Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative (DBWC) Planning Team Meeting

August 6, 2021 | 1:00 – 3:00 pm

Summary Outcomes:

- *Legislative Recap:* The most recent legislative session proved that the state is eager to address water issues in the Deschutes Basin and in the state throughout. The legislature allocated millions towards water resources this session. Kyle Gorman with OWRD noted that the department has never been given this kind of budget increase and it will take some time to figure out the best use for the new influx of money.
- *Committee Composition:* The group deliberated the merits of changing the purpose of the Planning Committee at length. The committee members seemed to overwhelmingly support a change in the way the planning committee operated, with an emphasis on improving efficiency and decreasing redundancy. There were some concerns addressed about the name of the new committee and ensuring that transparency and diverse perspectives are still at the forefront of the committee's goals.
    - Staff to write a one-pager on the three possible options for how the committee could shift and will distribute to the planning committee for a vote over email.

Full Notes

Attendees:, Kyle Gorman, OWRD; Nancy Gilbert, Juniper Group of the Sierra Club; Michael Tripp, Trout Unlimited; JoAnne Richter, Central Oregon Bitterbrush Broads; Phil Chang, Deschutes County Commissioner; Holly Mondo, Coalition for the Deschutes; Mike Taylor, Wild Rivers Owners Association; Brian Barney, Crook County Commissioner; Josh Bailey, NUID; Bruce Scanlon, OID; Dani Wise Johnson; Peter Lickwar; & Adam Sussman

Staff: Vernita Ediger, COIC; Chris Ogren, COIC; & Kate Fitzpatrick, DRC

Introductions -

- Vernita handed off to Kate Fitzpatrick to lead.

Planning team meeting notes -

- Opportunity for comments, none.

Working Group Outcomes -

- Planning a meeting at Smith Rock for later once work begins

Committee Report -

- Vernita - Groundwater subcommittee met 8/5, had been a while since last meeting. The subcommittee was waiting on the state for a report. Heard an overview of the report from the state. Group decided to create a comment letter to submit. Kate taking the lead on drafting the letter. It will be a high-level letter indicating DBWC interest in working with the Department on addressing some key long-standing issues in the groundwater mitigation program. The letter will

acknowledge that it is a state program. The letter will also indicate DBWC interest in understanding the state of groundwater in the Deschutes and making sure groundwater supplies remain sustainable into the future.

- Adam Sussman wanted to bring up some info for county commissioners, the mitigation program has a cap on it - 200 cfs - after that there is criteria on whether or not to lift the cap. That decision was made 20 years ago. Getting close to the cap. Ongoing concerns, now seems like the time to address the cap. Adam is quite concerned about having a standoff over the cap, not just a municipal issue alone, also economic issue. Adam not suggesting a free-for-all, but has concerns about what happens when we hit the cap. Phil Chang asked what should local governments be doing here?

Technical Committee Report -

- Some tough issues they need to work through to create a plan. Working on components of the play one by one. The last committee meeting, the group talked about the pathways for piping projects. *Outcomes of 2021 Legislative Session -*
- Really good outcomes for the state and for the Deschutes.
    - 3 new IT & data assistance positions, 5 new water masters (no impact on Deschutes), 7 new positions on groundwater studies, money for complex issues on the Deschutes - $422k, one new position & funding for contracted work to support.
        - Meeting with the State soon on how to shape the position. Believes that the position will be within the director's office. To make a pitch to the state on how we want that position to fit within the broader group and what problems it will solve.
        - Kyle Gorman - budget increase is monumental for the agency (OWRD), but wants to stress that these things take time. State will take some time to hire and then get the new person trained. Wants to temper expectations. Dept's budget has never been this good nor had this big of an increase. Will need time to figure out best uses.
    - Water projects grants & loans - $30m more dedicated to the fund
    - Deschutes Basin board control - $10m match
    - $500k to engage Oregon consensus to create a work group for regional water planning and use. $200k for a limited duration position to support that working group.
    - $500k in its feasibility study grant funding
    - money to update integrated water resources strategy
    - $200k for place-based water planning
- ARPA funding
    - $1m for place-based planning,

    - $1m for cost share for measurement and revolving funds.
        - Phil Chang - this is a lot to wrap our heads around, please provide interpretation
        - Kate F - good news across the state for water. For Deschutes - $10m for piping is great. Also a complex basin position to help the Deschutes. A lot of support and funding for regional planning. Legislature also doesn't know exactly how to roll out these different pots of money, just trying to support and bolster everyone's regional efforts.

- HB 3103 - transfers of stored water $485k associated with the bill. Can transfer the use of water on an existing storage water right, for other approved uses.
    - Some confusion between Kyle and Adam on whether or not new rules will be created on this and when it applies.

