisow, Director of Government Relations, CBDL

The League and East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) teamed up to provide a group of Washington State Senator Patty Murray staffers with an on-the-ground look at the East Low Canal capacity improvements that still need to be completed. Josephine Eckert from the Senator’s Washington D.C. staff joined the Senator’s Central Washington Director, Raquel Crowley, and Eastern Washington Director, John Culton, on the tour led by Craig Simpson and Jed Crowther from ECBID and Mike Schwisow, Director of Government Relations for the League.

The tour focused on the work remaining to be done on the East Low Canal to allow full deliveries to all of the distribution systems along the 43 miles of the Canal, starting at I-90 and continuing to its end near Scooteneey Reservoir. ECBID has utilized a \$26 million grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology Office of Columbia River (OCR), and has completed construction of: the Lind Coulee 1 and 2 siphons; the Warden siphon; two county road bridges; and 43 miles of excavation—all on time with costs less than original study planning estimates.

The major elements that still need to be completed are the Kansas Prairie Siphons 1 and 2, canal control structures, and 10 county road bridges. During the excavation of the canal, when ECBID crews reached a bridge, they would simply stop on one side and begin widening again on the other, leaving bottlenecks in the system. These bridges will need to be lengthened to allow the canal to be widened at those spots to allow full delivery. The work remaining to

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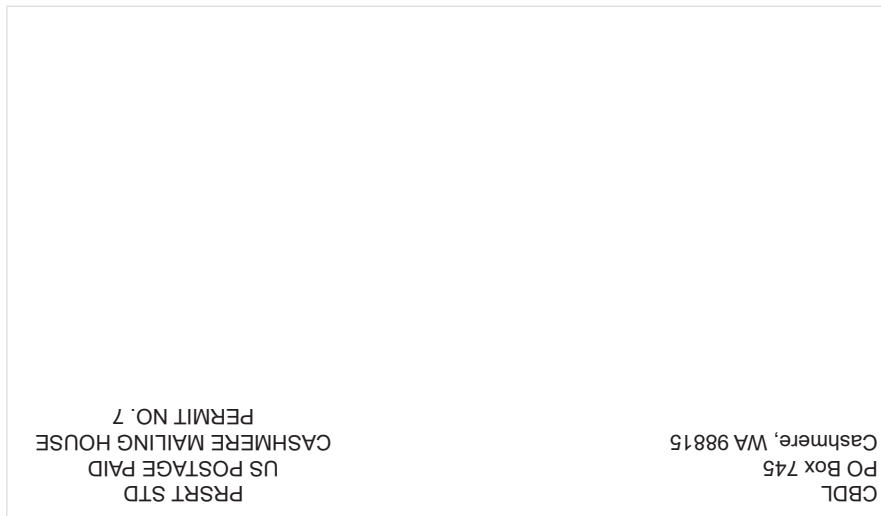
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be done, except for the bridges, is estimated to cost from \$12.9 to \$15.5 million, depending on contingencies. The bridges are expected to cost from \$1.5 to \$2 million each.

The bridges problem will require different teams of partners to come together to find a funding solution. Unlike the actual irrigation canal system that is owned by Reclamation and operated by ECBID, the bridges are part of the county road system. The League is working directly with the Office of the Columbia River and Adams and Grant Counties on identifying a source of funds for bridge replacement. Meetings have been held with the Commissioners of both counties to start the process. The effort will be challenging, however, as the bridges do not fit neatly within the criteria for many of the transportation granting programs. The bridges are primarily on “farm-to-market” roads, generally in safe condition and with relatively low total traffic counts. The key will be to communicate the fact that the bridges are a lynchpin to moving the overall Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) forward.

Replacement of bridges will allow progress on the two public policy goals of the OGWRP, preserving the environment by reserving the remaining ground water resource for municipal and domestic use and maintaining the economy of the region by keeping 87,000 acres of highly productive irrigated farmland in production.



