Deschutes Basin Water Collaborative

Working Group Meeting Notes

September 26, 2025 | 10:30-12:30 PM | Hybrid

Tri-Chairs: Commissioner Phil Chang, Deschutes County; Craig Horrell, COID

Members: Mike Buettner, City of Bend; Gary Young, Upper Crooked River Conservationists; Yancy Lind, Citizen; Jon Skidmore, COID; Becky Powell, League of Women Voters, Deschutes County; Carolyn Sufit, OWRD; Lori Faha, City of Bend; Erek Fuchs, NUID; Josh Bailey, NUID; Jeremy Austin, COLW; Tod Heisler, COLW; Owen McMurtrey, COCO; Skuyler Herzog, OSU-Cascades; Tim Deboodt, Crook County; Jessi Talbott, COID; Kris Knight, UDWC; Jerry George, ODFW; Karen Lewotsky, OEC; James Faughnan, HDFFA; Emily-Bell Dinan, ODFW

Other Attendees: Hayley Siltanen, Legal Representation for DBBC; Jim Powell, Citizen; Rebekah Triolo, Bureau of Reclamation; John Lambie, Citizen

Staff: Jenn Greco, COIC; Alex Ehrens, Lisa Seales, Kate Fitzpatrick, DRC; Andrew Purkey, Fluent Freshwater Insights; Angella Rinehold, OWRD

Draft Notes

1. **Welcome & Introductions** *Lisa Seales, DRC*

Lisa Seales opened the meeting with welcome and introductions. Commissioner Chang gave a few words about the legislation that passed and the important work being done.

2. **Public Comment**

John Lambie introduced himself to the group. He is a geologist and groundwater hydrologist and frequent visitor of the basin. He sees great things happening in the basin and offered his help.

3. **July Meeting Recap & Agenda Overview** *Lisa Seales, DRC*
   - Recap and Overview ***Attachment A: July Meeting Notes***

Lisa reviewed the notes from July's Working Group Meeting. There were no edits to the meeting minutes.

4. **LBC Appraisal Study Presentation** *Rebekah Triolo, BOR*

Rebekah Triolo with the Bureau of Reclamation joined the group to present on the Crooked River Water Quality Supply Reliability Pumping Plant Appraisal Study. The presentation focused on the appraisal study outcomes, technical summaries, and results. The appraisal study was completed, and the recommendation was to do further analysis. This means the appraisal study included a feasibility plan and BOR is moving forward to a feasibility analysis.

Rebekah went through the appraisal study, which included a design cost estimate, water resources modeling, and an economic analysis. The purpose of the study was to answer the question of whether or not to pursue continuing the project. They looked at various sites for moving the Crooked River Pumping Plant.

The full presentation can be viewed in the recording on the DBWC Website.

John Lambie, Citizen: Is the appraisal study published?

Rebekah Triolo, Bureau of Reclamation: We are including the appraisal study as an appendix of our feasibility analysis. These reports have not been published publicly yet, but if people are interested, I can process that through our policy office.

John Lambie: What is your baseline? Scenario 1?

Rebekah Triolo: Yes.

John Lambie: Do you have the number on how many acre feet of water is divertible under Scenario 1, since your comparisons are all to the baseline?

Rebekah Triolo: I'd have to pull that exact number for you.

John Lambie: You used the terminology, is limited to water available. What is the water?

Rebekah Triolo: At the current pumping location, there are requirements placed on the district, and also limitations to the amount of water that is in the river at that time. So those are the two categories that we reviewed.

John Lambie: You also mentioned later, it's a question of revisions or modifications to water rights out in the Period 3 timeframe. Is that codified somewhere as to what your expectations are on water available?

Rebekah Triolo: That would be North Unit's full water allotment.

John Lambie: Their water allotments out of Wickiup?

Rebekah Triolo: It would be at the point of diversion.

John Lambie: On the Crooked at their overcrossing.

Rebekah Triolo: Correct.

John Lambie: Is this strictly considered a Crooked River diversion?

Rebekah Triolo: Right now, but we would be moving to a location on Lake Billy Chinook. So those two different sites you saw were no longer on the Crooked River.

John Lambie: So those are not considered Crooked River diversions?

Rebekah Triolo: Correct.

John Lambie: O&M costs. I've just done planning-level studies for the San Bernadino Valley on this scale and water is heavy and you're going to be pumping it. Are your O&M costs considered in here yet?

Rebekah Triolo: The subtotal cost, the very first line item is a breakout of O&M.

Commissioner Phil Chang, Deschutes County: I have a tie-on question about operations and maintenance and I wanted to get to not just the cost of the electricity, but the cost of producing the electricity. In this region, our electricity supply is strained. As part of the analysis, I hope that you can quantify for us how much power is needed and then maybe just give us an idea of some of the alternatives for producing that power.

