

VOICE OF THE PROJECT

Supporting the Columbia Basin Project since 1964.



OUR MISSION

Serving as the voice of the Columbia Basin Project – advocating for completion and sustainable maintenance.



Billy Clapp Lake. Photo credit: iceagefloods.blogspot.com.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 01 RECAP OF THE LEAGUE’S 2020 ANNUAL MEETING
- 03 SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL CBDL CONFERENCE
- 04 A HIGHLIGHT FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING: KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROB CURLEY
- 05 ELC GATE AUTOMATION NEARING THE HALFWAY POINT
- 05 OGWRP BRIDGES UPDATE: PUSHING THE RESET BUTTON
- 06 LEAGUE COORDINATES 2021 PRIMER WITH KEY COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT LEGISLATORS
- 07 A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THE LEAGUE
- 08 FOUR LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS OF THE ODESSA GROUNDWATER REPLACEMENT PROJECT
- 13 NEW BOARD MEMBER AND OFFICERS ELECTED
- 14 DID YOU KNOW?
- 16 WHAT WILL THE LEGISLATURE LOOK LIKE IN 2021?

RECAP OF LEAGUE’S 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

The Columbia Basin Development League held its 2020 Annual Meeting virtually on Nov. 5, with more than 70 people tuning in. The COVID-19 pandemic kept the League from gathering in person, so the 90-minute meeting took place online for the first time in the League’s 56-year history.

The Board Chair, Mark Stedman, described all the changes as “a new dynamic in this world that we live in. We will survive.”

The meeting served as an opportunity to welcome new trustees, bid farewell to outgoing ones, update the bylaws and honor some distinguished guests and mainstays.

Continued on page 2

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"Recap of League's 2020 Annual Meeting" continued from page 1



Jake Wollman



Roger Hartwig



Mark Stedman



Rep. Dan Newhouse

Congressman Dan Newhouse (R-4th District) was honored with a lifetime honorary membership and longtime trustee Jake Wollman, Jr., received the title of Trustee Emeritus. Wollman retires this year after almost three decades on the board. "Jake, you've done a great job. Keep in touch with us, and keep participating," Stedman said.

Newhouse joined the meeting and offered a few brief remarks, calling himself "humbled and honored" to receive the award. He expressed optimism in the completion of the Columbia Basin Project. "I'm confident we can get this done if we continue to work, as we have, together," he said.

Eight returning trustees were reelected and

two new people earned terms on the board. New board members are Russ Kehl of Quincy and Terry Thompson of Othello. Both farmers, Kehl owns Farmer Bean and Seed LLC, Washington Trucking, and serves as the member of the corporate board of CHS, Inc. Thompson grows potatoes, hay, wheat, corn, and beans, serves as an Adams County Commissioner, and as a member of the City of Othello's Civil Service Commission.

Returning board members are Chip Dobson, Milt Miller, Mike LaPlant, Ben Leavitt, John Moody, Kevin Lyle, Mark Booker, and Vicki Gordon. The new terms for all 10 people start on Jan. 1 of next year.

Treasurer Orman Johnson offered a snapshot

of the League's financial shape, beginning with a prediction of how the 2020 fiscal year would end. "Working capital at the end of 2020 is expected to be \$23,000, which is about the same as 2019," Johnson said. Income for 2020 was expected to be \$191,000, and expenses were expected to reach the same amount. In 2019, total income reached \$214,000 and total expenses reached \$233,000, due to the Voices Task Force, Johnson said, which included a board-approved stakeholder survey.

Stedman acknowledged the board's three outgoing members: Wollman, Roger Hartwig, and Stephen McFadden. Wollman and Hartwig will retire, while McFadden has taken a new job in Pasco. A little later, Harris turned the tables on Stedman and acknowledged him for his two-year term as board chair. His term expires at the end of the year. "Thank you, Mark for your service; you deserve recognition," Harris said.

Harris, chairman of the League's Bylaws Committee revealed the result of a vote that proposed amendments and updates the League's bylaws. The proposed vote received a unanimous approval from all the members who voted, the League's executive director Vicky Scharlau said. Lastly, Scharlau said that the League is "stepping it up in 2021. "We have to. We need to," she said.

A 2019 survey of the League discovered that there's a huge need for the League to become an even louder voice of the Columbia Basin Project, Scharlau said. So, 2021 will be the year where the League works even harder at tailoring its message to smaller geographic regions within the Project and to local print media within the Project.

Furthermore, the survey recommended that the League build a broader list of contacts, and provide general information about the Project more broadly, educating people as to what the Project is all about.

"People are forgetting the value of irrigation and surface water over aquifer water," Scharlau said. "Sometimes, frankly, they aren't even forgetting that, they are not even aware they live on top of the nation's largest irrigation project."

Stedman closed the meeting by encouraging people to entice others to participate in the League, and reminded the audience of the historical value of the project. "We are not doing this for our children, but possibly for our great-great-great grandchildren. If President (Franklin) Roosevelt would have said, 'Dang, 77 people are going to die building the Grand Coulee Dam, I am not going support it,' and had pulled the funds, what would the Columbia Basin look like today? Jackrabbits and sagebrush. We have to think beyond ourselves."

ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE

The League invites you to participate in its annual conference, titled, "With One Voice" and scheduled for March 4, 2021 via Zoom.

Please mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details as the League staff enters the home stretch of preparations for the conference. Visit the website, www.cbdl.org regularly for updates.

The annual conference serves as a forum where attendees can stay up to date and informed of efforts to develop, maintain and improve the Columbia Basin Project.

**"WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING
YOU IN MARCH TO ADVANCE THE
LEAGUE'S MISSION TO BE THE VOICE
OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT,
TOGETHER."**

—Vicky Scharlau, League Executive Director



QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

**MENTAL TOUGHNESS IS TO PHYSICAL
AS FOUR IS TO ONE.**

- Bobby Knight, basketball coach, Indiana University
from 1971 to 2000.



A HIGHLIGHT FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING: KEYNOTE SPEAKER ROB CURLEY

Rob Curley closed the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Columbia Basin Development League, the first virtual meeting in the League's history, with a message brimming with optimism and humor, which seemed to resonate with his audience during a pandemic.

Curley, the editor of the Spokesman-Review newspaper in Spokane, opened by addressing his reputation as an innovator, noting the dismal state of the newspaper industry and poking a little fun at himself.

"You all couldn't get the horse-buggy maker to come and talk to you all about his innovations?," he said.

After a quick rundown of his career from a childhood in Kansas with parents who subscribed to three newspapers to his experiences building HGTV.com and the website for the Masters golf tournament, to his time as editor in Spokane, the first time he applied for a job in his life, Curley got to the heart of his presentation: What he calls "The Virtuous Cycle," the process through which he changed how his newsroom operated and how a company can better relate to the community it serves.

The key is, you have to make people like you, he said. To that end, he started featuring positive stories in the front page of the Spokesman-Review and shifting to longer, more descriptive stories.

"Not to sound crazy optimistic but in 2017, my first year here, we became the only newspaper in America whose numbers went up," Curley said. "From 68,000 to 88,000 subscribers. First circulation gain in the newspaper's history since 1996."

A way to implement the Virtuous Circle, Curley said is by implementing the Five Ps: Passion, Practical, Personal communication, Playful and Pleasure.

Passion answers the question of "what matters in your town?"

Practical answers the need for practical advice.

Personal communication is a winning strategy all its own nowadays,



Photo of Rob Curley, submitted by Rob Curley

"[THE FIVE PS] ARE NOT A BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR NEWSPAPERS; THEY ARE A BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR EVERY BUSINESS THAT IS SUCCEEDING RIGHT NOW."

—ROB CURLEY

Curley said. In a world where everything is technology, the only way to win is to be human, he added.

Playful is the fourth P and a big deal. "Being playful shows that you have a soul. Playful matters," he said. Pleasure is the fifth P and "why we work. We work our (tails) off 40 hours a week so we can enjoy our weekends," he said.

The Five Ps "are not a business strategy for newspapers; they are a business strategy for every business that is succeeding right now," Curley said.

ELC GATE AUTOMATION NEARING THE HALFWAY POINT

Robin Adolphsen, district engineer for the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, said that the automation of the gates on the East Low Canal is about 50 percent complete.

“With the East Low Canal, we have looked at all the gates we need to do and we are close to halfway done with them,” she said. “Depends if we continue to do the ones farther north. As the plans progress in the design work, we will have the push to put more of those in.” So far, 39 gates have been automated on the East Low Canal, the biggest canal in the ECBID.

Adolphsen described the automation as a project that’s been in the works for three years now.

The automated gates allow for a more efficient delivery of water, she added, without needing to send ditch riders out to make adjustments. Using human power is still the standard in the ECBID, though, Adolphsen said.

“Most of our gates are still manual. The East Low Canal has always done it with automation but we have a lot of canals and a lot of gates,” she said. “It would take years and more finances to get everything automated.”

Some of the bigger gates can cost about \$30,000 to automate, and that doesn’t include installation or maintenance. The benefits are quite considerable in water conservation, though.

“We conserve water by not spilling it when we get additional water in the canal. As the canal level rises, the gate closes and it maintains the same flow,” Adolphsen said, adding that a rough estimate of the water conservation thanks to the 39 gates is about 20,000 acre-feet. It will take about three to four years to have all the ELC gates automated, Adolphsen predicted.

“That’s our goal, it all depends on our funding and how much the board would like to continue it,” she said.

OGWRP BRIDGES UPDATE: PUSHING THE RESET BUTTON

While replacing Odessa Ground Water Replacement Project bridges remains a need and focus, in Adams County, some other changes are currently the priority.

Two new commissioners are coming in, and one of the people most responsible for recent progress on bridge replacement is leaving town.

Funds are always limited in Adams County, so the hunt is always on for agencies who can help share the cost of major undertakings. Replacing all OGWRP bridges (eight in Adams County, two in Grant County) is a big undertaking, but it is the necessary final step of canal expansion in order to increase water delivery capacity to OGWRP lands. People like the county’s former Economic Development Director (and former League trustee) Stephen McFadden, as well as State Sen. Judy Warnick tried hard to get the project started in a feasible manner.

In 2018, their efforts led to inclusion of OGWRP bridges in the state supplemental transportation budget. The result was more than \$100,000 to help Adams County come up with designs for new bridges.

