

V. COLUMBIA RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT GROUP

Future Direction of the CRWMG:

It was suggested that this discussion should begin with a reprinting of the CRWMG Charter, last revised in 1972. For brevity, only the “Purpose” section is highlighted here; please take the time to read the entire charter (<http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil/crwmg/charter.pdf>):

***“Purpose:** The Columbia River Water Management Group will act as a committee to consider problems relating to operation and management of water control facilities. Upon review and discussion of the problems the group will make tentative recommendations for consideration of the individual agencies having primary responsibilities in these areas. Particular emphasis will be placed on coordination of river system operations including the efficient operation of the hydrometeorological system required for each operation. The basic objective of the group is to facilitate agreement among the agencies in the interest of more effective and efficient public service in the use of water resources of the Pacific Northwest.”*

The role of the group has slowly changed over the years from one of potential decision making to one of more-or-less information dissemination. Other forums and processes are now in place (TMT, IT, Federal Caucus, etc.) to guide regional decisions and coordination. Further, the internet has dramatically altered the manner in which data and information is shared. Virtually all of the information presented at current CRWMG meetings is available from the respective agency websites, or could be made so with minimal effort. It was agreed that the CRWMG still serves a viable purpose, but that the function of the group should be redefined to reflect the changes that have occurred, as well as enhance the role the group can play in future activities. To that end, the following specific decisions were made.

Meeting Schedule: The group will meet twice a year, in April and October. Each meeting will provide an opportunity to review pertinent operations and issues along with a preview of upcoming activities. While the exact format of these meetings is up for discussion, effort should be made to move away from routine reporting of data (available on websites) to more dynamic discussion of items that are of mutual interest to the group. The basic structure of the meetings will be for a business meeting in the morning, followed by an afternoon workshop/technical presentation session.

Workshops/Technical Presentations: In conjunction with the twice-yearly meetings, the CRWMG will host an afternoon session of technical presentations. The goal is to expand both the information exchange role of the group and the audience beyond the typical participants of CRWMG meetings. The topics will be wide ranging but related to some aspect of managing the water and power resources of the Columbia Basin. Examples: new forecast techniques/results, climate workshops, fish recovery numbers/trends, ESA updates, power marketing issues, basin modeling efforts, relicensing, etc. CRWMG members are expected to solicit potential topics and presenters, and the rotating Chairman will take the lead in organizing the afternoon session.

Replacement of Permanent Secretary: Roger Ross, longstanding secretary for the group, accepted another position within the COE that did not allow him to continue this role. The COE does not have the resources to name a permanent replacement, nor were the other members willing to commit a person. Therefore, the position of secretary was disbanded. Meeting minutes will no longer be taken. Rather, agency data reports will be made available via links from the CRWMG web page. Each reporting agency will be responsible for providing a consistent web location for posting these reports and updating them on a timely basis each month. The Chairman will help coordinate this effort. The Chairman will also document and send out for review any business decisions made at CRWMG meetings.

Annual Blue Book: There is wide consensus within and outside the CRWMG on the value of the annual Blue Book and its continued publication. Much of the narrative and coordination of the Blue Book was the

responsibility of the secretary. This responsibility will fall to the contributing agencies, which will continue to submit annual write-ups. The COE will provide a 'template' format to facilitate these write-ups, provide the data plots, and publish the Blue Book in pdf format on the CRWMG web page. The proposed deadline for submissions is Jan. 31 of each year.