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UNRAVELING THE COMPLEXITIES OF HB 1752: A DEEP DIVE INTO WATER RIGHTS

By Gavin Pielow, Director of Government Affairs

The Columbia Basin Development League (CBDL) brings attention to the technical details surrounding House Bill 1752. At its core, this bill proposes a technical adjustment aimed at refining the current water management practices within the Columbia Basin Project (CBP). This legislation is a response to specific challenges faced by the CBP irrigation districts and aims to address these challenges through a measured and technical adjustment.

Historical Context

The roots of the CBP’s water rights trace back to the early 20th century, with the Washington Legislature recognizing the benefits of Federal Reclamation projects in 1905. The enactment of Chapter 88, Laws of 1905, later codified as RCW 90.40 – Water Rights of United States, granted the power of eminent domain to acquire the right to

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use water for projects like CBP. This statute aimed to coordinate state laws with the 1902 Reclamation Act and establish procedures for project development.

Construction of the Grand Coulee Dam commenced in 1933, and by 1941, it was completed. However, the development of the CBP’s irrigation infrastructure was delayed due to World War II-related priorities. The project, one of the largest Bureau of Reclamation undertakings in the U.S., now serves around 680,000 acres, contributing significantly to Washington’s irrigation landscape.

Shared Use and Federal-State Dynamics:

The CBP operates under a unique framework, involving a contractual relationship between the United States and three districts: East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Quincy Irrigation District, and South Columbia Basin Irrigation District. These districts, organized under state law, maintain and operate federally owned infrastructure, with landowners funding various costs, including federal operational expenses.

The United States holds water rights for the CBP in trust for the districts and water users, similar to municipal water purveyors. The 1933 withdrawal of unappropriated waters from the Columbia River laid the foundation for hydropower generation and irrigation, with specific allocations for each purpose.

Efficiency, Improvements, and the ACQ Challenge:

Over the years, CBP has evolved, incorporating advancements in on-farm technology and infrastructure. The project’s efficiency is evident in its ability to irrigate additional authorized acres without increasing the instantaneous or annual quantity of water diversion from the Columbia River.

However, the challenge lies in the outdated acreage limits set based on rill irrigation methods. Changes in on-farm irrigation technology and infrastructure improvements have outpaced the original design, necessitating adjustments. The Annual Consumptive Quantity (ACQ) test, introduced later in legislative history, has become a point of contention. While applicable to typical transactions, its practicality for federally authorized irrigation projects like CBP is questioned.

Understanding HB 1752

HB 1752 emerges as a response to these challenges, proposing technical adjustments aimed at refining the current water management practices within CBP. Let’s break down the key provisions:

1. Acreage Modification Within Existing Allocations:

- HB 1752 proposes allowing the Bureau of Reclamation to modify the acreage under irrigation without increasing the total water rights allocations. This technical adjustment aims to enhance flexibility within the existing framework.

2. Exemption from ACQ Calculation:

- Recognizing the complexities associated with the ACQ calculation, the bill exempts certain changes from this requirement, streamlining procedural aspects without compromising water rights integrity.

3. Department of Ecology Review:

- The bill mandates a thorough review by the Department of Ecology to ensure that these changes do not impair existing water rights, emphasizing a commitment to fairness in resource allocation.



QUOTE OF THE QUARTER

To achieve greatness, start where you are, use what you have, and do what you can.

- Arthur Ashe






Representative Mary Dye (R-Pomeroy), primary sponsor of HB 1752.

Washington State's Unanimous Bipartisan Commitment

As we look ahead to the legislative journey of HB 1752, the outlook is promising, underlining a remarkable bipartisan commitment from Washington State to the Columbia Basin Project (CBP). The bill achieved unanimous support in the House with a resounding 97-0 vote, emphasizing the widespread acknowledgment of the CBP's importance.

Moving seamlessly through the Senate, HB 1752 further solidified its bipartisan backing with a unanimous 49-0 vote. This unanimous support underscores the shared understanding among legislators about the significance of addressing the challenges faced by CBP irrigation districts and the potential positive impact of the proposed technical adjustments.

As the bill progresses through procedural steps, including signing by the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate (Lt. Governor), and subsequently reaching the Governor's desk, the unanimity achieved in both chambers reflects a collective commitment to enhancing system efficiency and economic output while preserving the environmental integrity of the Columbia Basin Project. Stay tuned for further updates on this bipartisan journey towards advancing water rights management in the CBP. these challenges through a measured and technical adjustment. 