The hope was to use the bridge designs as the basis for an application for a federal TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) grant, now called BUILD (Better Utilizing Investment to Leverage Development) grants. Initial efforts were not successful, however.

Now McFadden is moving to Pasco. Plus, with two new county commissioners, longtime Adams County resident Jay Weise and former chair of the state’s association of wheat growers, Dan Blankenship, there are many changes taking place among the people running the County and it may be a while until the plan to replace the bridges picks up steam again. Adams County will need to be onboard as they are the actual grant applicant, and it will take more than one round of grants to get it done.

LEAGUE COORDINATES 2021 PRIMER WITH KEY COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT LEGISLATORS

In October, the League coordinated a virtual meeting with Columbia Basin Project legislators to brief them on 2021 legislative priorities.

Each legislator from every legislative district touched by the Project received invitations—9th, 12th, 13th, and 16th. Those in attendance were:

- 9th District: Senator Mark Schoesler and Representative Mary Dye
- 12th District: Representatives Mike Steele and Keith Goehner
- 13th District: Senator Judy Warnick, Representatives Tom Dent and Alex Ybarra

Senator Warnick opened the meeting with a recollection of the value of the Project, not only to the citizens of each of their districts, but also to the state.

The Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program—replacing 70,000 acres of deep well irrigation with surface irrigation—can feel like a

long slog, but steady progress is happening. Legislators received a status update and an East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) slide show of the progress on distribution system EL 47.5 was shared. To check out the slideshow, follow the instructions next to the computer screen below, or [click here](#) if reading the electronic edition of Voice of the Project.

EL 47.5 was tested this fall, and will deliver water to 8,500 acres next spring.

Among other items, the lawmakers discussed state and federal funding sources and opportunities, the budget for Ecology’s Office of the Columbia River, the state’s budget shortfall going into the session, and the role and responsibility CBP legislators have in the overall voice of the Columbia Basin Project.

TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN PROJECT AND THE ODESSA GROUND WATER REPLACEMENT PROJECT WITH THESE EAST COLUMBIA BASIN IRRIGATION DISTRICT SLIDE SHOWS.

- EL47.5 Construction
- Columbia Basin Project Tour
- Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program Canal Widening
- Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program Siphon Construction

To view the slideshows, click the link or visit the CBDL website and follow these steps:

1. Go to www.cbdl.org
2. Click on News
3. Click on Classifieds and Resources
4. Look for the line that reads, “Click on the following slide shows below to learn more about the Columbia Basin Project”
5. Click on any of the four links to the slide shows



A BRIGHT FUTURE FOR THE LEAGUE: HIGH SCHOOLERS FROM THE COLUMBIA BASIN SHARE THEIR LOVE FOR AGRICULTURE

As the board of trustees' chairman Mark Stedman put it during the League's last annual meeting, the work of the League goes beyond the here-and-now. What happens now matters, of course, but the work that occurs often happens with an eye on how it will impact future generations of Columbia Basin residents.

With that in mind, the League reached out to a specific cohort of future Basin residents: those who have already discovered a profound passion for agriculture, and asked them to share their dreams, hopes and visions for when it's their turn to lead the way.

Thanks to the help of Rod Cool, co-advisor of the Quincy High School FFA chapter, the League contacted students from different cities in the Columbia Basin.

Colin Miller, Royal High School, Royal City, 11th grade.

Background: "I was a 4-H kid from the first year I could do it (third grade) until the last year I could do it. This is my third year in FFA. I grew up on a farm and I grew up working for people who had cows and stuff, so it was all I ever wanted to do."

How I feel about Ag: "Agriculture was kind of what brought life to America and it's something that is not going to go away anytime soon. You can't live without it, so I wanted to be a part of feeding America and keeping the business going."

What people don't know about the field of Ag: "People don't really know where their food comes from."

Next steps: "Stay in FFA. If you want a future that goes hand-in-hand with what you're learning, you need to stay in FFA. After graduation, I'd like to go to a community college or maybe a four-year and study agribusiness or farm and ranch management"

Family ties: His brother is studying accounting in Wenatchee so he can take care of the family farm's books later on.

Ryann Harrington, Quincy High School, Quincy, 11th grade

Background: Three years in FFA. "Although I did not grow up on a farm or a ranch, I've always been interested in agriculture and learning more about it. I wanted to be a part of that. Just being outdoor a lot and working with your hands and doing something that you love."

How I feel about Ag: "I've definitely learned a lot more about it, how everything works. I definitely see myself having a career in Ag if I wanted it.

How my family feels about my love for Ag: "They are not surprised by it. I have always been very outdoorsy and we have other families that have farms or ranches, so it's always been something I've been around."

Biggest challenge I've faced in Ag: "Being a woman in ag and being looked down (up)on. Men belittle you and say 'Oh, this is a man's field.' It hasn't happened to me yet, but I have seen it happen."

McKlay Jorgensen, Warden High School, Warden, 11th grade.

Background: FFA member since 8th grade, 4-H member before then. "I was attracted to the sense of community that grew from being in a farming community. Anyone who was a part of agriculture all knew each other and helped each other out and helped educate everyone else."

