

# COLUMBIA RIVER-UMATILLA SOLUTIONS TASKFORCE

## Meeting Notes

JULY 27, 2012 – Port of Morrow Riverfront Center, Boardman

### Attending:

Richard Whitman	Steve Eldrige	Crystal Ball
Dennis Doherty	Phil Ward	John Turner
Bob Levy	Roy Elicker	Dawn Wiedmeier
Kimberley Priestly	Bill Boggess	Gary Neal
Eric Quaempts	JR Cook	Joe Furia
Karl Weist	Derek Sandison	
Brett Swift	Stephanie Page	

### Guests:

Bill Duke	Don Rice	Connie Caplinger
Mike Ladd	Randy Jones	Michelle DeHart
Barry Norris	Jim Litchfield	Steve Haeseker
Rick Kepler	Jana Jarvis	Tony Norris

### **Reflections on Field Trip and Dinner**

Richard Whitman recognized and thanked J.R. Cook and the Umatilla Basin Commission for helping to organize the Thursday bus tour. He also recognized Eric Quaempts and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation for hosting the First Foods dinner Thursday evening.

### **How We Will Work Together**

Regarding the proposed operating principles for the Columbia River-Umatilla Solutions Taskforce (“How We Will Work Together”) Steve Eldrige asked that we add something about people needing to be recognized by the Conveners before speaking, to help keep order in the meetings. He also noted that the “How We Will Work Together” document does not specify the level and type of consensus the group process. Steve Greenwood answered that sections #2, #3, and #6 of the document speak to a level of consensus where the recommended actions are ones that “all” can support and the document implies that everyone in the group will work hard to achieve that level of consensus.

Richard Whitman asked Steve Greenwood to bring back the “How We Will Work Together” document along with a written outline of the group’s goals and objectives (i.e. a written “framing” of the project) for group decision at the September meeting.

## **Overview of Columbia River System**

Tony Norris of BPA presented an overview of how the Columbia River System is currently managed. The Powerpoint presentation will be sent electronically to the Solutions Taskforce. Among the points made in his presentation:

- Part of the challenge in managing the Columbia River system for multiple uses is the day-to-day, and year-to-year uncertainty about both water flows and demand for power.
- The current hydrograph pattern is similar to the natural hydrograph, with very high flows in the spring (April-June). Natural hydrograph had even higher spring flows.
- Key times: December begins period of high power demands; In January, BPA begins holding back water to ensure adequate spring flow for fish; Fish spill begins in April and ends September 1;
- Climate change predicted to bring higher winter flows and lower summer flows on the mainstem.

## **Presentation on Science of Fish and Flow Needs**

Michelle DeHart, Director of Fish Passage Center, and Steve Haeseker, US Fish and Wildlife Service provided an overview of the research related to fish survival and Columbia River flow. Their Powerpoint presentations will be made available to Solutions group members, and will be put on the project website.

Some key points from their presentations:

- Water transit times which are the primary factor affecting fish migration time increased significantly after the 1950's. There is a high correlation between water transit time, fish travel times (to the ocean) and fish survival. The Smolt to Adult Return (SAR) ratio is a way of measuring survival. The target established by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council is 2-6% SAR (return rate)
- We are generally not achieving the target SAR for Chinook Salmon and Steelhead, though Steelhead SAR's are slightly higher.
- In order to achieve the target (4%) SAR, research shows a need for 85% freshwater survival.
- Freshwater survival rates also correlate highly to ocean survival rates for salmonids.
- Spill levels of 55-60% correlate with 85% Freshwater survival rates.

## **Report from the Interstate Options Sub-Committee**

The Interstate Options Sub-Committee has identified 10 potential options for further exploration and consideration. It was noted that none of these options are "recommendations" from the sub-committee and the evaluation of the options will occur in the next phase. Options included:

1. Managing Columbia River to increase flow in summer months.

Karl – Add also spring (May – September)

2. Additional Draw-down of Lake Roosevelt.

Karl – Add spring and summer to time period

3. Revised management of ‘run of the river’ reservoirs.

Derek Sandison clarified that one of the two reservoirs being evaluated in Washington was off the table. Project is now on hold due to low electricity rates.