OLYMPIA ADVOCACY DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Columbia Basin Development League (CBDL) traveled to Olympia in January for its Lobby Days effort, a vital event for advocating key issues related to the Columbia Basin Project (CBP). Despite challenges posed by winter weather, the event was marked by significant developments and strategic discussions, with both in-person and virtual participation from CBDL representatives.

Emphasizing the Value of Our Projects

Conversations in Olympia were centered around the critical role of the CBP and the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) in supporting our region's agricultural vitality and water resource sustainability. We communicated the direct impact of these projects on our state-wide community, highlighting how they bolster economic stability, environmental stewardship, and food security.

Legislative Highlight: House Bill 1752

A significant focus of CBDL's advocacy was House Bill 1752, a legislative effort aimed at refining the process for changing water rights within the CBP. Bill sponsors included Representative Mary Dye (R – 9th) and Representative Tom Dent (R – 13th). Here's what makes HB 1752 a needed technical fix to existing regulations:

- **Empower Expansion:** It enables the Bureau of Reclamation to apply for a change to increase acres served without doing the required annual consumptive quantity (ACQ) calculation which is essentially impossible for a shared use water right that allows recapture and reuse of operational spill, seepage and return flows.
- **Streamline Regulatory Processes:** By exempting specific changes within the CBP from the ACQ calculation, it removes a significant regulatory hurdle, fostering a more adaptive approach to water management.
- **Safeguard Water Rights:** By exempting a change to increase acres from the ACQ calculation, it would allow the CBP Irrigation Districts to take advantage of changes in on-farm irrigation efficiency and conservation actions to maximize the delivery capacity of the existing infrastructure and water rights.

CBDL's focus on HB 1752 in Olympia was driven by its potential to unlock new possibilities for the CBP, supporting both the environment and our agricultural community's needs.

Championing Change: The \$5.5 Million Push for EL 22.1

Amidst the limited availability of capital budget appropriations during

Continued on Page 4


Washington State Legislature’s biannual short legislative session, CBDL has also been pursuing \$5.5 million in the supplemental budget for EL 22.1, a crucial component of the OGWRP, which encompasses:

- **Canal Pump Station:** The heart of the system, ensuring efficient water delivery.
- **Electrical Power Substation & Booster Pump Stations:** Backbone of operational efficiency, powering the entire irrigation network.
- **Large Diameter Pipeline:** Designed to sustainably irrigate 16,000 acres of fertile land.

This initiative was bolstered by the technical expertise and support of the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District and the EL 22.1 landowners’ readiness for construction funding.

Recognizing the unique constraints of a short legislative session, CBDL’s advocacy underscores the importance of strategic, targeted investments in projects ready for immediate impact. This funding request builds on the state’s previous contributions, which have successfully doubled construction capital for OGWRP, highlighting a track record of impactful investment and collaboration with partners like the Columbia Basin Conservation District and USDA NRCS.

Itinerary and Key Engagements

CBDL’s agenda in Olympia was packed with critical meetings spanning three days, from January 17th to January 19th, 2024. Key discussions were held with influential legislators like Sen. Judy Warnick, Rep. Peter Abbarno, Sen. Mark Schoesler, Rep. Tom Dent, Rep. Alex Ybarra, and Rep. Mary Dye among others. These meetings centered around the ongoing development and funding of the CBP and OGWRP, highlighting their importance to Washington State’s economy and food security. 

L 22.1: MAKING THE CASE FOR STATE INVESTMENT DURING SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET YEAR

Leveraging Last Year’s Success

Momentum continues from last year, when the Washington State Legislature allocated a record \$32.8 million in the 2023-35 Capital Budget for the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) in addition to other funding for the Columbia Basin Project. This monumental investment was leveraged and served as the foundation for successful grant applications by the Columbia Basin Conservation District for federal funds, leading to \$39 million from the USDA NRCS RCPP.

That \$39 million is funding:

- **EL 84.7** Landowner Extension Mainline (\$19,666,666) [7,138 acres]
- **EL 80.6** Landowner Extension Mainline (\$13,100,000) [5,222 acres]
- **EL 86.4** On-Farm Project (\$7,200,000) [5,426 acres]

This notable federal response not only validates the commitment of the state and numerous local partners but also sets a compelling precedent for collaborative efforts in sustainable water management. These funds are pivotal in facilitating OGWRP’s transition of 87,500 acres served by deep wells to a more sustainable water supply.