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From the Chair

Kevin Lyle

While Congress took a recess during August, the Columbia Basin Development League continued engagement in a number of Federal advocacy activities. Read on to learn more about some of them. Also, don't forget to register for this year's Conference. The event takes

place on November 2, and you'll save money if you register before October 19. Finally, be sure to check out what was happening around the Project recently. The late Don Olson was honored in a naming ceremony in South District, and the US Bureau of Reclamation Acting Commissioner recently visited the Project.

League Weighs In On Columbia River Treaty

In August, Board member Jeff Schibel and Director of Government Relations Mike Schwisow attended a stakeholder roundtable meeting with Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers on the subject of the Columbia River Treaty. The Treaty, an agreement between the United States and Canada, provides for flood control and power generation benefits in both countries. The treaty expires in 2024 with potential implications to these benefits as well as in-stream and out-of-stream uses. As an outcome of the meeting, the League is sending a letter to the Department of State, responsible for Treaty negotiations, urging them to fill the lead negotiator position. Without a lead negotiator, negotiations on potential changes or renewal of the Treaty cannot progress. The League regularly communicates with Tom Tebb (Department of Ecology, Office of the Columbia River [OCR]) and Derrick Sandison (Washington State Department of Agriculture) who are part of the Washington State's technical team on the Columbia River Treaty.

Trip to DC Focuses on 960-Acre Limitations

This October, the League returns to Washington, DC, for the second time this year. Joined by the Office of the Columbia River Director, Tom Tebb, and Washington State Potato Commission Director of Government Affairs, Matt Harris, League representatives will meet with key committee and staff members as well as senior Reclamation staff with the primary purpose of advocating for the exclusion of OGWRP from the 960-acre limitation in the Reclamation Reform Act (RRA). Lands may be exempted from the acreage limitation provision of the RRA through language in an appropriations bill or another legislative vehicle. In response to a lawsuit against the Federal government in the 1970's, alleging improper acreage limitation administration, Congress passed the RRA and it was signed into law in 1982. But, the 960-acre limitation is likely to negatively impact OGWRP as it is anticipated that it will result in limited landowner participation. The anticipated high cost of water in the program means a lower return per acre. Landowners within the OGWRP boundary, interested in participating in the program, would need more acres to be able to participate. As an approximate example, compare the returns to a landowner west of the canal growing 100 acres of potatoes with a water cost of \$66.00/acre with a landowner within the OGWRP boundary, also growing 100 acres of potatoes, but with a water cost of \$200.00/acre. The landowner within the OGWRP boundary would need roughly three times as many acres to generate the same revenue, all other factors being equal. The 960-acre limitation effectively limits landowners' ability to fully utilize the replacement water supply made possible by OGWRP, and, thus, minimizes the potential success of OGWRP to reduce agriculture's use of the declining Odessa Aquifer.

Brenda Burman, Reclamation's Soon-To-Be Commissioner

Annick Miller Rivera, Senior Policy Advisor, Water Strategies

On June 26, 2017, Brenda Burman was nominated to lead the US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation as Commissioner. Shortly thereafter, the League submitted a letter in support of her confirmation. Once confirmed, Burman will be the first woman to serve in that position.

Burman has worked for nearly 20 years on western water matters including Tribal water settlements and Colorado River and other river basin issues. As Commissioner, Burman will be responsible for managing 492 dams, 338 reservoirs, and over 8,000 miles of canals in the 17 western states. While she may be the first woman Commissioner, this will not be her first time at Reclamation; during the George W. Bush administration she served as Deputy Commissioner for External and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary.

Burman's experience ranges from working as a park ranger at the Grand Canyon to her current job as the Director of Water Policy for Arizona's Salt River Project. Prior to that, she worked for the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, The Nature Conservancy, and US Senator Jon Kyl. This unique combination of experience gives her insight into how water users are affected by federal water policies and is the reason the Columbia Basin Development League submitted a letter of support for her nomination to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

As of the publication of this article, Burman's nomination has not reached the Senate floor for consideration. The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee must first approve the nomination, before it can be considered before the full Senate.