How I feel about Ag: "I want to become an ag teacher so I can connect with the students. Working with them, you build a closer connection with them. I want to teach high school students because they are the people who need that close connection with a mentor or an adult."

Family ties: Mom works for USPS, dad works for UPS, but grandparents were farmers.

Next steps: "I hope to attend the University of Idaho. My ag teachers both went to U of I and they talked it up. I even went to a camp at U of I and loved the campus."

How does my family feel about me going into Ag: "They know that my main goal is to help people and they think that this is a really good way."

FOUR LEGISLATIVE CHAMPIONS OF THE ODESSA GROUNDWATER REPLACEMENT PROJECT

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The mighty Columbia Basin Project (CBP) is a Reclamation project that dates back to the 1940s and provides Columbia River water to 671,000 acres in east-central Washington State. Some may be unaware, however that while the entire CBP was authorized by Congress, only three quarters of it have been completed. The delay in the completion of the CBP is now creating serious problems for Central Washington irrigators and communities. Most significantly, farmers in the Odessa, Washington, region received permits from the Washington Department of Ecology to drill deep wells on the understanding that a canal would eventually be built to bring CBP water to the land. However, that did not happen for over 40 years, and as a result, the Odessa-area aquifer is being depleted at a rapid rate. The “ancient water” that is now

being pumped from it is old, high in temperature, and filled with salt and minerals that make it ill-suited for irrigation. The decline of the aquifer not only threatens irrigators in the region; there are also 12 communities that risk losing their domestic water supplies.

To guarantee the continuance of high-value agriculture in the region to restore the aquifer, and to secure the water supplies of local municipalities, that use of groundwater must be replaced with the use of surface water from the Columbia River. This expansive undertaking, known as the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project (OGWRP), involves large pumps to pump the water out of the river, large pipes to convey it to the Odessa area, and laterals to bring it to the farms. Only now, with a new pipeline built through the OGWRP, are the first deliveries of Columbia River water being made to the region.

In this interview, we speak with four Washington State legislators who have played key roles in helping to fund and advance the OGWRP about the importance of the project and the way forward.

Tom Dent represents Washington’s 13th legislative district in the Washington House of Representatives. He can be contacted at tom.dent@leg.wa.gov

Mary Dye represents Washington’s 9th legislative district in the Washington House of Representatives. She can be contacted at mary.dye@leg.wa.gov

Mark Schoesler represents Washington’s 9th legislative district in the Washington Senate. He can be contacted at mark.schoesler@leg.wa.gov.

Judy Warnick represents Washington’s 13th legislative district in the Washington Senate. She can be contacted at judy.warnick@leg.wa.gov or 360-786-7624.

Photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons





Rep. Tom Dent

STATE REP. TOM DENT

Irrigation Leader: Please tell us about your background and how you came to serve in the Washington Legislature.

Tom Dent: During my private career, I flew airplanes as a crop duster, a flight instructor and a corporate pilot. I've been flying since 1975. I also own and operate a small ranch where I raise hay and buffalo.

I grew up in the Columbia Basin. My family moved here in 1955 when I was a small boy. We came when the water came to the Columbia Basin and I watched the desert bloom as I grew up.

I was 10 years old when John Kennedy ran against Richard Nixon, and I became interested in them and the election. President Kennedy's statement, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country," had a big effect on my life. It's what pushed me into the political process.

In 1964, I became involved in my first political campaign and I haven't missed one since. I always wanted to run for office myself. I had just sold my business in early 2014 when Doc Hastings announced that he was not going to run for another term in Congress, and I knew that Janea Holmquist, who was in the state

Legislature, wanted to run for his seat. I saw my opening in her vacant seat in the Legislature, so I decided to run. I am now in my third term.

Irrigation Leader: What is the Legislature's role in developing and funding the OGWRP?

Tom Dent: Up to this point, the Legislature's role has been putting money into the project to keep it moving through the Washington Department of Ecology's Office of Columbia River (OCR). We've been able to put over \$100 million in to this project. We have widened the canal. Only half the siphons that were originally planned for the canal were ever put in, so we have added second siphons in several places. Now we have enough infrastructure to get producers on surface water.

Irrigation Leader: Would you tell us about your work with federal and state partners and the farmers in the region to support the project?

Tom Dent: We are working with farmers to make sure we stay on the same page. Right now, we are having problems with the cost of the project on a per-acre basis. We've been working hard with the growers to help come up with ways to reduce that cost. We are working with Ecology as well.

We have also realized that we needed federal money, because while the CBP is a federal project, the OGWRP has been solely supported by the state up to this point. I've been to Washington, D.C. with Sen. (Judy) Warnick a couple of times to talk to our federal partners and our congressmen and senators. There are three members of Congress whose districts intersect with the 13th State Legislative District, which I represent. They, along with our two United States senators make up a strong team and all support the project.

We have met with the U.S. Department of the Interior along with the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture as well. Having discussed the importance of the project

with these agencies, we are hopeful that we may receive federal funding to keep it moving.

Irrigation Leader: What are the next steps for the Washington Legislature?

Tom Dent: The first project that has been completed is one known as Project 47.5. The pump station has been built, the pipe is in the ground, they've been testing it, and there is now water on the ground. We are going to go back to the Legislature and ask for more money to keep this program going. We are also working with our congressional partners to see if we can get money from them.