Rebekah Triolo: In our feasibility analysis, those first two bullets that you're seeing, water right and value planning, are our priorities at the beginning of our study, but what you're not seeing, because our schedule is extremely long and complex is that we would actually be completing a power study to answer some of the questions you raised. So, the results of that smaller study effort inside the feasibility analysis would be able to answer those questions.

Yancy Lind, Citizen: One of my concerns about this project from the beginning has been the depth of water withdrawal. You showed two diagrams of Site 1 and Site 2, and maybe someone from NUID can talk about this, but is there an idea about how deep in the lake the water withdrawal would be?

Rebekah Triolo: I'll tell you one consideration we've made before is relative to water temperature, right? So, when we're looking at that water quality benefit that we want to be able to quantify to ensure that we get to that cost-benefit ratio greater than one, we would be concerned with the depth associated with the water temperature that's being pulled out, because that is something that we can quantify and assign numbers to associated with our economic benefits. So, while you're seeing the pretty simplistic pipes associated with withdrawal, that would be a factor that's greatly reviewed in the feasibility work.

Yancy Lind: So, water temperature is the concern. And when you talk about water temperature being this important element, can you give me like we want warm water close to the surface, we want cold water at depth?

Josh Bailey, NUID: I can answer that one. The intent of this project is to pump the warmer, nutrient-laden water near the surface. Now, obviously, we're confined by the ability of the pumping to make sure we're not cavitating the pumps or anything like that.

Yancy Lind: When this project was first discussed, it was not just to replace the Crooked River Pumping Station, it was also to allow releases out of Wickiup that would then flow down all the way through the middle and then take that water out at this new pumping station. Is that no longer the case?

Josh Bailey: No, that is still something we are looking at and keeping our options open. The primary purpose is to pick up the 200 CFS water right from the Crooked and supplementary to that would be either create a bulge storage of released HCP water in the winter and be able to access that during the summer.

Yancy Lind: I'm really interested in the fish and wildlife and water quality stuff. My understanding from the quick discussion here is that's still 2-3 years out?

Rebekah Triolo: That's correct.

Jim Powell, Citizen: You all have referred to the parameters here, but one of the things that happens at the confluence in Billy Chinook is the return of cold groundwater from the majority of the basin, particularly around Opal Springs. Are you all going to be looking at Site 1 and Site 2, or any other site, relative to how much degradation that cold water inflow is created by your pumps either inadvertently or intentionally?

Rebekah Triolo: Yes, we would be looking at those. The nice part about moving this analysis forward further is under the feasibility structure, you're able to spend time getting that additional data and information to help answer these questions.

Kate Fitzpatrick, DRC: One remark and then a question. Currently the benefits are framed in additional water for North Unit, but I know that conversations around this project have been equally about benefits to the rivers and trying to create multiple benefits. So, it sounds like some of that is yet to be worked out in the feasibility analysis, but I think that what's happening with water rights, how does that show up in the Crooked and/or Deschutes, and what are the water quality ramifications? I'm just curious, you laid out three scenarios, and you only reported on modeling results associated with Scenarios 2 and 3, so what happened to Scenario 1?

Rebekah Triolo: This ties a bit back to the question that John, I think, asked at the beginning. Scenario 1 is our baseline. I did not do a good job of describing that, but we compared everything to Scenario 1.

Kate Fitzpatrick: I think this is maybe in the weeds, but I think what I'm guessing is why that included the DRC agreement flowed in the Crooked, but maybe the future scenario wouldn't

include those is because the whole reach is restored and the diversion is downstream, so it becomes a moot point. Am I tracking with that?

Rebekah Triolo: Yes, that's accurate.

Josh Bailey: Kate, I would add that the appraisal study does not reflect the changes to the bypass flow requirements that were recently amended. So, when we do feasibility, it's going to be updated accordingly.

Kate Fitzpatrick: I'll throw in one little thing for future consideration. It makes perfect sense if there's no diversions, that that agreement doesn't make sense, that was millions of dollars of public investment. Maybe there's some other creative way to realize some of the other benefits that we can work on to reflect that level of investment.

John Lambie: If I may follow up, I asked for the acre footage divertible under Scenario 1, would you provide the same for Scenario 2 and 3?

Rebekah Triolo: Of course. One other piece relative to public involvement: our feasibility study process has very prescriptive public involvement, including prior to our environmental compliance. Once we get into the feasibility analysis, we work in tandem with the community and make sure that those concerns are addressed throughout the process. Then, we have our extremely prescriptive environmental compliance and public comment periods as well.

John Lambie: Where will you be looking to get data for water quality? I'm aware of where DEQ is gathering data for the TMDL on the Crooked and the TMDL on the Deschutes, which is all well and good, but it's not what's in Lake Billy Chinook. What are the points of consideration?