Continuing the Momentum This Year

Last year’s impressive investment serves as a robust argument for continued funding. However, the Washington State Legislature is now in a supplementary budget year.

Despite the constraints of a supplementary budget year, CBDL has

been closely engaging with stakeholders, partners, and policymakers to extend last year’s success. The supplemental request for Washington State’s capital budget investment in OGWRP during the 2024 short legislative session stands at \$5,500,000 - a strategic request informed by 22.1 landowner readiness, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District’s technical expertise, and Columbia Basin Conservation District’s anticipated future grant requests. As of the writing of this article, budget outcomes were not yet finalized.

EL 22.1: The Next Stage of OGWRP


By June 2024, the EL 22.1 system is expected to be construction-ready. This project targets the construction of a pump station and pipeline system, drawing water from the existing CBP East Low Canal and effectively replacing the usage of the fast-depleting Odessa Aquifer groundwater. \$5 million of 2024’s state funding requests are detailed toward:

- **Canal Pump Station:** The heart of the system, ensuring efficient water delivery.
- **Electrical Power Substation & Booster Pump Stations:** Backbone of operational efficiency, powering the entire irrigation network.
- **Large Diameter Pipeline:** Designed to sustainably irrigate 16,000 acres of fertile land, this pipeline is the conduit for progress.

The remaining \$500,000 of the proposed supplemental appropriation is sought to commence the design of additional distribution systems to qualify for future USDA NRCS grant funding opportunities.

Columbia Basin Conservation District (CBCD) plans to submit additional NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) applications

for the OGWRP when the next application period opens. CBCD anticipates that NRCS will announce the application period at the end of March. CBCD is working with ECBID, other partners, and our legislators to secure partner contributions for the applications.

As funding is sought for the EL 22.1 project, CBDL continues to underscore the strategic importance of the investments made toward OGWRP. The first distribution system, EL 47.5, serving 10,500 acres, recently completed its third operational season and is showcasing operational success, advancing from concept to reality. 

CONNECTING BRIDGES: EARMARKS AND INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE

Pending Appropriations: A Glimpse into Future Development

In a collaborative move toward bolstering regional infrastructure, federal earmarked appropriations for the replacement of key bridges along the East Low Canal (ELC) hold promise for advancing the success of the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program (OGWRP) while maintaining local transportation networks. While these FY 24 earmarks are not yet finalized with the President's signature, they demonstrate what can be accomplished in a unified effort.

The Background and Need for ELC Bridge Improvements

The ELC widening within the CBP is crucial for delivering reliable surface water to replace depleting groundwater resources. However, this expansion necessitated changes to bridges crossing the canal. Originally built in the 1950s, these bridges are not long enough to accommodate the widened canals, and thus, create a bottle neck at each bridge crossing.

The sheer scale of the ELC widening project presented a significant financial challenge to successfully replace or improve what began as a total of nine bridges. Recognizing the wider impact on the CBP and regional agricultural sustainability, stakeholders like the local counties, East Columbia Basin Irrigation District (ECBID), Reclamation, Washington State, CBDL, and many others joined forces in support of federal funding, leading to the recent promising developments with earmarked appropriations. Meanwhile, one of the nine bridges was previously replaced by ECBID, and Sackman Rd. Bridge in Adams County, having received FY 23 funding is currently in process for replacement.

Pending FY 24 Appropriation Earmarks for Bridge Improvements

Road W Bridge in Grant County

In the Senate's Transportation, Housing & Urban Development appropriations bill, \$3,888,000 is allocated for the replacement of the Road W bridge in Grant County. This strategic investment, thanks to support from Senator Patty Murray, enhances infrastructure resilience and exemplifies a commitment to tangible improvements for the Columbian Basin Project. Efforts are already underway at the Road W Bridge to prepare for replacement.

Booker Road Development in Adams County

In the House equivalent of the Senate appropriations bill, an earmark of \$3,978,000 focuses on Adams County's Booker Road bridge replacement. Thanks to the support of Congresswoman Cathy McMorris-Rodgers, this is a response to collaborative advocacy efforts and underscores the cooperative spirit within the CBP and its extensive support network.