Irrigation Leader: What is the Washington Legislature's role in developing and completing the CBP?

Tom Dent: The Legislature has engaged in the OGWRP as a stopgap measure until we can complete the CBP. To complete the CBP as designed would be an incredible feat and would significantly advance the rural development of eastern Washington. The infrastructure would create jobs and support communities. Without water, this area would go back to be(ing) a desert. Water means so much to eastern Washington, the Columbia Basin and the state of Washington!

Continued on page 10



Rep. Mary Dye

STATE REP. MARY DYE

Irrigation Leader: Please tell us about your background and how you came to serve in the Washington Legislature.

Mary Dye: I've been in eastern Washington as a farmer for 33 years. My husband and I farm roughly 3,600 acres of soft white wheat. Prior to that, I was a field agronomist for a startup company that introduced canola to eastern Washington. Prior to that, I was a field tech working in irrigated portions of the Yakima-Grandview area in the Columbia Basin. I was appointed to the Washington Legislature when a midterm vacancy emerged in 2015. I won the election to fill the second half of that term in fall 2015, and then won re-election in 2016 and 2018. The November 2020 election will be my third regular election.

Irrigation Leader: Please tell us about your district.

Mary Dye: It's a large district of about 7,500 square miles. It includes four full counties and parts of two others. Half the district is in the OGWRP. The other half is in dryland wheat production.

Irrigation Leader: Would you tell us about the importance of irrigated agriculture in central Washington?

Mary Dye: The food supply that irrigated

agriculture produces is a matter of national security. The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted both the risks of supply chain disruptions and the importance of our irrigated agriculture sector.

Ninety percent of the potatoes that are produced in our region are fresh frozen and sold to restaurants. Frozen French fries are our second-largest export. In fact, our region is a major producer of the McDonald's global potato supply. Our potatoes go to restaurants and food service worldwide, including in China and India.

However, when the pandemic hit, processors suspended their production and processing contracts. It is not possible to quickly repackage for grocery so we had a billion pounds of potatoes pile up at the farm gates. This shows how important global supply chains are in enabling the economies of scale that support our national food supply.

The COVID-19 pandemic also demonstrates how a major economic disruption affects access to food. Since people were unemployed, we came within a week of running out of food supply to the food bank system. However, the producer community opened up its bins and donated over a million pounds of potatoes during the height of the COVID-19 crisis. The producers sent 20-ton semi loads to every single congressional district, often making deliveries multiple times. That goes to show the power of our agricultural industry when it's fully tooled up.

Irrigation Leader: Would you tell us about the Legislature's role in developing and funding the OGWRP?

Mary Dye: In 2017, Sens. (Mark) Schoesler and Warnick and I secured \$15 million from the state capital budget to start the first pipeline. In December of that year, I traveled to the nation's capital with a delegation that included the Washington State secretary of agriculture; the Washington Senate majority leader, Mark Schoesler, and local growers to ask for federal support. I have been to Washington, D.C. on these matters six times. On one occasion, I was invited to join county commissioners serving the OGWRP area at the White House. We met with Vice President Pence, (then-)Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and (then-counselor to the president) Kellyanne Conway. In 2019,

we were successful in securing another \$15 million for a second pipeline through the state capital budget. Later that year, I met with Bill Northey, the undersecretary for farm production and conservation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and with other USDA staff who work on irrigation projects Northey identified potential monies available through the 2019 Farm Bill.

Subsequently, we have been working with Roylene Comes At Night, the Washington conservationist of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), to submit our first municipal application for the NRCS' Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). We are hopeful that we will be chosen. Our steering committee for that application includes county commissioners, the Washington State secretary of agriculture, the head of the OCR, the head of the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID) and the ECBID's board members.

Irrigation Leader: What are the next steps for the Legislature?

Mary Dye: With the USDA partnering with the state, our intention is to use the RCPP process to start a larger watershed project through the USDA's PL-566 watershed program and to dig the final tie canal. If we do that, we can meet a lot of the conservation objectives envisioned by the NRCS. We can use that gravity-fed canal to reach the remaining infill acres on the Odessa aquifer that the pipelines we are building cannot easily reach. That would also allow us to pursue a groundwater recharge strategy similar to what is being done in Idaho's Snake River basin.

We can also make the case that advancing the OGRP addresses federal goals. One of the USDA's priorities is to remedy salination and by using deep-well water, farmers are salting the land. The other thing is that the acres that are being dropped off deep-well water without a replacement are going to dryland wheat in a two-year rotation, which causes the wind and water erosion issues I described earlier. A lot of that land is so short on rainfall that it's being put into the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and information from the National Agricultural Statistics Service suggests that about \$25 million a year is being paid to farmers for dryland winter wheat production through the CRP.



Sen. Mark Schoesler

STATE SEN. MARK SCHOESLER

Irrigation Leader: Please tell us about your background and how you came to serve in the Washington Legislature.