Rebekah Triolo: That would be an analysis that our TSC does initially to set up that framework. They look at existing data that they have available and determine what data we need and how we would get it. Then we would move forward on a decision.

5. <u>Approach to Chapter 5 Development</u> *DRC Staff*

- Discussion About Modified Approach

Lisa Seales and Alex Ehrens presented the Chapter 5 Development approach. As a reminder, the group completed steps 1-4 and are now working on step 5, which is to develop the implementation strategy. This is a consensus-based process and not a regulatory plan.

The modified approach directly ties the actions we want to implement to the desired outcomes that we want to create from the actions. This means that we're leaving out the "how" of Chapter 5 for simplicity. We will document all challenges, issues, barriers, constraints, etc. to get to the desired outcomes. Lisa and Alex provided examples to show this modified approach, which can be seen in the recording on the website.

John Lambie, Citizen: Who developed the alternative pathway if it wasn't done here?

Lisa Seales, DRC: It was developed by the Oregon Water Resources Department and the districts.

Jim Powell, Citizen: Based on my experience with the Planning Commission, if you use canal piping to increase water availability for a specific district, the argument will inevitably arise, when AID needs additional water, as they did several years ago, it's not available to them because your plan or all of your program has specified where that water is going to go. So it's a pitfall. There are advantages in it, but there's a pitfall there. You're already finding that you've left out the municipalities in your list, so the piping is a big deal. Not only because of the funding. There will be opportunities that come out of this; whether it's for the districts or the community at large, that we can't see right this moment. So, as you do this, build in a little bit of fluidity that gives you wiggle room.

Lisa Seales: We're open to ideas on how to build in the fluidity, again, with staying focused on trying to tie actions to the outcomes that we're all driving to achieve. We're not trying to leave out the cities at all; we want to figure out ways to generate mitigation credits and meet the cities' needs. We're realizing that the integration piece, which we have yet to really dive into is where we'll get to that.

Emily-Bell Dinan, ODFW: To clarify, you're looking for feedback on the structure of the action plan, right? Is there an evaluation step as well in the structure, without getting into the weeds of it?

Lisa Seales: That's a great segue into what we will be talking about post-plan – how this group will work together after the plan. I think evaluation and monitoring and reporting is definitely something that will continue to happen.

Emily-Bell Dinan: You're planning to have the variables that you'll measure be pulled out in the writing?

Lisa Seales: Chapter 3 has all of the needs outlined of exactly how much water, so we're proposing to leave that out of Chapter 5.

Kate Fitzpatrick, DRC: Maybe we could clarify your question. We are looking for feedback on the restructuring structure, or the actual contents of the examples that might help the group?

Lisa Seales: Both, really. We're reporting out on the last couple of months of Planning Team meetings, and yes, structure is a big part of what we've done with simplifying, how we're going to talk about this, and directly tying implementation actions to outcomes. We are looking for feedback on structure, but then if there are specific things like Jim said about leaving fluidity in the plan, we're open to all feedback.

Becky Powell, League of Women Voters of Deschutes County: I may have misunderstood but did you say there would be things in the plan that had not been agreed upon by the entire collaborative?

Lisa Seales: No, I noted that the menu included in Chapter 4 describes all the potential options on the table. Chapter 5 is consensus-based, so Chapter 5 is everyone agreeing to order the specific items off the menu.

Gary Young, Upper Crooked River Conservationists: This seems to not address the groundwater levels that we've been discussing. Is this seen as supporting the depletion of groundwater levels?

Lisa Seales: No, this is specifically dealing with this particular tool in the toolbox. We do have an entire section of the plan that was written up that's the outcome of the Groundwater Subcommittee. We're definitely be addressing groundwater, but this particular action is specifically looking at the implementation of district canal and lateral piping and the outcomes that we want.

Gary Young: So, the water saved here is going somewhere else besides back in the ground?

Lisa Seales: Yep, it's outlined on the slide. It's going to be permanently protected in-stream in the upper Deschutes in the winter months and going to improve water supply in North Unit in the summer months, as well as potentially being permanently protected in the middle Deschutes in the summer months.

Commissioner Phil Chang, Deschutes County: I have a more mechanical question. So, you're walking us through this example, you know, a high-level action to implement. We will cover desired outcomes as well as challenges, issues, and constraints. Is that basically what Chapter 5 is? Is that all we're doing in Chapter 5?

Alex Ehrens: This is a portion of Chapter 5. We'll start with the Principles of Integration of the Tools and how more can be achieved if we're integrating the tools together rather than using them individually. A quick recap of Plan Outcomes, then Implementation Strategy (where we are today), Outreach Strategy, and then Data Gaps/Research Questions.