Preliminary Design for Multiple Bridges in Adams County

The Senate bill also designates \$1,700,000 for the engineering and design of five bridges in Adams County. Senators Murray and Cantwell played a role in advocating for these proactive steps, recognizing the importance of long-term planning.


Delayed Appropriations from Federal Continuing Resolutions:

As of the writing of this article, the current appropriation bills await final approval. We acknowledge the impact of recent continuing resolutions (CRs) in delaying the process. While five CRs were passed in the past year, highlighting the complexities of the appropriations process, the current deadline for most agencies is March 8th, 2024, offering hope for swift progress.

20% Match from Washington State

Highlighting Washington State's commitment to the development of the CBP, the state has positioned itself as a crucial 20% cost-share partner in current and future federal funding requests for bridge replacement. Recognizing the significance of this partnership, the State Legislature allocated \$4.15 million in the 2023 Transportation Budget specifically for matching funds. This proactive approach demonstrates the state's dedication to supporting the federal initiatives aimed at replacing bridges along the East Low Canal. Thanks are extended to CBP allies in the Washington State Legislature, in particular, Sen. Schoesler, Rep. Dye, and Rep. Dent.

Looking Towards the Future:

Although FY 24 is not yet complete, attention is being turned to the FY 25 process. CBDL is working, again, with Grant and Adams Counties, ECBID, Reclamation, Congressional offices, and others to address the next priorities in the line of remaining bridge improvement needs. 

UPDATE ON HEALTHY WATERSHEDS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES ACT


The Healthy Watersheds Healthy Communities Act, initially introduced as S.2636 in the U.S. Senate, now has a companion bill in the House as H.R.6497. The bill aims to modernize the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program (PL-566), with a specific focus on benefiting local communities. It includes provisions that prioritize projects with multiple conservation and public benefits, support irrigation districts, and encourage interagency coordination, among other key aspects.

The collective efforts of Senators Michael Bennet, Deb Fischer, and Jeff Merkley in introducing this bill have been widely recognized and praised by various agricultural and conservation organizations. The proposed legislation has the potential to streamline planning processes and enhance local control over watershed management, aligning closely with the values and objectives of Columbia Basin Project stakeholders.

The provisions outlined in the Healthy Watersheds Healthy Communities Act include:

- **Broadening Eligibility:** By explicitly including irrigation districts as qualifying Local Organizations, the bill expands accessibility to vital assistance under the law. This inclusion paves the way for comprehensive support of initiatives like the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP) and analogous projects.
- **Encouraging Coordination:** Facilitating interagency coordination by allowing non-USDA federal funding for local/state matches denotes a collaborative approach, enabling a more unified effort in ensuring the success of watershed initiatives.
- **Streamlining Processes:** Shifting the focus from the national office to state conservationists, allowing them more oversight, streamlines plan reviews and facilitates efficient decision-making.
- **Adapting to Modern Challenges:** Recognizing the evolving landscape, the act acknowledges increased costs by raising the statutory cap for project approvals, a crucial step in addressing the challenges posed by escalating material and labor costs.

In alignment with the national advocacy of the Family Farm Alliance and Western Ag and Conservation Coalition CBDL underscores the strategic importance of this legislation locally.

With the bill now being considered in both chambers of Congress, the immediate focus involves galvanizing continued support through close communication with congressional offices and other influencers. 

FARM BILL UPDATE: IMPACT AND INSIGHTS

In November of 2023 a one-year extension of the 2023 Farm Bill, to September 2024, was signed by President Biden. The extension provides a degree of stability, but it also underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive, long-term legislative framework to address the evolving needs of our agricultural communities and initiatives, including the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) and the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program (OGWRP).

The decision for this extension stems from the complexities that have stymied the formulation of a new bill. The divergence between the House and Senate persists on several pivotal issues, including the allocation of funds for farm programs, the scope of conservation programs, and the trajectory of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Implications for OGWRP

The Farm Bill funds programs that not only provide support to farmers but also plays a pivotal role in shaping conservation programs that are vital to the region. Programs like NRCS's Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations Program, also known as "PL-566", cannot evolve in line with pressing challenges such as the depletion of the Odessa Aquifer without movement on the Farm Bill.