Mark Schoesler: I'm a fifth-generation farmer in Ritzville, Washington. My father's family were German Russians who immigrated here in the 1880s. My mother's family were German immigrants who came in the 1880s. I grew up in a small town. After community college, I worked briefly for the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation and then returned to the family farm. I've been farming full-time since 1978. I farm primarily dry land but have one small parcel that is irrigated with reclaimed water from the city. I've grown wheat, barley, canola and winter peas, and I run some beef cattle. I was first elected to the Washington House of Representatives in 1992. I went to the Senate in 2004. I've been Republican leader in both the majority and the minority since fall 2012.

Irrigation Leader: Would you tell us about the Legislature's role in developing and funding the OGWRP?

Mark Schoesler: The OGWRP was a recipient of the 2005 Columbia River Account, through which the Legislature bonded \$200 billion. This money was distributed through the entire Columbia River watershed, which includes the

Yakima Basin and parts of northern, central and eastern Washington. It supported a host of things, including conservation, fish habitat and water, and it positioned us to take advantage of President Obama's stimulus package. Probably the best project of the entire stimulus was the second Weber-Coulee siphon. We built an approximately \$30 million siphon that will benefit multiple generations. The taxpayers will be repaid because it's part of the irrigation district. A lot of the money in the Obama stimulus was spent on grinding and paving roads that had an effective life of 5-7 years and on paying bureaucrats' salaries. It was really temporary. The siphon, on the other hand, like many irrigation projects, put people to work building real stuff and benefitted future generations, and the money will actually be paid back.

Since then, the Legislature has supported the OGWRP through the OCR, for example by enhancing the East Low Canal. We have started design and some construction on pipelines to bring water into the critical areas and get the wells offline. I hope we eventually see a plan to finish the second half of the CBP.

Irrigation Leader: Have you traveled to Washington, D.C. to speak with people there about this work?

Mark Schoesler: I've been to D.C. with friends and constituents and have participated in meetings with the U.S. Department of the Interior and Sen. (Patty) Murray and her staff. I have also flown to Denver with meet with Interior and Reclamation staff there. I've made a couple of trips at my own personal expense to try (to) keep the message alive that we have a short-term plan, but we have to have a long-term plan to support the economic development and to sustain the drinking water of this entire region.

Irrigation Leader: What are the next steps for the Legislature?

Mark Schoesler: The Legislature has been appropriating money to incrementally move

the project along. I expect to work with the OCR to shape that policy now and during the session. My colleague Sen. Judy Warnick is one of my key people and is leading our work on the capital budget. We are working with Roylene Comes At Night of the NRCS to see how we can use NRCS funding mechanisms to help the growers buy the cost down. The OGWRP won't do Odessa-area farms any good if they cannot afford the water that is replacing the water that is rapidly going away. We are trying to buy the cost of the infrastructure down for a variety of good economic reasons.

Irrigation Leader: What will be the end result of the OGWRP?

Mark Schoesler: Our aim is to take 80,000 irrigated acres off groundwater and replace it with surface water until we see the vision of the CBP completed. We believe that if we can take over 70,000 acres off groundwater, we can stop the decline in the aquifer. At that point, our communities can move forward and our economy can prosper. If it is used for irrigated agriculture, the land in the area can produce thousands of dollars per acre per year; it makes less than \$100 an acre per year in the CRP or a few hundred dollars every other year if used for dry-land wheat. The multiplier effect is just incredible.

Irrigation Leader: What would the benefits of completing the CBP be?

Mark Schoesler: The benefits would be incredible. The land that is part of the CBP was sagebrush and jackrabbits when my father was growing up. Now Moses Lake is a town of 27,000 with diversified agricultural interests and other economic development. Every community in Adams, Franklin, Grant, and Lincoln counties has prospered because of the irrigation enabled by the CBP and the possibility of exporting crops to foreign countries. We are an agricultural linchpin because of that, and we have a lot more potential. The water right for the CBP is a federal and state water right in statute.



Sen. Judy Warnick

STATE SEN. JUDY WARNICK

Irrigation Leader: Please tell us about your background and how you came to serve in the Washington Legislature.

Judy Warnick: I serve the 13th Legislative District as a senator. My legislative career has primarily focused on agriculture and business. I grew up on a family dairy farm, so I have agriculture in my blood. I met a couple of U.S. senators when I was growing up, so I knew that they were real people, but I never thought that I would be given the opportunity to serve in a legislature. It was a surprise when I was asked to run. I won a race for a seat in the Washington House of Representatives in 2006 and moved over to the Senate in 2014. I have also been fortunate to be named to the Senate's Agricultural Committee. I was on the Agriculture Committee in the House for the eight years that I served there, and I've been either chair or ranking member of the Ag Committee in the Senate. My district begins at the top of Snoqualmie Pass, which is at the border of King County, and extends across central Washington to Spokane County. It's a wide swath of the state. Each of Washington's legislative districts has the same number of people, but I joke that ours has more dirt, both because of its area and because it's primarily rural.

Most people think that Washington has lots of water because of its reputation for rain, but it does have serious water resources issues. There is more rain on the western side of the state; central Washington is more desert-like, with an average of less than 10 inches of annual rainfall. Without Grand Coulee Dam and the irrigation system it supplies, there would be nothing but sagebrush and sand in our area.

Irrigation Leader: What is the Legislature's role in developing and funding the OGWRP?

