

PBAC CAG Meeting of January 11, 2007

Attendance:

Members present:

Michael Echanove

Kirk O'Reilly

Bill French (alternate)

Dr. George Grader (alternate)

Earl Bennett

Helen Harrington, IDWR

Keith Stoffel WA DOE

Members Excused:

Jerry Fairley, Joe Spoonemore, Ben McLuen

Members Absent:

Dan Boone, Jim Mital

Guests:

Mark Loiaza, Steve Robischon

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

The draft minutes were approved by consensus.

Letter of Resignation:

Chairman Echanove announced that he has received a letter of resignation from Bill Brock.

PBAC Report and Update: (November 16th meeting) by Steve Robischon

1. Bill French led a discussion related to conservation that was well received by PBAC.
2. Hannah Hernandez presented preliminary results from her research indicating a connection between Paradise Creek and the Wanapum Basalts in the vicinity of the Ground Water Research Site.
3. Discussions related to the conduct of a synoptic water level measurement are leading to the realization that any such effort will likely not be possible this coming spring. Significant preparation work is required, and resource limitations will likely delay this effort.

Open Forum:

Helen Harrington announced that Governor Butch Otter has appointed Dave Tuthill as IDWR interim Director. It has been announced that there will be a nationwide search for a permanent Director that may take 4 to 5 months to complete. The IDWR budget for this legislative session was characterized as status quo, with no new initiatives included. There is some uncertainty in the Department related to the pending Idaho Supreme Court case that will rule on the validity of the conjunctive management rules

Keith Stoffel of the Washington Department of Ecology (DOE) updated the group on the status of the appeal of the WSU water rights transfer. A hearing in Pullman before the Pollution Control Hearings Board (PCHB) is scheduled for

June 18-21. The PCHB will hear arguments from the appellants and respondents related to 18 legal issues. The appeal is one of several challenges currently be made to the 2003 Washington municipal water law.

Stoffel also indicated that an application (either has been or) will be submitted to the Water Conservancy Board on January 25 related to the proposed Hawkins development near the State line.

Business:

Michael Echanove updated the group on the December meeting between representatives of CAG and PBAC and the Washington 9th District Legislative delegation (Schoesler, Buri, Hailey).

Stoffel indicated that there is some uncertainty as to whether a specific item related to Eastern Washington ground water studies still appears in the DOE budget, but indicated that there likely will be money available in the watershed implementation funds to support such an effort. Eligibility for these funds previously depended upon the acceptance of a watershed plan by the county commissioners, but this requirement will likely be relaxed. Stoffel noted that it is known at DOE that the Legislative delegation is interested in and supports the project, and that Senator Schoesler had followed up the December meeting with inquiries to DOE about the funding specifics.

Robischon noted that the delegation indicated a show of support for the Pullman reuse project might be helpful, and that Palouse Basin groups could benefit from visiting with the representatives of the neighboring ground water management area (GWMA).

By consensus, the CAG resolved to present a recommendation to PBAC suggesting the enlistment of support for the project from concerned parties in the Basin and the issuance of a letter to DOE Director Manning.

Additional discussion related to the desire to maintain scope flexibility for the project, and the potential of enlisting assistance from the Palouse Conservation District in administering any funding that may be secured.

As meeting time was running short, there was only limited discussion of CAG 2007 goals. A desire was expressed to continue working to pursue funding for new projects, as well as a new focus by the group upon conservation.

The next meeting will be February 8, 2007.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Note: These notes were approved by a consensus of the CAG members attending the February 8, 2007 meeting.