Looking forward, the path to a new Farm Bill remains uncertain. The prevailing political landscape suggests a challenging road to consensus.

Brief background of PL-566 funding and its relevance:

Origins and Purpose:

- Enacted in 1954, PL-566 aimed to address soil erosion, flood damage, and water resource management concerns on a watershed basis.
- It initially focused on smaller watersheds, but later expanded to encompass larger projects addressing multiple resource issues.

Funding Mechanisms:

- PL-566 is funded through annual appropriations from Congress and mandatory annual funding as a result of the 2018 Farm Bill.
- The amount of appropriated funding available varies depending on national priorities, budget constraints, and competition from other programs.
- Traditionally, projects receiving PL-566 funding have been subject to a 75% federal cost-share, 25% local sponsor cost-share ratio. However, provisions exist for increased federal cost-share in limited resource areas.

Farm Bill History:

- The Farm Bill, a comprehensive piece of legislation addressing various agricultural and food issues, periodically reauthorizes and amends existing programs like PL-566.
- The most recent Farm Bill, the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, reaffirmed PL-566's importance in addressing rural water resource challenges and authorized funding for the program through 2023.
- The upcoming Farm Bill's overdue reauthorization is expected to continue PL-566 and potentially make adjustments to address emerging issues like climate change and water scarcity.

OGWRP Needs and Program Challenges:

- Upon completion of an NRCS OGWRP Watershed Plan/ Environmental Impact Study, OGWRP can be eligible for PL-566 funding for construction,

But:

- PL-566 has endured flak for its complex application process, competition for limited funding, and potential environmental impacts of certain projects.
- Concerns exist about the program's long-term sustainability given annual appropriations and potential shifts in national priorities.

Looking Ahead

The challenges that exist with PL-566 are opportunities for improvement if the Farm Bill can be prioritized by Congress. CBDL continues to monitor developments and advocate for attention to needed improvements along with regional and national partners. [B](#)

NURTURING AGRICULTURAL LITERACY: SB 5813 AND THE FUTURE OF THE COLUMBIA BASIN

The Washington State Legislature's 2024 Legislative Session saw a unique proposed legislation to potentially shape the educational future of the Columbia Basin and like ag regions across the state. Proposed by Senator Dozier, SB 5813 seeks to introduce agricultural literacy instruction for students, fostering a deeper understanding of the agricultural industry and its multifaceted contributions.

About SB 5813: Milestone Legislation

The introduction of SB 5813 signals a crucial acknowledgment of

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*TIMES/SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED UPON NETWORK SCHEDULE. CHECK STATION PROGRAMMING TO CONFIRM AIR TIMES.

agriculture's indispensable role in our state and communities and addresses a diminishing knowledge of agriculture, especially in urban and suburban settings. As of the writing of this article, the bill had not moved out of committee, and is not expected to advance, but it is nevertheless worth understanding. SB 5813 proposes to integrate agricultural literacy into the curriculum for students in grades seven through twelve, offering a comprehensive understanding of the industry's economic, environmental, and societal dimensions.

The bill mandates the inclusion of agricultural literacy instruction, slated to commence from the 2025-26 school year. The curriculum aims to cover diverse facets of agriculture, from operational intricacies to its broader impact on the economy, environment, technology, lifestyle, and its interconnectedness with livestock.

Why SB 5813 Matters to the Columbia Basin

The Columbia Basin is home to a rich agricultural heritage, with nearly 700,000 acres of farmland currently irrigated and over 300,000 acres awaiting the necessary infrastructure for irrigation.

Bills like SB 5813 will play a crucial role in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of agriculture among the next generation. This legislation is not just about education; it's about cultivating knowledge and understanding and ensuring the sustainable growth of regions like the Columbia Basin. [B](#)



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THE CASE FOR CBP FOOD SECURITY

As we witness the ever-evolving challenges plaguing agricultural landscapes across the nation, it becomes increasingly apparent that the value of the Columbia Basin Project (CBP) is not just about local prosperity but integral to bolstering national food security in times of urbanization and environmental uncertainty.

Climate events in various agricultural regions contributing to issues ranging from water scarcity to soil degradation to wildfire damage serve as poignant reminders of the vulnerabilities inherent in our food systems. In light of these challenges, the CBP stands out as a beacon of sustainable agricultural practice and food security.