Potholes Reservoir Supplemental Feed Route Project

*Charity Davidson, Project Manager,
US Bureau of Reclamation, Ephrata Field Office*

On February 15, 2007, the Office of the Columbia River published the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Columbia River Water Management Program. The purpose of the EIS was to identify potential impacts associated with implementing the Management Program, as well as several proposed projects identified as "early action" items within the program, including the Potholes Reservoir Supplemental Feed Route (PSFR). In 2007, Reclamation, in collaboration with OCR, finalized an Environmental Assessment to evaluate alternatives to convey water from Billy Clapp Lake through the Pinto Dam outlet works to the Potholes Reservoir of the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) to fulfill existing water contract obligations to the South Columbia Basin Irrigation District (SCBID). Currently, the East Low Canal feeds water to the SCBID but capacity in the East Low Canal is no longer sufficient for this purpose. The preferred alternative put forth in the final Environmental Assessment included conveying water through both the Frenchman Hills Wasteway and middle Crab Creek with a goal to deliver up to 500 cubic feet per second (CFS) during the irrigation season to the Potholes Reservoir.

In February of 2015, 100 CFS of feed water was released from the Pinto Dam outlet works into middle Crab Creek to "charge" the shallow groundwater system to facilitate conveyance timing when feed water was ramped up to 500 CFS. The feed water into middle Crab Creek was shut off in August of 2016 due to unintended flooding as a result of surface-groundwater interactions, primarily in locations south of Road 10 in Moses Lake. In response to these unintended consequences, Reclamation is deploying a "boots-on-the-ground" approach to alleviate short-term concerns and simultaneously investigating if a better alternative exists to convey water to the Potholes Reservoir or if another source of water is available to supplement the additional CFS necessary to meet the goal of the PSFR.

Reclamation's Pacific Northwest Regional Office has prioritized the PSFR to ensure it is given adequate responsiveness to alleviate impacts where feasible, while remaining focused on meeting water contract obligations to the SCBID. In July of 2017, Reclamation was awarded \$400,000 of additional capability funds from Congress to gain a better understanding of groundwater fluctuations observed in 2016 and identify achievable solutions. In addition to recent federal appropriated dollars, OCR has committed \$400,000 in 2017 to support groundwater analyses using existing data, answer key questions related to water ponding concerns at the Grant County Airport-Port of Moses Lake, and work through necessary real estate actions; OCR's financial support is pending a final capital budget from the State Legislature.

UPCOMING EVENTS

CBDL Annual Conference

Thursday, November 2

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

ATEC, Big Bend Community College, Moses Lake, WA

National Water Resources Association 86th Conference

November 15 – 17

Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, Tucson, AZ

Washington State Water Resources Association 72nd Annual Conference

December 6 – 8, 2017

Davenport Hotel, Spokane, WA

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Potholes Reservoir Supplemental Feed Route Project

