

Okanogan Board of County Commissioners
06/04/2018

JD—Jim DeTro
AH—Andy Hover (absent)
CB—Chris Branch
LJ—Lalena Johns-clerk to the Commissioners
PH—Perry Huston—County Planner
Angie—Angie Hubbard, Planner

This is a paraphrasing of conversations by one of several volunteer citizen note takers and published on the website of Okanogan County Watch (countywatch.org) Any writer's comments or explanations are in italics. For officially approved minutes of Board of Commissioner meetings, normally published at a later date, see www.okanogancounty.org.

Summary of significant discussions

Exempt well tracking program—Perry plans to use grant money to fund a temporary staffer to work only on tracking the number of exempt wells in WRIAs 48 and 49.

WRIA 49 Watershed plan revision—A brief discussion of Perry's plan to recruit members for the planning unit.

Comprehensive Plan—Perry shows the Commissioners his draft reply to Phil Rigdon (of the Yakama Nation) explaining how he'll address a number of issues Rigdon's wants included in the Comp Plan.

Exempt well tracking program 1:30

PH—The first item is the exempt well tracking program. It's being done in-house. Once the program is populated by data, we'll be able to tell the TCF reserve for each area in Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 48 (Methow Watershed). There's a \$60,000 grant from DOE to do this. It's separate from the Watershed planning money.

PH—Starting July 1, there's money in the budget to put a Planner I back on the payroll. We could also get someone with the training of a Planner I who'd be a temporary worker using the DOE money. The temp Planner could begin to do research with well logs, assessors' information, etc. We want to get a number of how many exempt wells are operating. We also need to know the number of future exempt wells.

CB—Since we don't have the money yet, the idea is to get applications ready, etc.?

PH—Yes. Once we've got a clear way to get the money, I have to adjust the budget. We could call this an employee or a project. I'll post the Planner I spot that's open and use that as a start. I'll call the temp the contract position. That person will *only* do that job—reconcile the well logs. So I'll post the first job and see how to get the money for the second job.

CB—Tell them we're in a hurry.

PH—We're fairly well along getting the tracking system to go. We need to enter the current information. I think we can get a lot of good work done in a few months. The work will involve some boot leather. AH was trying to get some money from the Watershed Council. They emphasize WRIA 48, but maybe 49 (Okanogan Watershed) could use some too.

CB—Think about the approach if you need to go visit the sites. Ask around and somebody might know about the existence of wells.

PH—We'll try to avoid knocking on a door and asking if we can see your well. The most common response to that is: What do you want to do to my well?

CB—I did some of that in Thurston County in college. I wanted to take samples from wells. Most people were nice, but a few were suspicious.

PH—I'll come up with a work plan so grantors will know what I'm trying to achieve.

1:45 WRIA 49 Watershed plan revision.

CB—I don't see other initiating governments being interested in this. The role of cities and irrigation districts are more limited. They have customers they have to satisfy. The county's role is more diverse.

PH—I'm out of the office on Thursday and Friday so I'll try to get a list of people to be on the planning unit. We'll probably use paper applications.

PH—Concerning Watershed Planning grants, there's a clear path to the money but we need the contracts. We're not on the 2019 deadline so other counties with the 2019 deadline get priority.

CB—But there's plenty to do....?

PH—Yes. We'll stay busy.

CB—Oroville & Tonasket are scheduled for July 9 to come in to talk about their water banking.

1:53 Comprehensive Plan

PH distributes his draft of a letter to Phil Rigdon, Superintendent of the Yakama Nation Department of Natural Resources, addressing issues Mr. Rigdon's would like included in the Comprehensive Plan.

PH—Some of the concerns have no real policy mentioned in the Comp Plan, so I've included my response to them.

The issues:

Support water quality education programs which inform local citizens and visitors about water quality issues and ramifications. There's nothing in the Comp Plan about this. Maybe it should be in Chapter 12—Natural Environment.

CB—What about in aquifer recharge?

PH—That's in Chapter 12. It's a good place too.

CB—And the education information could be broad or simple—example, a pamphlet.

PH—If we're already doing it, let's say so and get the credit.

CB—And help us get grant money.

PH—So if you want, I'll put it in the plan.

CB—I'm interested. Plus it's not going to create a great burden.

JD—I'm good with it.

Actively pursue violators which illegally discharge waste into rivers, lakes and streams. The Sheriff has some power to enforce this.

CB—If somebody calls the Planning Department and reports a guy dumping fill, what do you do?

PH—Take the complaint and figure out who's got jurisdiction. Is it a shoreline? A critical area? If we don't have jurisdiction, we'll pass it off to Fish & Wildlife or whoever does have jurisdiction.

CB—I tell the person reporting the violation who to call. If it was a city or whatever, we can coordinate with who has jurisdiction.

PH—I'll send a letter usually and ask what's going on. Try to get the conversation going. If the violation sounds egregious, maybe I'll go and check it out.

CB—Maybe we should put in the plan that we'll work with agencies to respond to complaints. We do a lot of coordination, but that's not active pursuit.

PH—I'll draft language concerning active pursuit.

Adopt water availability determination policies as provided by Washington State Department of Ecology through administrative process for individual WRIAs.

PH—There's language in the Comp Plan about determining water availability but I don't know if I'd use the DOE policy.

CB—It depends on what those look like.. This is relevant to differences between WRIA 48 and 49.