Connecting the Dots: Lessons from Across the Nation

As the Colorado River faces increasing strain from drought and overuse, the imperative of sustainable water resource management has come to the forefront of national attention. California, a major user of Colorado River water, has been compelled to make significant cuts to its water usage, reflecting the severity of current issues and concerns.

California's reliance on Colorado River water has been a subject of intense scrutiny, with the state recently agreeing to conserve 643,000 acre-feet of water through 2025 in exchange for \$295 million in federal funding. This agreement is part of a broader effort among the Lower Colorado River Basin states to reduce their water usage by at least 3 million acre-feet through 2026. The ongoing dispute over how to allocate water cuts among the states dependent on the Colorado River underscores the complex and contentious nature of water resource management in the region.

In the arid West, water scarcity looms as a significant concern, posing formidable challenges to irrigation-dependent farming communities. Instances of drought across several states underscore the fragility of water resources and the urgency to adopt water-efficient agricultural practices—a realm where the CBP's innovative water management strategies and relatively drought resistant circumstance shine.

Recent developments in congressional discussions echo the struggles faced by agricultural regions grappling with and climate-related challenges. These issues threaten the very foundation of agricultural productivity in many areas.

The Value of the Columbia Basin Project

In contrast, the Columbia Basin Project offers a compelling alternative. The Project uses just 3% of the overall Columbia River flow to irrigate nearly 700,000 acres. In some instances, water is reused multiple times

on its way south from Grand Coulee Dam to Pasco, and every year, irrigation technology is creating increased efficiencies in water deliver and on-farm uses.

With its track record of responsible water usage and agricultural productivity—and the opportunity to provide for another 300,000 acres of irrigated food production—The Columbia Basin Project can be part of the solution as we navigate the complex and interconnected challenges contributing to an ever-growing concern about our nation's food security. By drawing on the circumstances of the Columbia Basin Project, and by advocating for policies that align with its principles, we can chart a course towards a more secure and sustainable future for our food production.

Context

Irrigated agriculture has long been a cornerstone of economic development and food production in the American West. The Columbia Basin Project, one of the most significant irrigation projects in the nation, has played a pivotal role in supporting the agricultural productivity and economic vitality of not only the local region and state, but of nation.

The late 1940s witnessed a surge in public investment in irrigation projects, leading to the expansion of irrigated acreage in the American West. Today, the Columbia Basin's irrigated agriculture remains a linchpin of the region's economy, contributing substantially to food and value-added product production:

- ***\$2.66 billion in annual crop production value***
- ***\$2.67 billion in local animal production and food processing***
- ***65,900 jobs nationwide***
- ***\$4 billion in annual labor income***
- ***\$1.29 billion in total annual tax revenue***

Amidst the backdrop of challenges in other agricultural regions, the significance of the Columbia Basin Project in ensuring food security and economic resilience becomes even more pronounced. As climate change and water shortages increasingly impact agricultural productivity elsewhere, the need to supplement that dwindling productivity has never been more urgent or obviously possible as it is within the Columbia Basin Project.

Advocating for a Resilient Future

Strengthening the case for supporting the existing Columbia Basin Project and developing the remaining potential is not merely about local aspirations but a collective endeavor toward bolstering national food security, ensuring sustainable agricultural practices, and fortifying our resilience against environmental adversities.

As congressional discussions unfold, aligning with efforts to address water scarcity and sustainable agricultural practices nationwide, advocating for the CBP and highlighting its successes becomes pivotal. But it takes many voices, united as one, to champion this cause. Join the League in making the case for the CBP. Tell someone, new, about its value. [!\[\]\(19d44b37fb4fa155bf9d60c77a3d3cb2_img.jpg\)](#)

CONFERENCE AND 59TH ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

The League held its conference and 59th annual meeting on November 14, 2023 in Moses Lake, WA. During the annual meeting, the League announced the outcomes of 2024 board elections including three first-term trustees. Elected and re-elected board members represent about one-third of the total board and began their terms on January 1st.

Returning board members:

- Mike LaPlant (Ephrata)
- Kevin Lyle (Othello)
- Mark Booker (Othello)
- Chip Dobson (Mattawa)
- Vicki Gordon (Pasco)
- Milt Miller (Moses Lake)

First-term board members:

- David Dormier (Quincy)
- Derek Friehe (Moses Lake)
- Mike Garza (Othello)

Dormier is an Engineering Manager with Erlandsen & Associates and sits on the Quincy City Council. Friehe is the General Manager of Friehe Farms, located just outside of Moses Lake, growing over 10 different crops. Garza serves as Adams County Commissioner for District #3 and has served as the Othello School Board President and Chairman of the Columbia Basin Health Association.