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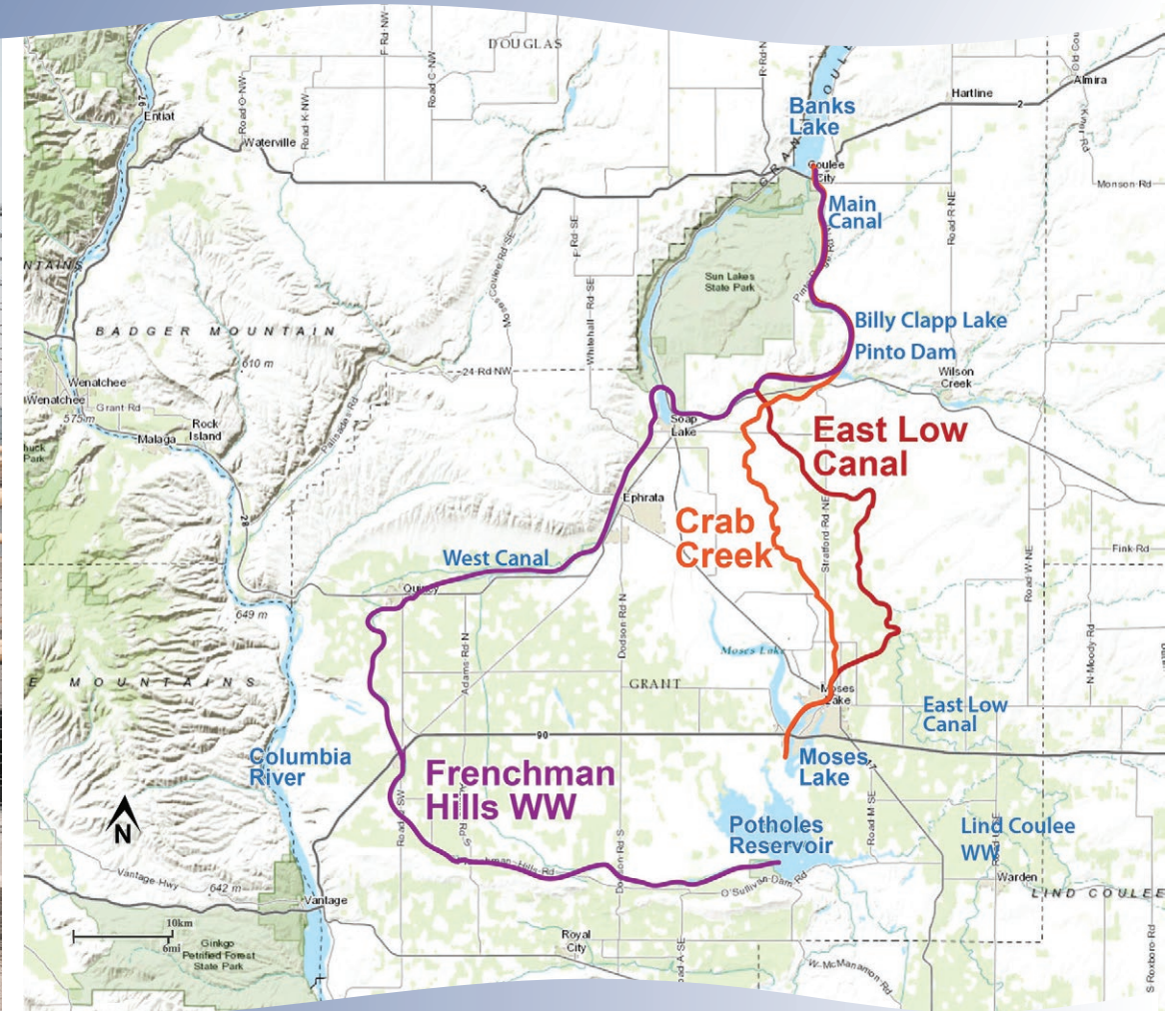
On August 2, 2017, Reclamation's recently appointed Deputy Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen visited with Ephrata Reclamation Field Office Management to discuss the PSFR. Commissioner Mikkelsen was well informed of issues regarding the PSFR project prior to his visit and recognized the necessity of persistent project implementation to get water to the SCBID. Commissioner Mikkelsen's expertise with large irrigation projects and water-related issues was and will continue to be an asset to the success of the PSFR.

What can you expect in 2017 and 2018?

- Feed water will not be released until practical solutions to unanticipated effects are secured.
- Reclamation and their partners will be examining potentially better alternatives to convey water from the Pinto Dam outlet works to the Potholes Reservoir.
- Reclamation and their partners will be assessing the applicability of accessing an estimated 6.5 million acre-feet of CBP seepage and wastewater return flow that has accumulated in the Pasco Basin (USGS, 2016) to supplement the need to feed 500 CFS.
- Reclamation will continue with necessary real estate actions.
- Reclamation will do a better job at communicating project updates to the public, the Districts, agencies, tribes, and interested stakeholder groups.