Judy Warnick: The Legislature's role is to ensure that Ecology and the OCR have adequate funding to continue this project. Both Ecology and the OCR are funded through the state budgets. The current director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, Derek Sandison, was the first director of the OCR, and he has been helpful in his current position because he understands the need for water. The Columbia River Initiative was launched by then-Gov. (Gary) Locke in 2001, and since then, the Legislature has invested \$120 million in the OCR. The Legislature has periodically continued funding additional special projects, most recently a \$15 million lateral line in the 22.1 area. We allocated that \$15 million separately from the OCR to help the OGWRP get started earlier in that area because the farmers there were more affected by aquifer depletion and were ready to contribute matching personal funds.

Legislators are looking for partnerships and investigating how to apply for federal funds under the RCPP and other programs. It's a huge undertaking, and we are trying to determine how to take small steps during these tough economic times to make the additional funding go the furthest. It would be great to get the entire \$300 million or whatever it takes to finish the project all at once, but that's not feasible. We are trying to be realistic, to time our requests appropriately and to prioritize our projects.

Irrigation Leader: Would you tell us about your work with your federal and state partners as well as local farmers to support the OGWRP?

Judy Warnick: Legislators have met with local farmers, the local irrigation district, and the Columbia Basin Development League (CBDL), which covers all of the above: farmers, irrigators, and state agencies. I have traveled to Washington, D.C., twice to meet with our federal legislators. The OGWRP is supported by both sides of the political aisle. We just need to figure out how we prioritize our requests and how much we ask for. We were going to go back again this summer, but the COVID-19 restrictions prevented us. We are taking a strategic approach by prioritizing the most important projects rather than asking for the whole amount of funding. I have been working not only with Ecology but with the CBDL, the ECBID, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the conservation districts.

Irrigation Leader: What are the next steps for the Legislature today?

Judy Warnick: We are working with all the stakeholders to develop a more comprehensive plan on the state and federal levels. It's being led by both the state and the county conservation districts. Harold Crose, who is a former NRCS employee, is taking the lead as he understands the process and knows what funds are available. In addition to reaching out to our federal partners, we are looking to our state budget as well, though because of COVID-19, we are not sure what to expect when we go back to the legislative session in January 2021. State-invested funds are allocated through the capital budget. We'll be asking for matching funds to not only continue investing in the protection of the aquifer, but to match the applications being requested from federal programs. The next step for me as a legislator is to advocate for the protection of our water resources, to help find more funding to match the federal application, and to support the growers' efforts to do the same.

WELCOME JON ERICKSON TO THE LEAGUE'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES!



The Columbia Basin Development League welcomed Othello City Council member Jon Erickson to its Board of Trustees during its monthly meeting in mid-November. Erickson joins the League replacing Stephen McFadden, who moved to Pasco after a distinguished stint as a League trustee and as Economic Development Director for Adams County.

Erickson was elected to the Othello City Council in 2019 and will serve that city until 2023. He has lived in Othello since 2015 and works for the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District as project manager of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Project. Therefore, he comes into the League with a substantial amount of knowledge regarding some of the League's most pivotal topics.

"I am excited and honored," Erickson said of his appointment to the League. "The League's mission and what they do for the area is nothing short of wonderful. To have the chance to be a part of it, offer my expertise and assist in their efforts is a good feeling."

Erickson is also the president of Haida Management Services, LLC, a construction company based in his hometown.

Given that Erickson is fulfilling a term left incomplete by an outgoing trustee, his appointment became effective immediately. Incoming trustees Russ Kehl and Terry Thompson, elected during the League's annual meeting in early November, will each serve a full term, and therefore do not take office until January of 2021.

WELCOME NEW OFFICERS OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN DEVELOPMENT LEAGUE!

A new year is afoot, and the Columbia Basin Development League is ready, with a seamless transfer to a distinguished cadre of new officers and leaders.

During its monthly board meeting, the Trustees elected new officers for 2021.

Current Vice Chair Matt Harris will serve as chairman, with Dale Pomeroy as Vice Chair, Clark Kagele returning as Secretary, and Orman Johnson returning as Treasurer. Current

chairman Mark Stedman will serve as Past Chair. Harris works for the Washington State Potato Commission, Pomeroy works for the Port of Warden and Kagele and Johnson are farmers, the former from Odessa and the latter from Connell.

Besides its officers, the Board chose its executive committee for 2021, which is comprised of officers plus four at-large positions. The at-large members are Bill Wagoner from Quincy; Rich Burres from

Kennewick and Kevin Lyle from Othello, with a fourth position to be filled in January.

This open spot was to belong to Stephen McFadden, who resigned from the board earlier this month and took a job in Pasco. Prior to electing new officers, the sitting officers voted to accept McFadden's resignation.

All elected officers and executive committee members will begin serving on Jan. 1, 2021.

**DID
YOU
KNOW?**

history & facts about the Columbia Basin Project

Photo credit: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The Grand Coulee Dam, “the mightiest thing ever built by a man,” according to the song by American singer-songwriter, Woody Guthrie

From farmers to businesses, cities, and towns; from people on vacation to wildlife and flora, they all benefit from the Columbia Basin Project. If you live, work, or play in Washington, the work of the Columbia Basin Project is crucial to you!



