

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF JOINT COMMITTEE
OF THE OWYHEE PROJECT**

May 30, 2019

A special meeting of the Joint Committee of the Owyhee Project to discuss water releases from the Owyhee Dam was held at the offices of Stunz, Fonda, Kiyuna & Horton, LLP, 106 Main Street, Nyssa Oregon, at 10:40 a.m., on May 30, 2019, Eric White, Chairman, presiding.

The following members of the Joint Committee were present:

Eric White	Bruce Corn
Frank Ausman	Dan Tschida
Brett Nielsen	

Also present were: Jay Chamberlin, Manager of the Hydro Projects; John Eells, South Board Manager; Harvey Manser, OID Assistant Manager; Michael W. Horton, Secretary; Monty Culbertson and Dillon Mitchell, Old Owyhee Ditch Company; and Peter Cooper and Joel Fenoglio, USBR.

WATER SITUATION. Mr. Chamberlin said that inflows at Rome are 1,584 cfs and rising. He said that between 8:30 p.m., and 9:00 p.m., last night the releases below the Dam through the jet flows were increased to 2,600 cfs. Mr. White said that the river channel is holding up pretty good.

Mr. Chamberlin said that the weather forecast is more storm warnings in the Owyhee Watershed.

Peter Cooper with Reclamation said that the Owyhee River is loaded up with water. He said that Mountain City picked up one inch of rain in one hour. He said that warnings are currently out for the Southern watershed. He said there is unsettled weather predicted through Sunday with some reprieve forecasted but then getting another storm to follow the short reprieve. He said the forecast today is of slow moving storms throughout the watershed with up to two inches of rain in some of the storms. He said reclamation is predicting flows of 5,000 cfs in the Owyhee River for the next four to five days. He then explained new river gauges on the upper Owyhee River. He said this is a hard watershed to forecast as is the water flow travel time. He said that right now they are estimating flow travel time from Mountain City to the Dam at four to five days. He said the ground is saturated throughout the watershed.

Mr. Chamberlin said he will need some flexibility to operate the facility. He said based upon what is coming at us, he would like to be authorized to make releases and store water on a 7 to 10 day full schedule. He said it is very difficult to give hard numbers. He said that he would like to be able to maintain a 15,000 acre foot cushion in the reservoir as best as he can.

Mr. Chamberlin said that the ring gate is commissioned and ready to go. He said that USGS staff are working on the measuring facility below the Dam and once they are done, he

proposes using the ring gate, in addition to the jet flows, to increase flows to 3,500 cfs. He said the inflows will need to be watched hourly and that he does not want to have to increase the flows down the river by 1,000 cfs overnight. Mr. Cooper agreed saying that this is a very dynamic situation and that management will need to have flexibility.

The Joint Committee members discussed the matter. It was their consensus that staff did the right thing by increasing flows down the river to 2,600 cfs. Mr. Corn said this is an extraordinary situation. Mr. Cooper said that it is similar to 1964. Mr. White said that the big difference is the river channel has tightened up a lot since 1964. Mr. Cooper noted that the National Weather Service needs to update their flood stage levels in recognition of the tightened river channels. The Committee members discussed their concerns on potential crop loss. Mr. Corn asked if any homes are currently at risk and was advised that they are not. It was noted that the Snake River is currently at 21,000 cfs. Mr. Cooper said he expects Snake River to come up another 3,000 cfs.

Mr. Manser reported on the measurements he has taken on the lower Owyhee River. He said from 7:00 a.m., yesterday to 7:00 a.m., today the river has come up 2 feet at Overstreet and 1.6 feet at the highway. Mr. Culbertson said that the 2,600 cfs release was at Overstreet by this morning. He said the water appears to be getting into a field by Borge Lane.

The water situation was discussed at length. Mr. Cooper said that the Boise weather radar is currently down for maintenance. After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Ausman, seconded by Mr. Corn, and unanimously carried authorizing Mr. Chamberlin to fill the reservoir on a 7 to 10 day fill schedule with the filling and releases based upon river flows and that an emergency meeting of the Joint Committee be called if river flows at Rome exceed 10,000 cfs.

The Committee members discussed meeting again at 10:30 a.m., on Monday, June 3. After discussion, it was the consensus of the Joint Committee members to meet on that date and time. Mr. Chamberlin explained the work USGS is doing on the measuring structure below the Dam. He said the ring gate is responding well. The Committee members discussed bridge and church camp access.

ADJOURNMENT. There being no further business to come before the meeting, the same was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Secretary

APPROVED: _____