

# Monthly Briefing

*A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News*

## Alliance Effort Seeks To Identify 'New' Water Plans

The Family Farm Alliance is calling upon one of its greatest strengths to help identify a wide range of potential projects that could eventually help generate new supplies of Western water.

The Alliance's far-flung Advisory Committee, many members of which are farm and water leaders in their regions, will begin a grassroots examination of possibilities.

**THE ALLIANCE'S** *Western Water Policy – A New Vision* includes a key proposal to develop water supplies. It says:

*Renewed and continued support for the development of new, environmentally sound, sources of water supply is essential. New water supplies must be developed if we want to solve environmental problems, allow for population growth and protect the economic vitality of the West.*

**WORKING ON A STATE** by state basis, Advisory Committee members hope to create a list of regional water projects that could be developed with fairly minimal federal funding.

"The Alliance believes there are many such potential projects in the West that should be considered," said Executive Director Craig Smith.

## Norton Meets With Alliance's Farmer Lobbyists

**A** Family Farm Alliance team of Farmer Lobbyists went right to the top while in Washington last month and held what Alliance Executive Director Craig Smith (OREGON) terms "an interesting and productive meeting" with Interior Secretary Gale Norton. In-depth discussions focused on the Interior Department's "Water 2025" plan.

"We looked at the whole initiative," Smith said. "We stressed the need to develop additional water supplies as the Alliance has recommended in its *New Vision* proposal for Western Water Policy."

The Water 2025 plan, which is being discussed at meetings throughout the West, currently says nothing about new supply or storage.

Alliance board members taking part were President Bill Kennedy (OREGON), Secretary-Treasurer Judy Brown (CALIFORNIA) and Pat O'Toole (WYOMING). Representing the Advisory Committee was Robert Stackhouse (CALIFORNIA).

Their meeting with Norton lasted 30 minutes and, Smith said, "went very well."

"Secretary Norton said new supplies and storage proposals need to be developed by local interests and made it clear that she did not see Interior proposing any new, large storage projects," Smith said.

"We told the Secretary that conservation and other programs are fine but won't result in any new water," he added.

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## California Hearing Takes A Look At New Water Storage

Water storage needs in Central California were aired June 28 during a House Water and Power Subcommittee hearing in Tulare.

The hearing focused on possible development of Temperance Flat Dam on the San Joaquin River northeast of Fresno.

Temperance Flat is viewed as a means of providing a water supply for San Joaquin River restoration without harming water users in the Central Valley Project's Friant Division who use much of the river's water. Flood control and irrigation storage are other potential benefits.

The environmental community opposes the plan.

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# Former Alliance Leader Gets New USBR Post

Former Family Farm Alliance President Mark Limbaugh has received a U.S. Bureau of Reclamation promotion.

Commissioner of Reclamation has named Limbaugh as a Deputy Commissioner, along with William E. Rinne. Limbaugh will serve as Acting Commissioner when Keys is traveling outside Washington.

Limbaugh has served for the past two and a half years as Director of External and Intergovernmental Affairs for the Bureau.

**HE IS THE FORMER** Payette River (IDAHO) Watermaster and Executive Director of the Payette River Water Users Association, an organiza-

tion active in protecting the region's water rights.

Limbaugh was co-founder and facilitator for the Payette River Watershed Council, a highly successful grassroots organization involved in building consensus among the many diverse water user interests in the Payette River basin.

He was also previously involved in the Idaho Water Users Association in Boise and is a director of the United States Committee on Irrigation and Drainage.

Limbaugh served as President of the Alliance, a grassroots association that represents growers and water agencies in 17 Western states, for nearly two years.

## Another EPA Official Resigns

The U.S. Environmental Protection agency is now without its two top officials.

A day before Administrator Christie Whitman's resignation took effect, Deputy Administrator Linda Fisher announced she is also resigning as of July 11.

She had been considered a possible candidate for Whitman's post. Whitman told the Associated Press that permanent replacements might be some time away.

Fisher, like Whitman, said she is leaving for family reasons in order to spend more time with her two young children.

## FARMER LOBBYISTS MEET WITH SECRETARY NORTON, OTHER OFFICIALS

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Norton was given specific examples of projects that could be accomplished nearly immediately, with little or no federal funding, if Interior would act as the facilitator and help trim red tape.

"She was cautiously supportive," Smith said. "But she made it clear that Interior did not intend to propose new, large scale water development projects. Those proposals are going to need to come from the grassroots." (Please see related stories, front page.)

The meeting with Norton and the 10 other sessions held by the Alliance team was another example of the importance of the Family Farm Alliance's "Farmer Lobbyist" program that brings Western farmers and water leaders to Washington for face-to-face discussions.

The Alliance party also met with Rep. Greg Walden (R-OREGON) on the his "Good Science" ESA reform bill.

There were sessions held with Jonathan Pawlow, Counsel to the House Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment; Josh Johnson, Majority Staff Director, and Craig Albertsen, Legislative Fellow, House Water and Power Subcommittee; Shelly Randel, Counsel, Senate Energy Committee; Valerie West, Natural Resources Director for Senator Gordon Smith (R-OREGON); and Jeff Clark, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Environment and Natural Resources Division.

Other meetings were held with Steve Lanich and Lori Sonken, House Resources Committee legislative staff member; Matthew Iandoli, Policy Director, Congressional Water Caucus; and Todd Willens and Matt Miller, of the House Resources Committee professional staff.

Among other issues discussed were fallout from the Talent (OREGON) Irrigation District case; Warren Act and CFO audit matters; safety of dams, Endangered Species Act reform and the Walden Good Science bill.

## STORAGE HEARING HELD

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House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo (R-CALIFORNIA) and Water and Power Subcommittee Chairman Ken Calvert (R-CALIFORNIA) took part along with four other Golden State House members.

They heard from a seven-member panel of witnesses, all but one of whom represented water interests.

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