-
- Grand Coulee Dam was built over 75 years ago to help satisfy the nation's need for electricity at a time of growing manufacturing, industry, and war. Construction started in 1933 and finished in 1942. First water flowed over the spillway on June 1, 1942.
 - Grand Coulee Dam was once the largest concrete structure in the world: 550 feet tall (almost two football fields) and 5,223 feet long—just short of a mile.
 - Building the dam foundation required excavating more than 22 million cubic yards of earth and stone--enough to fill 10 Rose Bowls.
 - Grand Coulee Dam is the cornerstone of infrastructure that comprises the Columbia Basin Project. It is the most powerful dam in the United States, no other dam has a higher capacity to produce megawatts of power. The dam's total producing capacity reaches 6,809 megawatts. One megawatt would be enough to power nearly 800 homes for a year.
 - Grand Coulee Dam's average annual output is about 2,300 megawatts: enough power to continuously supply two cities the size of Seattle. California's Lake Oroville Dam can produce 819 megawatts. Hoover Dam can produce up to 2,080 megawatts.
 - The dam's electricity served to power aluminum smelters, airplane factories and a nuclear power plant--which made plutonium used in the first atomic bombs helping end World War II.
 - In almost eight decades, Grand Coulee Dam has helped nearly 700,000 acres of land receive irrigation water, making it possible to grow everything from tree fruits to wheat, potatoes, alfalfa, timothy, canola, sunflowers, and mint. Grant County is the leading potato-growing county in the nation.
 - Irrigation begins with water from Lake Roosevelt behind the dam being pumped into another reservoir, Banks Lake. From there, it flows into a series of canals and pipes, some of them hundreds of miles to the south. Thousands of farms in Washington state receive this irrigation water.
 - The John W Keys III Pump-Generating plant at Grand Coulee Dam was completed in 1973 and contains 12 pumps that lift water from the Columbia River, up a hillside and into Banks Lake. Six of the 12 pumps are reversible to generate hydroelectricity if needed.
 - Grand Coulee Dam helps with flood control, especially in years with lots of rain and snow. Lake Roosevelt, the dam's main reservoir, can store up to five million acre-feet of water--enough to cover a surface four times the size of Grand Canyon National Park in one foot of water.

This is the second installment of the League's "Did You Know?" e-series. To grow stakeholder insight and knowledge about the Columbia Basin Project, these periodic emails feature facts and information related to the Project.

If you have an idea, fact, story, or video about the Columbia Basin Project, email us at info@cddl.org.

ELECTIONS ARE OVER: WHAT WILL THE LEGISLATURE LOOK LIKE IN 2021?

By Mike Schwisow, Government Relations Director, Columbia Basin Development League

The League can expect to see little change in Washington State government following the 2020 elections. While polling indicated the possibility of a blue wave, it never materialized. Most Washington legislative districts are very predictably Republican or Democratic with a handful of swing districts where the battle for seats occurs and candidates gather large amounts of campaign contributions. This election was no exception to that.

The House of Representatives maintained a 57-41 Democratic majority with the R's and D's exchanging a seat each. In the 19th District in southwest Washington, Democrat Brian Blake, the long-time chairman of the House Rural Development, Ag & Natural Resources Committee lost his seat in a district that has been trending Republican. Republican Luanne Van Werven from Lynden in the 42nd District lost her seat in a district trending Democratic. The Democrats maintain a significant majority and will set the agenda for the House.

The story in the Senate was similar. Each side lost a seat, or each side won a seat depending on how you look at it, but in the end the Democrats maintain a 28-21 majority. Again, the trending 19th District came into play where long-serving Senator Dean Takko lost his seat and gave the state GOP a sweep of the District's legislative delegation. Republican's Steve O'Ban lost his seat in the 28th District, (University Place in Pierce County.) That District now has all Democratic legislators.

Although the majorities of the House and Senate will remain the same, some radical changes loom for the 2021 Legislation Session, due to the COVID pandemic: The Legislature will hold its first virtual session. Conducting a Legislative Session is a complex operation involving people traveling to Olympia from all over the state, meeting with legislators and testifying at hearings. Hundreds of staffers support the operations to make it all run smoothly. It's a very procedural type of operation, set in tradition and very structured. This time around, everything will be virtual, which will be unusual for all involved.

Legislative administrators have been doing trial runs conducting hearings, floor debates and votes on bills. Many legislators from rural areas of the state worry about having adequate broadband capacity to participate. Several have indicated they will come to Olympia and participate from their offices in the House and Senate Office Buildings. The simple logistics of trying to conduct business virtually will be a challenge and it will not be possible to take up everything the Legislature would in a regular session.

Leadership in the House and Senate has advised their members to consider only a limited number of bills this session. This is the year that the Operating Budget is written, so that is a given. The effects of the pandemic have left a big hole in funds available for the 2021-23 biennium. Altogether, these changes lead many to predict that this will be a session like no one has ever seen before.

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The work of the Columbia Basin Development League, championing the Columbia Basin Project and serving as its fiercely committed voice and beacon for 56 years, could not be possible without the support of our distinguished sponsors and members. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, League staff and officers, the Columbia Development League expresses its deepest gratitude to the following organizations and individuals for their aid, endorsement and commitment to the League's work and advocacy, in particular during the planning, preparation and execution of our 2020 Annual Meeting.

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