The League also honored outgoing board members Benjamin Leavitt (Warden), Russ Kehl (Quincy), and John Moody (Ephrata).

Moody was also the recipient of the League's Trustee Emeritus Honor and was recognized for his decades of commitment to the Columbia Basin Project throughout both his career with the Bureau of Reclamation as well as in retirement.

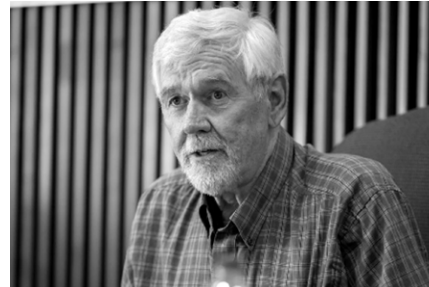
Lad Irrigation was awarded Honorary Life Member status by the League for its ongoing dedication to innovating and advancing irrigation in the Columbia Basin Region, as well as its consistent support of the League.

Finally, Harold Crose was awarded the League's Perseverance Award for his pivotal role in the success of the Odessa Groundwater Replacement Program following his illustrious career with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and now with the Greater Columbia Basin Conservation District.

The League also honored the life and career of Board Treasurer, Past Chair, and long-time supporter of the League, Orman Johnson, who passed away in early November. His memory serves as a testament to his impact not only on the Columbia Basin Project and region but to all those who knew him.

The Conference itself was full of informative presentations from speakers from across the state and region, featuring keynote speakers Dan Keppen, Executive Director of the Family Farm Alliance, and Jennifer Carrington, Columbia-Pacific Northwest Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation.

Join us in 2024 for our Conference and 60th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 29th! [📅](#)



*(clockwise from upper left):
Harold Crose, recipient of the Perseverance Award
John Moody, Trustee Emeritus
Lad Irrigation, Honorary Life Member*



OGWRP GETS A LOGO!

A group of OGWRP stakeholder partners made up of representatives from East Columbia Basin Irrigation District, Reclamation, Ecology, Columbia Basin Conservation District, USDA NRCS, CBDL, and landowners, meet regularly to coordinate on communications and messaging regarding OGWRP. Recently, they completed work on a brand for OGWRP. The new logo represents the unified voice of this collaborative project and an easily recognizable visual identity for the program, aimed at replacing ground water with Columbia Basin Project surface water for deep well irrigators who have been waiting for Project water. [📄](#)



OGWRP icon



OGWRP logo

ELEVATE THE COLUMBIA BASIN: BECOME A PROUD MEMBER OF CBDL!

As we kick off 2024 with intensive advocacy work in Olympia and look toward a jam-packed year of supporting CBP development, we turn our focus to the critical role you—our members—play in allowing us to be your voice.

Member and partner contributions are what keeps the League working to bring water to the Columbia Basin and drive our mission; to serve as a voice for the Columbia Basin Project.

Become a member or renew your dedication to the League today! 

Scan to join! →



...or visit: www.cbdl.org/support/membership



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THANKS TO OUR 2024 MEMBERS!

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SUSTAINING



LEADERSHIP



PREMIER



MAJOR

Big Bend Electric Cooperative
Warden Hutterian Brethren

UNDERWRITER

Adams County Commissioners
KeyBank, Moses Lake
McCain International / McCain Foods USA
RH2 Engineering
S&C Ranching Inc
South Columbia Basin Irrigation District
The McGregor Company

SUPPORTER

Connell 76 LLC
GTM Transformations LLC
Port of Pasco
Quincy-Columbia Basin Irrigation District
Zirkle Fruit Company

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Johnston Property Management LLC
Jon & Sharon Fink
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Kagele Family Farms LLC
Kniep Ag, Inc
L&L Ag Production LLC
Landau Associates
Leffel, Otis & Warwick, PS
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Lindcrest Ranch / Preston Farms LLC
Lyle Family Land LLC
Mark Booker
Marvin and Neil Joint Venture

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McGuire, DeWulf, Kragt, & Johnson
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