Rick Kepler noted that there are constraints such as flow and velocity considerations.

4. Crab Creek Site, Washington

1-3 million acre feet . Derek described the project as “scaleable”

5. Goose Lake Site, Washington

Derek – About to complete approval study and would like to vet with Colville Tribes.

6. Nine Mile Flat Site, Washington

Same as #5.

7. Washington Co-investing on Oregon storage sites

8. Operate the John Day Pool at minimum operating depths during the summer.

Rick – As you draw down pool you remove that water out of Columbia River. It will require re-location of diversions. The group said, place this option in interstate options.

9. Washington Aquifer Storage

10. Coordinated Conservation Projects

Have a pool of conservative users

Derek –Washington may look at changing law for conservation and raise awareness to use this proposal in Washington as well as Oregon?

11. Short Term options

Richard – How much permitted water use in Washington not developed?

Derek – There are still some as Washington law allows 15 years to develop water use.

## Report from the Oregon Options Sub-Committee

1. Support for build-out of Umatilla Aquifer Recovery Program

2. Capture recharged water in Ordinance Aquifer

3. Establish a Umatilla Basin Water Transaction Program

JR – Look at how we can market water and move around.

Steve – Timing issues on how to make work. Need out-of-stream and in-stream benefits.

Kimberly – Would be helpful to have a written work up of this option. JR answered that the Commission is currently working on one.

4. Explore and construct additional aquifer storage and recovery projects in the basin beyond the current aquifer recovery plans.

JR – May have projects just for fish benefit.

5. West Extension Return Flow

More water for west extension gets more water instream in Umatilla River for fish.

6. Use of Spring (April-June) flows in Columbia River for storage when Columbia is flowing above Bi-Op target flows for fish.

Phil Ward asked if this would require change to Division 33 rules. Steve answered that the subcommittee had not come to that conclusion and thought there may be other alternatives within Division 33.

Barry Norris emphasized that this would involve interruptible water rights, based on real time monitoring of Columbia River flows.

7. Boardman Tree Farms water transfer

JR Cook said this could involve both transfers upstream or downstream. He said to strike the reference to Cold Springs Reservoir.

8. Construction of new surface water storage facilities

Should be Juniper Canyon not Juniper Springs. Almost \$1,000 AF.

9. Expansion of Cold Springs and/or other current above-ground facilities.

10. Expansion of Wallowa Lake and/or other out-of-basin facilities.

Phil Ward noted that this option would require measures to “shepherd” the additional water flow past diversions in state of Washington.

11. Conservation measures in Wallowa Basin.

12. Utilize existing unused Columbia water rights, i.e. municipal rights, for irrigation in the Umatilla Basin.

Phil & Barry - Is this short term? Would depend on the holder of water right and how they want to grow into the water right. Holder of water right can define term length.

13. Basalt Aquifer Recharge and Water Bank.

14. Instream Flow Restoration in High Priority Rivers and Reaches

Richard Whitman stated that one of our operating sideboards should be: Don’t conflict with CTUIR Water Rights Settlement discussions, including Phase II infrastructure use.

Options not on list to consider:

Steve – Withdrawals of 1 KCFS from John Day Pool

JR – Use 10,000 AF from reservoir in Grand Rhonde Basin. Use water from Simplot Lagoon.

Steve Greenwood proposed that the subcommittees will next prioritize and focus on those projects that have the best chance of being implemented. We shouldn’t throw any off the list but will need to focus our time between now and December.

Convener Dennis Doherty asked Taskforce members, and subcommittee members especially to be prepared for discussion of a matrix type rating analysis of the options and what would go into that analysis.

**Next Meeting**

Will be in September. Steve Greenwood to send out a Doodle Poll on behalf of the Conveners.