PH—We're handling this in WRIAs but I can expand the statement and provide examples of other sorts of policies.

CB—I think it makes sense. It's an informational piece, kind of like "We'll follow the law".

Encourage existing and require future boat launches to incorporate wash-off stations. Vessel sewage pump-out facilities and fueling provisions shall be sited to implement best management practices for the protection of water quality.

CB—These water areas are on the Columbia. It sounds like a shoreline management program.

PH—I can add language to encourage participation.

CB—Suppose the state proposes this. There's a fee for that inspection. This would be language that supports it. The constraint is the funding.

CB—Concerning vessel pump-out facilities, nobody is staying on the lakes so they can just go to shore. The Columbia is different. It's a federal effort. The National Park Service is on Lake Roosevelt.

CB—Overall, supporting this is great, but I've never seen a boat on Lake Ososyoos that had a sewer tank.

Encourage restoration of contaminated ground water sources.

PH—The only way to decontaminate ground water is to pump the bejeebers out of it.

CB—Do cities and towns have well-head protection? City wells are required to. Also, cities have lists of potential contaminants. They mostly come from ag-chem places and service stations. I've got a copy of one town's ordinance.

PH—What should I do?

CB—Talk about the cities doing stuff. The county is mostly just doing emergency response.

CB—Contamination also comes from heat-pump systems. They pump water out of one aquifer and into another.

PH—Can you send the ordinance to me? I'll bump up the language regarding well-head protection.

CB—Most remedial stuff these days is for gas stations.

PH—And dry-cleaners.

Support the purchase of critical areas by public or private organizations for purposes of preservation or conservation.

CB—Critical areas are important. Some say, "making it a critical area is a taking, so pay me for it." This says buy this from them if you want to protect it, but they can't do anything with it anyway.

PH—Make a distinction between critical areas vs. development rights.

CB—An example is a flood plain. Just buy the place and don't let people build there.

PH—Some groups struggled with this issue. Compromise to recognize there are tools that might work.

CB—Because it depends on the specific proposal. If a landowner recognizes a wetland and manages it a certain way...

PH—I'll try to create a statement that turns it into a list of options. One tool in the toolbox.

Protect water quality and fish habitat by requiring dredging and filling activities to minimize introduction of suspended solids, leaching of contaminants, or habitat disturbance.

PH—We have lots of policy concerning protecting water quality and fish habitat, but nothing that speaks about dredging and filling.

CB—Tie it to the Shoreline Master Program.

PH—I could say we use the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) to do these goals. We do it anyway, so let's take credit.

CB—SEPA is a tool to evaluate. Explain how we implement SEPA in Okanogan County.

Encourage and streamline the process of restoring critical areas.

PH—The tribe sometimes doesn't want to go through the process.

CB—But the process provides others the ability to weigh in on a project. Here's something to think about. Get in a boat and cruise around Lake Ososyoos with people from different agencies and listen to the conversation. Everybody has a different perspective.

PH—I'd be reluctant to introduce language that we don't need to do SEPA.

CB & JD—OK with us.

Encourage the use of innovative techniques to protect and restore critical areas, such as purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, clustering, conservation easements, land trust, and the public benefit rating system.

PH—This sounds a lot like an issue we've already discussed. (Support the purchase of critical areas by public or private organizations for purposes of preservation or conservation.) I'll make the language for the first one work in this one, too.

In designating and protecting critical areas, the County shall use best available science to develop policies and development regulations. The County should also give special consideration to conservation or protection measures necessary to preserve or enhance anadromous fisheries.

PH—In the Comp Plan, the phrase "best available science" refers only to wetlands. I can put it in other things. We'll be held to that standard, too.

CB—DOE has the most knowledge concerning wetlands, so they have the best available science. Plus it's been peer reviewed.

PH—So I'll put the best available science in the general planning section.

Consult Tribal treaty resource managers about important habitats and ecosystem functions that need protection to sustain Tribal treaty resources such as fish and wildlife.

CB—Yakamas are a treaty tribe. Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT) were formed by executive order. I don't have any problem with consulting tribal managers concerning environmental issues. How does the Yakama treaty apply to counties? And how does this language affect us whether it's included or not?

PH—Well, we'll consult whoever it's appropriate to consult with.

JD—This language is just asking for trouble.

CB—I agree. We don't know about treaty rights.

PH—There's language in the Comp Plan that says we'll actually consult with the CCT.

CB—Trust land off the reservation, what about that?

PH—Want me to expand this?

JD & CB—Just let it be.

Incorporate the information and recommendations in locally adopted Endangered Species Recovery Plans to produce inventories and protective regulation of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas.

CB—We do this. If there's an endangered species we look at that in critical areas.

PH—I'll buff up the responses to this and I'll include the language the BOCC wanted created. I'll send the draft response to the Yakama Nation to Dave Gecas. Dave will be here next week to talk about OCC 17A.400. We're getting closer.

3:15 Draft resolution of intent to form a Lake Management District

PH—The hearing will be July 10 at 6PM in Oroville. Just to double check—Veranda Beach is out and ag parcels are out. I'll create a new map.

CB—If ag parcels are converted, then we include them.

PH—I haven't found anybody that's done that.

CB—We should put in language that says if ag converts to non-ag, it's included in the district and has to pay.

BOCC adopts a resolution to create a Lake Management District around Lake Ososyoos.

Notetaker leaves 3:30.