

Monthly Briefing

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

Excellent D.C. Meetings Held

A series of very successful meetings were held during a Family Farm Alliance-sponsored visit with Bush Administration officials as well as members of Congress and legislative staff members in Washington last month.

A six person delegation made the journey as part of the Alliance's "Farmer Lobbyist" program, which brings local water users and their leaders to Washington for face-to-face meetings with makers of law and policy that directly affect life in the 17 Western states with federal Reclamation projects.

THE TEAM CONSISTED of Alliance President Bill Kennedy (OREGON), Secretary-Treasurer Judy Brown (CALIFORNIA) and Executive Director Craig Smith (OREGON). Others making the trip were Alliance Advisory Committee members Robert Stackhouse (CALIFORNIA) and Tom Knutson (NEBRASKA), along with Ron Jacobsma (CALIFORNIA). Jacobsma chairs the Central Valley Project Water Association Financial Committee.

"We focused on five primary issues, three of which are pretty technical Reclamation finance issues and two which are more global issues," Smith said.

The Reclamation issues focused on the impact of a recent Chief Financial Officer's Act (CFO) audit that would require Endangered Species Act mitigation projects on non-federal lands to be expensed as annual O&M. Also discussed were changes made during the Clinton Administration in how Warren Act revenues are credited to project repayment.

The more global issues included EPA/ESA consultation lawsuits and Endangered Species Act sound science.

THE ALLIANCE ALSO HOSTED its traditional Washington dinner, this time for Alliance friends on Capitol Hill and in the administration. "Our purpose for limiting invitations was to engage the group in a focused discussion on where we are heading on key issues relating to Western water policy and to understand how the hill staff see the Alliance's role as they move future agendas," Smith said.

Taking part in the dinner included the Alliance delegation along with Alliance Director Dan Errotabere (CALIFORNIA), Tom Birmingham (CALIFORNIA), Reclamation Commissioner John Keys, Bureau of Reclamation Director of External and Government Affairs Mark Limbaugh, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Interior Jason Peltier, Valerie West (staff of Senator Gordon Smith [R-OREGON]), Josh Johnson and Doug Yoder (House Resources Committee), and Paul Griffin (staff of Rep. Greg Walden [R-OREGON]).

"Overall, our team agreed that it was a productive trip and that we made some excellent contacts," Smith said. "There is still a big roadblock in the Senate due to the narrow margins of control. "This does not look like it will be rectified by the mid-term elections. That intensifies our need to develop administrative solutions to our key issues."

AN IMPORTANT MEETING was held with Assistant Interior Secretary Bennett Raley, Keys, Limbaugh, Bureau
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Annual Meeting Is March 6-7

Mark your 2003 calendar for Thursday and Friday, March 6 and 7. That's when the 15th Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting and Conference will take place at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino, on The Strip in Las Vegas (NEVADA).

A complete registration package will be mailed in early November. The Alliance is holding the line on costs. Room rates will be \$95 per night.

"Our program will be stronger than ever," said Executive Director Craig Smith. "You will have an opportunity to interact with our Washington Insiders panel and again have your questions answered by Reclamation's regional directors." Other presentations will feature critical and timely information on water quality and Endangered Species Act issues that are dominating our business environment.

"This is a Conference you will not want to miss," Smith says.

Humboldt Transfer Gets OK In Congress

Another proposal backed by the Family Farm Alliance's Project Transfer Council has met with success in Congress.

The Senate unanimously adopted a House measure approving transfer of the Humboldt Project to the Pershing County Water Conservation District located near Lovelock (NEVADA). President Bush is expected to sign
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ALLIANCE DELEGATION PLEASED WITH D.C. MEETINGS

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Operations Director William Rinne and Peltier. "Our meeting at Interior was productive," Smith said. "The Bureau committed to investigating the Warren Act issue and to tell us why the revenues from Warren Act activities are no longer credited to the project accounts. They also committed to research their legal authority to extend payments for the capital items that have been expensed as a result of the recent CFO audits. They also will be investigating impacts outside

of the Central Valley Project in California." The Bureau has adopted a helpful posture in dealing with CFO concerns and the possibility that significant new cost obligations could arise from the audits.

"Bennett Raley challenged us to develop a target list of 'doable' issues that his office and Reclamation can pursue in the next 18 months," Smith said, noting that the administration is beginning to feel a time crunch created by the upcoming Presidential election in 2004.

Other Meetings Held By 'Farmer Lobbyists'

Ten other meetings were held in Washington last month by the Family Farm Alliance's "Farmer Lobbyist" delegation. Here are highlights of those meetings:

Josh Johnson, Staff Director,
Water and Power Subcommittee,
House Resources Committee

Doug Yoder, Sub-Committee Staff

A briefing was given on all five key Alliance issues, with a request for assistance if legislation is needed to correct the CFO audit issue.

Rep. Greg Walden (R-Oregon)

Paul Griffin, Legislative Assistant

The delegation met with Rep. Walden on the Alliance's desire to see Rep. Walden's sound science bill enacted. Alternative approaches to implementing a Sound Science standard were discussed, if Congress should fail to act on the bill.

Four separate meetings conducted with Congressional staff members:

Tricia Geringer, Legislative Assistant
to Rep. George Radanovich (R-California)

Warren Weinstein, Legislative Assistant
to Senator Diane Feinstein (D-California)

Jessica Carter, Legislative Director
to Representative Richard Pombo (R-California)

Jim Travis, Legislative Assistant
to Rep. Cal Dooley (D-California)

Each of the legislative staff meetings focused on all five of the Alliance's issues, with special emphasis on the financial impacts each of these issues is having on irrigation districts.

Ben Grumbles,

Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water, EPA

Meeting focused on current lawsuits requiring EPA to consult on pesticide registrations. These lawsuits could cripple production agriculture and impose huge monitoring costs on irrigation districts.

Rep. John Linder's Staff (R-Georgia)

Doug Yoder,
House Resources Committee staff
**National Water Resources
Association Staff**

**Association of California Water
Agencies Staff**

OWRC lobbyist

The Alliance delegation was asked to attend a joint meeting with Rep. Linder's staff to discuss his bill that would create a national water policy commission. Rep. Linder is attempting to pass legislation that would create a blue ribbon national commission to address water supply into the next century. The Alliance agreed to provide comments on the revised bill.

Steve Lanich, Democratic Staff,
House Resources Committee

A briefing was given that focused on CFO audit and Warren Act revenue issues, with a request for support if legislation is required.

Julie MacDonald, Special Assistant to the
Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks

MacDonald has been in this position only a few months. She served in a similar role in California. We briefed her on the EPA consultation issue and the need for coordination with Fish and Wildlife.

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HUMBOLDT

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the bill, H.R. 5200. The Senate opted to adopt the House passed version without amendment rather than dealing with the Senate's own bill.

Pershing Manager Bennie Hodges and district Directors Mike Gottschalk, Bob Gibson and others worked with Alliance Project Transfer Council Director and Washington (D.C.) lobbyist Joe Findaro and Laura Schroeder, an Oregon water attorney.

"Their efforts all paid off in bringing this bill to a successful resolution," said Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Craig Smith. "Congratulations!"

The Alliance will continue to work with Reclamation contractors to make project transfers a reality whenever possible.
