

Melinda S. Eden
Chair
Oregon

Joan M. Dukes
Oregon

Frank L. Cassidy Jr.
"Larry"
Washington

Tom Karier
Washington



Jim Kempton
Vice-Chair
Idaho

Judi Danielson
Idaho

Bruce A. Measure
Montana

Rhonda Whiting
Montana

Council Meeting Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

November 16-17, 2005

Minutes

Melinda Eden called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m. on November 17, and adjourned at 2:45 p.m. on November 17. All members were present, except Larry Cassidy.

Jim Kempton moved that the Council meet in executive session to discuss participation in civil litigation. Judi Danielson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously on a roll-call vote.

Reports from Fish and Wildlife, Power and Public Affairs committee chairs:

Rhonda Whiting, chair, fish and wildlife committee. Tom Karier, chair, power committee; and Larry Cassidy, chair, public affairs committee.

Tom Karier reported that the Power Committee talked about the progress of the Regional Dialogue and the adequacy forum. The committee discussed a report on new generating resources in the Northwest, he said, adding "there's a surprising amount of new generation being built." Some natural gas plants are being completed, and more wind is being built than was in the Council's plan, Karier pointed out. He said the committee also discussed the work of the Northwest Transmission Assessment Committee (NTAC).

Rhonda Whiting reported that the Fish and Wildlife Committee discussed the Johnson Creek Artificial Production Enhancement project and the status of the fish and wildlife project selection process. There was a briefing on the Council's role in regional monitoring and evaluation and a discussion of Bonneville implementation policy issues, such as Bonneville's proposed policy on capitalization of land acquisitions, she said.

Report on the Montana Energy Conference:

Bruce Measure and Rhonda Whiting, Montana Council Members.

Bruce Measure reported on Montana's Energy Future Symposium, noting that 800 people had attended. We are compiling information from the presentations and will post them on the Symposium website, he said.

1. Update on Biological Opinion remand:

John Shurts, general counsel.

Staffer John Shurts reported on what's new in the litigation over the BiOp in Judge Redden's court and the injunction filed by the plaintiffs calling for alternative spill and flow operations.

Oral argument on the matters raised by the motions will be held December 15, he said.

2. Presentation on burbot conservation strategy:

Sue Ireland, fish and wildlife director, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho.

Sue Ireland, fish and wildlife director of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, gave a presentation on the Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative, which seeks to conserve and protect burbot. She described how the group works, the strategy they have put together, and a recent memorandum of understanding reached to implement it.

3. Discussion of fish and wildlife project evaluations by utility customers:

Terry Flores, Northwest RiverPartners; Lee Corum, PNUCC; and Kevin Banister, PNGC.

Terry Flores, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners, explained the origin, goals, and membership of the RiverPartners, noting that the group is working to get more focus on cost and accountability in salmon investment in the region. We wanted a single voice to address the issue of salmon recovery, she stated.

4. Discussion of provincial objectives and AHA completion:

Doug Marker, director, fish and wildlife division; John Shurts and Peter Paquet, manager, wildlife and resident fish.

We want to discuss how to bring the All-H Analyzer (AHA) technical work to completion and make sure you support continuing this work, staffer Doug Marker told the Council. The AHA work would help in "rolling up" the subbasin plans and also be of use in such activities as hatchery reform and fish and wildlife project selection, he said.

5. Discussion of project performance evaluations: regional water brokerage and potential pilot proposal for complete and ongoing projects:

Lynn Palensky, subbasin planning project manager; and Peter Paquet.

Staffer Lynn Palensky updated the Council on plans to review the Columbia Basin Water Trust Program, which seeks to conserve fish habitat through voluntary water transactions with willing private property owners. The program has been going on for five years and has invested \$5.6 million for water rights through over 100 transactions, she noted. Now it's time to evaluate the program and see if and how it can be improved, Palensky said. The review would last until April 2007, and the cost estimated for the consultant to conduct it is \$125,000, she noted.

6. Update on critical habitat designations for bull trout:

Lynn Palensky; and Scott McCarthy, Chief of Listing - Region 1, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

--This agenda item postponed until Decmeber.

7. Update on regional transmission issues:

Wally Gibson, manager, system analysis and generation.

The Regional Representatives Group (RRG) is meeting today, staffer Wally Gibson told the Council. He reported that Grid West has been reorganized into a non-profit non-member organization, with the intent of reconstituting a new member organization to implement the Grid West proposal presented early this summer. Gibson noted that Avista has committed to participate in six weeks more of investigation, and then it will decide whether to be part of Grid West.

At the meeting today, Grid West said it would continue to work with Bonneville because Bonneville is a big part of the transmission picture, and Grid West recognizes the need to work together going forward, he said.

8. Briefing on regional dialogue briefing and the future role of Bonneville:

Terry Morlan, director, power division.

"The talks are going pretty well, but there are unresolved issues in all subject areas," said staffer Terry Morlan in a brief update on the Regional Dialogue on the future role of Bonneville. The participants have been working on issues like cost control -- trying to make sure that Bonneville's costs "won't explode" over the next 20 years, he noted. Other key issues include the residential exchange for public utilities and the treatment of new publics, Morlan said.

9. Review of 2005 adult salmon returns:

Cindy Lefleur and Dick Stone, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Cindy LeFleur of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife reported on 2005 Columbia River chinook runs and fisheries, noting that the numbers are still preliminary. In 2005, we forecasted upriver spring chinook returns of 254,100, and the actual return was 106,400, she said. "Despite the fact that our forecast was off considerably, 100,000 is still a strong return of this stock," according to LeFleur.

10. Briefing on analysis of recent hydro operations proposals:

John Fazio, senior power systems analyst.

Fazio characterized as "preliminary" the results of his analysis of the effects of the plaintiffs' proposal for alternative spill and flow operations for 2006 contained in a motion seeking injunctive relief in the Biological Opinion (BiOp) litigation. He explained that he used the GENESYS model to compare the proposal to current (BiOp) operations, and he said he found three categories of impacts: power supply adequacy, economics, and physical impacts.

The plaintiffs' proposed operations would have a detrimental effect on the adequacy of the power supply if increased curtailment of fish and wildlife operations during power emergencies were not allowed, Fazio stated. Assuming the same limits on emergency operations as modeled for the BiOp, the winter loss-of-load probability (LOLP) would rise to 7.5 percent, well above the near-zero value under current operations and above the historical 5-percent standard used by the Council, he said. To restore the LOLP to an acceptable level, a more liberal allowance for emergency operations would be needed, according to Fazio. Such reservoir drafting wouldn't affect adequacy, but it could affect the refill probability at Hungry Horse, he reported. There, refill probability could drop from 62 percent to 58 percent.

11. Council business:

– Adoption of minutes

Kempton moved to approve the minutes for the October 11-13, 2005 Council meeting held in Eugene, Oregon. Karier seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Approved December 14, 2005

/s/ Jim Kempton
Vice-Chair