

## Minutes

### Public Hearing and Joint Session of the Boards of County Commissioners of Benton County, Klickitat County and Yakima County April 27, 2009

Benton County Public Utility District, Conference Room, Prosser, WA

#### County Commissioners Present:

**Benton County:** Chairman Max Benitz, Jr., Commissioner Leo Bowman,  
Commissioner James Beaver

**Klickitat County:** Chairman David Sauter, Commissioner Rex F. Johnston,  
Commissioner Ray Thayer

**Yakima County:** Chairman J. Rand Elliot, Commissioner Mike D. Leita,  
Commissioner Kevin J Bouchey

**Present During All or a Portion of the Public Hearing and Joint Session:** David McClure and Doreen Wooden—Klickitat County Natural Resources Department, Adam Fyall—Benton County, Greg Schuler-Department of Ecology, Bruce Beauchene-City of Kennewick, Clark Posey-Benton County Planning, Mike Shuttleworth-Benton County Planning, Cami McKenzie-Benton County.

#### Call to Order

Acting as Chairman for the public hearing and joint session of the Boards of County Commissioners of Benton, Klickitat, and Yakima Counties (hereinafter referred to collectively as “the Boards”), Benton County Commissioner Max Benitz, Jr. called the meeting to order at 2:00 P.M. Chairman Benitz welcomed the commissioners from Yakima and Klickitat Counties to Benton County and thanked them for participating.

Chairman Benitz informed that the purpose of the meeting was to consider the watershed management plan for Rock Creek-Glade Watershed, WRIA 31 (WRIA 31). Chairman Benitz said that, with the county commissioners’ agreement, the meeting would open with a public hearing for approximately a half an hour with a staff report on the WRIA [Water Resource Inventory Area] plan, followed by proponents’ testimony and then opponents’ testimony, followed by clarification of matters raised by the testimony. The public hearing will then be closed and action by all nine county commissioners will be requested. The three Boards of County Commissioners agreed.

#### Public Hearing

Chairman Benitz opened the public hearing and invited David McClure to provide a summary.

#### Staff Reports

David McClure informed that he is the director of Klickitat County’s Natural Resources Department and served as the coordinator for the watershed planning effort. Watershed planning was initiated in WRIA 31 in 2001 with the concurrence of Yakima County, Benton County, Klickitat County and City of Kennewick. However, it took a while to organize the planning effort and the Planning Unit did not started meeting until 2003. Yakima County elected not to participate in the planning process, but did not opt out of watershed planning as could have been done under statue. Therefore, Yakima County,

Benton County and Klickitat County need to participate in the public hearing and approval of the plan. The planning effort included the water quantity, water quality, and habitat components of watershed planning, but did not include developing a recommendation for an in-stream flow rule.

Mr. McClure informed that the Planning Unit conducted watershed assessments, as required in statute, as well as a couple of supplemental studies. One study evaluated surface and ground water quality. The other was at a multi purpose water storage study. The planning process concluded in January 2008 with the Planning Unit unanimously approving the proposed watershed plan and recommending it to the three Boards of County Commissioners.

Mr. McClure informed that the proposed watershed plan was reviewed pursuant to the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) by Klickitat County Planning Director Curt Dryer and Tom Tebb of the Department of Ecology acting lead officials under a co-lead agency agreement between Klickitat County and the Department of Ecology. They issued a determination of significance and adopted the state-wide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Watershed Planning plus an addendum to the final EIS for Watershed Planning. The Boards may consider comments on the adopted addendum to the final EIS for Watershed Planning, but the final EIS for Watershed Planning is not open for public comment. Opening the adopted addendum for comment is not required under the SEPA rules, but we have opened it for public comment. We advertised that the public is welcome to attend this meeting and speak on SEPA issues as well as testify for or against the proposed watershed plan.

Chairman Benitz called for questions.

Commissioner Leo Bowman inquired about the City of Kennewick being an initiating government, and whether the City would need to sign a resolution adopting the watershed plan.

Mr. McClure explained that under statute the counties are the only parties that need to approve the proposed watershed plan. He noted that Bruce Beauchene from the City of Kennewick is present at the hearing and informed that the City's representative did vote to approve the watershed plan when it was before the Planning Unit.

There being no other questions, Chairman Benitz thanked Mr. McClure and invited Adam Fyall to report.