For more information regarding this or the PSFR project please contact Charity Davidson, Reclamation PSFR Project Manager at:

cndavidson@usbr.gov.



Reclamation Deputy Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen with Project Manager Charity Davidson at Pinto Dam.

Preferred Alternative Routes - Frenchman Wasteway and Middle Crab Creek (2007 EA).

Washington Grown Does Segment on CBDL and Project

Washington Grown, a local television program airing each weekend on KOMO (Seattle), KSPS (Eastern Washington), and KIMA/KEPR (Yakima/Pasco) tells the story of what Washington's approximate 300 different crops contribute to meals, culture, the economy, and the global community. With an educational purpose, the program explores a number of different aspects of agriculture and the resulting products that make it to our tables in a fun, relatable manner.

Last month, the League's Executive Director, Vicky Scharlau, was interviewed for a segment that will air later this fall about the Columbia Basin Project and the League's role advocating for the Project. The Columbia Basin Project produces over 100 different crops and is responsible for \$1 billion in economic impact within the state.

Around the Columbia Basin Project

ACTING COMMISSIONER TOURS PROJECT

East Columbia Basin Irrigation District welcomed Reclamation Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen and hosted a tour with Reclamation officials on August 4.



Pictured from left to right are: Duaine Anderson, ECBID Board Member; Rob Skordas, Reclamation; Clyde Lay, Reclamation; Amy Rodman, Reclamation; John McCourtie, ECBID; Alan Mikkelsen, Acting Commissioner, Reclamation; Lorri Gray, Reclamation; Craig Simpson, ECBID (presenting to the group); Tom Tebb, OCR.

DON OLSON OFFICE DEDICATION

In August, stakeholders gathered at the SCBID Wahluke Campsite located south of Othello to dedicate the new office in memory of Don Olson. Olson was a highly regarded, 30+ year veteran of SCBID and Reclamation. He was the Watermaster at Wahluke from 1967 to 1997, and he was Operations Supervisor in Pasco from 1997 until he retired in 2004. The Don Olson office was completed in 2016, replacing a smaller, inadequate building.



Film Fundraising Continues

Filming for the League's short documentary, *Waiting for Water*, concluded last month. The film will be used as an advocacy tool to motivate viewers to learn more and ultimately to invest, maintain, and support the Project. Planned for release later this year, remaining work on the film is primarily post-production editing followed by distribution. Additional funds are still needed to complete this work. Consider a one-time donation to the effort. Donors will be recognized in the film's credits. For more info or to donate visit cbdl.org.

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Help us save on printing and mailing costs by opting to receive an email version of this newsletter.

Visit www.cbdl.org to sign up, or send us an email:

info@cbdl.org.

Register Today for the Annual Conference!

Conference & 53rd Annual Meeting *The Columbia Basin Project: Continuing the Legacy*

ATEC Building, Big Bend Community College
7662 Chanute St NE, Moses Lake, WA 98837

9:00 AM *Registration/Check-In*

6:00 PM *Safe Journey Home*

Register today using the enclosed registration form or online at cbdl.org.

Registration includes lunch and is \$65 before October 19; \$85 after.

Agenda to include:

- *Waiting for Water*, CBDL's New, Short Documentary
- Updates from Irrigation Districts and the Bureau of Reclamation
- Potoles Supplemental Feed Route Update
- Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program Construction and Funding Update
- Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program Bridges Funding Options
- Office of Columbia River: 10 Years of Water
- Columbia River Treaty Update
- Federal and State Government Affairs Update

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Every once in a while, a new technology, an old problem, and a big idea turn into an innovation."

–Dean Kamen, inventor

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