DBWC Planning Committee Composition –

- Suggestions at the last meeting/question on whether DBWC still needs the planning team. Some committees taking a different role than originally expected, so unsure if DBWC still needs the planning team. Some repetition from folks in multiple committees hearing the same things. Scott created options for what to do:
    - 31 members of current planning team - found in charter - tough for a group of 31 people to be effective
    - Kate reviewed the requirements of the committee in the charter, the pros and cons
    - Planning team 2.0 - proposal
        - less length in meetings, less report overview, still meeting regularly to discuss
    - Executive Committee - fewer people, more co-chairs, small leadership group focused on process more, more speaking role - need people to go talk to someone - can't have 31 people doing it. Smaller group, more efficient, tough to pick who the fewer people would be while still making sure everyone gets the information they need.
- Thoughts?
    - Shon likes the idea of going to exec committee (from Kate).
    - Mike Taylor - pro shorter meetings. Wants to get rid of the redundancy. Concerned that we're trading substance for efficiency. Hard to pick who to include. This decision limits diversity. Wants shorter, more focused, strategic meetings.
    - Kyle Gorman - concerned with the length of meetings and redundancy. Thinks it's smart to reduce the time and streamline it, but recognizes he participates less than others.
    - Phil Chang - "Executive" suggests maybe more power than the committee would have. Consider just using a different name.
        - Kate - leadership team or steering committee. Thinks that Chang is right.

- Adam Sussman - agrees with Kyle. Likes the idea of when difficult issues arise, can bring it to the full group. Smaller group will be more efficient with dealing with day-to-day. Liked the way a planning committee worked on the Basin Study.
- Nancy Gilbert - agrees with some comments, specifically want to avoid redundancy among groups. Thinks there's been quite a bit. The trick is to maintain the level of dialogue that the group currently has. Agrees with Phil Chang re: name. Likes keeping the planning team name. Most important thing is to have all stakeholders fully engaged, informed, and participating. Need to do whatever is necessary to ensure that. Thinks getting back in person will help with some of the frustration now.
- Bruce - In agreement with the last few people. Likes steering committee. Wants efficient equal representation.
- Mike Tripp - likes the comments. Process needs to be more efficient if it wants to be effective. Says meeting host needs to be more effective in holding folks accountable to staying efficient. Is fine with shrinking meeting. Still - meeting chairs need to do better. Agrees with Chang on name.
- Joanne - uncomfortable with it only being 3 people. Wants to maintain access and not be limited. Suggests maybe a smaller planning committee. Feels it would be under representative of the diversity of the group.
- Holly – Example from Harney county group - full group, strategy team, coordinating group is how they structure things. Understands we'll be different, but they're happy with their setup. Should be more than 3 people. Harney County's exec group is 8 people. Holly goes to them for difficult issues. Coordinating committee is more collaborative and more process/agenda based. Very successful model. No exec name - agrees with Chang.
- Josh - Agrees with Bruce. Fine with a smaller group. Wants to make sure that everyone retains their voice. Feels like it can be done through other committees
- Peter - comfortable with a variety of approaches. Doesn't have an opinion.
- Vernita - helpful to have smaller teams. Doesn’t care about the name. Communication challenges between broader group and smaller teams. Can create silos/bias. Want to focus on maintaining trust of the group.
- Kate - summary - sounds like there is broad support for a smaller, more efficient group. Want to be more nimble. Less repetition. 5ish people + staff. DBBC could choose their representative. COCO could choose theirs. Instream interests could choose theirs.. Open meetings to include people that may feel excluded by not having a formal role.
    - Mike - all for efficiency, but concerned that we're fixing something that isn't broken. Doesn't want to commit to another year of process changes. Concerned with results not how it gets done.

        - Nancy - Seems like siloing a little bit. Try to avoid the appearance that its a small group doing less work or being hyper-focused. Doesn't want it to appear like a small decision making body. Likes the idea of opening meeting to the public.
        - Joanne - still doesn't like the idea of just 3 people. Likes 8 people. Has been frustrated by how long things take, so likes efficiency. More comfortable now than initially.
    - Kate - ready to move on to smaller team. Still need to flesh out the composition of the group.
    - JoAnne - doesn't want to rush. Wants more specificity.
    - Kate - Bobby as chair, Kate and Scott as staff, and then each interest group picks a representative, plus OWRD
    - Nancy Gilbert likes what Vernita put in the chat. Wants a 1 pager for more clarity on what exactly the group is voting on.
    - Kate proposes circulating a 1 pager through the group, and having folks vote on which composition they prefer.

Working group agenda for September -

- want to focus on accelerating projects, less on planning
    - Chang - everyone wants to see progress, planning sometimes necessary for that, thinks everyone wants to see action. How can the collaborative accelerate things that are already in motion?
    - Kate – one idea is education. Can impact policy at the state level by suggesting innovative ideas, but we don't really have any of those right now. Largely educational right now.
    - Holly - having the collaborative helps give stakeholders a sense of ownership. communicating to the community
    - Nancy - DBWC has already contributed to more funding and education for the Deschutes Basin. Not an exciting process but tangible achievements.
    - Bruce - magnitude of the drought that we're experiencing - education & communication about this issue is very important to the region. Lots of misinformation. DBWC can be the voice of clarity & reason.
    - Phil Chang - helping the community understand the problem like we do. Is the DBWC still trying to get consensus or are we past that phase? compared DBWC to Deschutes Forest Collaborative
    - Adam - group is struggling to address some of the areas where group members fundamentally disagree or struggle to find consensus. Members in the collaborative are literally suing each other over water issues.

- Adjourn @ 2:59