Mr. Fyall informed that he is Benton County Commissioners' staff and has served as the Chairman of the Planning Unit from 2003 to present. He expressed appreciation for the efforts of Watershed Planning Coordinator David McClure and Greg Schuler from the Department of Ecology. He commented on high level participation by the Planning Unit members and expressed appreciation for their efforts. He also recognized Mercer Canyons which allowed the Planning Unit to meet at their office, which one of the few meeting places that are centrally located in the watershed. In summary, Mr. Fyall said that, speaking on behalf of the Planning Unit which unanimously endorsed the plan, we would like to see the commissioners adopt the plan.

Chairman Benitz called for questions. There being none, Chairman Benitz thanked Mr. Fyall and invited Greg Schuler to report.

Greg Schuler informed that he is the Department of Ecology who is assigned to represent the agency, well as other state agencies. The Department of Fish and Wildlife and State Health Department were the two other agencies he worked with the most in helping the Planning Unit achieve the approved

proposed plan. All requirements under the statute have been met in terms of preparing this plan and approving it. The Planning Unit was a stellar group to work with. The Planning Unit addressed difficult issues and we were able to work through them between Ecology management, other agencies, and the Planning Unit. In approving the plan, as part of the Planning Unit, he accepted a number of obligations that are in the plan pertaining to how Ecology works with the Planning Unit, currently and in the future, so that we can move forward. Most of these are process obligations that lay the foundation for the Planning Unit to continue great work.

Commissioner Leo Bowman inquired about how many WRIA's in the state have not completed watershed planning.

Mr. Schuler stated that there are a few were late in getting started in the WRIA process and are in the early to middle of the assessment phase. Most have completed their plans. There are four or five on the west side of the state that did not make it through with an approved plan due to issues that could not be resolved.

There being no other questions, Chairman Benitz thanked Mr. Schuler.

#### Public Testimony

Chairman Benitz opened the hearing to receive testimony from those wishing to speak in favor of the watershed plan.

Bruce Beauchene approached the Boards and stated his name and address for the record:

Bruce Beauchene – City of Kennewick, Utility Services Manager;  
Home address 98705 East Clover Road, Kennewick WA 99336.

Mr. Beauchene stated that he was speaking in support of the document and report. This has been an on going process that has taken many years. With the support of Mr. McClure and Mr. Fyall and the support of the counties that initiated it, the first part of the process has been completed. Continued support is important to address some of the big water issues we have in this WRIA. Water is the key to continue growth. As a representative of the largest city within the WRIA, we understand the importance of developing our water resources. We are fortunate to have the Columbia River, which we rely on; but we all know that water availability in the River is being challenged. It is a big issue that we are dealing with. The City of Kennewick is looking at an aquifer storage and recovery project, which was kicked-off as part of the watershed planning process and a grant from Ecology. In closing, Mr. Beauchene thanked everyone involved and expressed appreciation for their continuing support.

Chairman Benitz thanked Mr. Beauchene and called for testimony from those wishing to speak in favor of the proposed watershed management plan. Hearing none, Chairman Benitz called for testimony from those wishing to speak in opposition to the proposed watershed management plan. Hearing none, Chairman Benitz called for questions or clarifying statements regarding the testimony. There being none, Chairman Benitz closed the public hearing.

#### **Joint Session of the Boards of County Commissioners**

Chairman Benitz opened deliberations by the Boards. He informed that Benton County prepared a draft resolution accepting the watershed management plan and asked for deliberation of the options.

Chairman Benitz thanked Mr. McClure for his leadership and thanked the Klickitat County Commissioners for making him available to help. He then thanked Adam Fyall and Greg Schuler for their time and hard work.

Commissioner Bowman moved for approval of the “Watershed Management Plan Rock-Glade Watershed (WRIA 31).”

Commissioner David Sauter seconded the motion.

Chairmen Benitz asked for questions from Yakima County.

Commissioner Mike Leita informed that the Yakima County Commissioners had no questions and spoke in favor of the resolution.

Chairmen Benitz asked for questions from Klickitat County.

Commissioner David Sauter informed that the Klickitat County Commissioners had no questions and spoke in favor of the resolution.

Chairmen Benitz asked for questions from Benton County.

Commissioner Beaver thanked the team involved in the planning effort. He noted for the record that Department of Ecology participated as part of the team. He gave recognition and expressed appreciation to the Department of Ecology for stepping forward and getting involved in trying to solve the problems.

Commissioner Bowman called for the question. Chairman Benitz called the question. The motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Benitz adjourned the joint session of Benton, Klickitat, and Yakima Counties at 2:23 P.M.

Board of County Commissioners  
of Benton County, Washington

Board of County Commissioners  
of Klickitat County, Washington

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Chairman

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Chairman

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Clerk of the Board

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Clerk of the Board

Board of County Commissioners  
of Yakima County, Washington

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