Tod Heisler, Central Oregon Land Watch: Great approach, thank you.

Skuyler Herzog, OSU-Cascades: Will you also include the tools you're not choosing and why?

Lisa Seales: Yes, in an appendix.

Kate Fitzpatrick: I'm wondering why we wouldn't include metering and measurement in the near term.

Lisa Seales: We would, I think it was just left out.

Tod Heisler: The number one kind of restricts us to where to do private lateral piping where main canal piping is completed, which is logical, but as we pointed out, these are private laterals, and the private individuals may have other ideas. Are we open to the fact that there may be private individuals who want to get started ahead of these other things, so that they're ready to go when the district canal gets to them?

Lisa Seales: Definitely, yes. It takes a long time for these private projects to come to fruition, so getting a jump start is always a good idea.

John Lambie: These private laterals sit within COID and they are a distribution into the place of use in COID's water rights and of course COID needs to know how much water they delivered to their patron. Who's able to benefit the conserved water? The water bank, the individual, or the district?

Craig Horrell, COID: The district controls it. We measure what we're delivering, and once we hand it off to the private, once that person makes an improvement, they may choose to use all of their water, which happened at the pumpkin patch. That's a real operating farm. Someone may choose to grow lavender. What we're saying is we're open to the idea of split leasing on a temporary basis, not permanent. Because it could be a lavender farm today and something else tomorrow. Our job is to protect the water right for that farm.

Lisa Seales: We will get to the topic of split rate/split duty at a later date. But I want to note, John, that it's not just COID that has private laterals. Private laterals also exist in all of the other districts across the basin. We're working on a private lateral piping project in Arnold Irrigation District as we speak, so it's a tool that's applicable to districts beyond just COID.

Kate Fitzpatrick: I wanted to comment that specific to the Arnold project, that water is going in stream. So, some things are happening on a faster timeline than this suggests.

Jim Powell: This is still morphing, is that correct?

Lisa Seales: Yes. To give a high-level understanding of what's happening at the Planning Team level, we're having these discussions with the Planning Team and decided on this streamlined approach. We've talked about these two examples and getting into other tools.

6. <u>Post-Plan Continued Collaboration</u> *DRC Staff*

- Discussion

Lisa opened this discussion by saying that it might be easier to finish the plan if everyone had a better idea about what the world will look like once the plan is finished. The purpose is to create/retain an enduring entity, under the DBWC name, to coordinate the Plan and project

implementation, monitoring to meet balanced goals, and ongoing reporting. We envision convening of sub-committees as needed to implement the plan as well.

Becky Powell, League of Women Voters of Deschutes County: I have been concerned that the collaborative and the document will be used to lobby. It addresses the needs to the three legs of the stool, not necessarily the public in general. In going forward and approving the document, I worry that economics was left out and not taken into account, that some of the bills that have been used in the past have not been addressed and maybe they will be. But in that approving it, it may be used in lobbying.

Lisa Seales, DRC: I think that's why we're trying to go with the higher-level approach, both in terms of being able to achieve consensus and a reasonable timeframe.

Commissioner Phil Chang, Deschutes County: What do we anticipate happening with the basin planning program within the state within the next few years? Who will fund us to have an ongoing DBWC implementation group?

Angella Rinehold, OWRD: There is a grant available for ongoing coordination, so effectively implementation of the plan. Once this plan received state recognition through the Water Resources Commission, then we would be eligible for those funds. And an important part of receiving those funds is having a clear plan for what comes next in terms of collaboration and implementation, so we're on the right track.

Emily-Bell Dinan, ODFW: ODFW has been commenting on the grant application, so I want to say I've been told it will be ready in December and open up. Pre-planning will be one grant, creating the plan another, coordinator role for implementation another, and post-plan updates the fourth.

7. **Roundtable**
   - As Time Allows

The Groundwater Subcommittee met, and the write-up is complete. It will be sent to Planning Team and then Working Group for review.

Emily-Bell Dinan is new to ODFW and will continue to work closely with our group on the plan.

Kris Knight, Upper Deschutes Watershed Council, shared positive news in looking at the Whychus Creek area where the Flat Fire came in that the work being done over the last 20 years made that area very resilient.

Gary Young expressed his disappointment in flood-plain restoration not being discussed much in this group.

Kate Fitzpatrick shared that she and the Three Sisters Irrigation District Manager, Amelia, met with folks from Wallowa Lake about the work done on the Deschutes to reintroduce sockeye. She also shared that the goal is to bring the water bank charter to the commission meeting in December.

Becky Powell suggested reading the ProPublica article on groundwater throughout the world.

Jon Skidmore let the group know that they are shutting down for the season. Josh Bailey said they are doing the same.

John Lambie shared he's working on a research paper that should be out in December.

8. **Adjourn**