

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

March 29, 2011

A special meeting of the Joint Committee of the Owyhee Project was held at the office of Stunz, Fonda, Kiyuna & Horton, LLP, 106 Main Street, Nyssa, Oregon, on March 29, 2011, at 1:05 p.m. Frank Ausman, Chairman, presiding.

The following members of the Joint Committee were present:

Bruce Corn	Jerry Nagaki
Frank Ausman	David Shenk
Dan Tschida	Brett Nielsen (South Board Alternate)

Also present were: Jay Chamberlin, Manager of the Hydro Projects; Michael W. Horton, Attorney of the Joint Committee; Tom Zittercob, Hydro Operator (who joined the meeting at 1:24 p.m.); Eric White, OID Alternate; Ron Keester, South Board Manager; Harvey Manser; OID Assistant Manager; Andy Peutz, OID Ditch Company Board Member; Lance Peterson, District Patron; Larry Meyer, *Argus Observer* newspaper; Deputy Hunsucker, Malheur County Sheriff's Office; Robert Peterson, District Patron; Wes Allison, Nyssa Rural Road District; and Monty Culbertson, Owyhee Ditch Company Manager.

MEETING NOTICE. Mr. Chamberlin said that the meeting notice was sent out on March 28, 2011, to the media as to the time, date, and place of the meeting.

Chairman Ausman opened the meeting for business and had everyone present introduce themselves.

Mr. Chamberlin said that the meeting was called because of the precipitation that has come in. He said there were triggers set for a meeting and that even though these triggers have not yet been met, the snow numbers have increased 10% since yesterday. Mr. Corn noted that Mud Flat has really increased in snow/water equivalent. Mr. Horton handed out the 2006 minutes of the Joint Committee, which was a similar year to this one, in order that the Joint Committee members could see what actions the Joint Committee took during that year. He also handed out a National Weather Service Northern Nevada Hydro Outlook, which is predicting a warmup in the southern portions of the District's watershed. Mr. Chamberlin also passed out handouts, copies of which are attached to these minutes. The Joint Committee members reviewed the handouts.

Chairman Ausman said that since Mr. Chamberlin recently flew over part of the basin, he asked him if he felt that the snow site data is correct. Mr. Chamberlin said that the data is a

true reflection of what he saw. Mr. Chamberlin said that in talking with Bureau staff, they feel confident in their forecast. The USBR handout shows comparable snow pack years with average inflows for that month. Mr. Chamberlin said that NRCS is going to fly over the basin on Thursday. Mr. Chamberlin said that he will fly Wednesday or Thursday. Mr. Shenk asked Mr. Chamberlin what he thinks the flows from the reservoir should be. Mr. Chamberlin said that he can only go by the forecast.

Mr. Chamberlin said that reservoir storage is to the point that the Joint Committee should consider leaving room in the reservoir and not increase storage at this time. He explained that the Dam was not built for flood control, but rather for irrigation. He said that the jet flow valves can let out 2,400 cfs. He said that reservoir levels are at a height now that the ring gate can now be made operational.

Mr. Shenk said that the south country looks awfully white for this time of year. The current snow packs were discussed. Mr. Chamberlin said that the Joint Committee needs to come up with a schedule and triggers with regard to releases. He said if the Committee does nothing at this time, the reservoir will fill in thirteen days. He said that he would like to keep a 100,000 acre foot cushion in the reservoir. He said that way if the reservoir gets a spike, it does not have to be passed below the reservoir and impact the landowners. Mr. Corn asked if one jet flow valve at a time were opened if that would help. Mr. Chamberlin said that safety is a concern and that recreators need to know that flows will be increasing. Mr. Chamberlin said that crossings will be taken out and that he would suggest starting with one jet flow valve opened halfway in order to give people warning. He suggested that the one jet flow valve be opened the rest of the way tomorrow morning and that this would get 1,000 cfs into the river. He suggested opening a second jet flow valve halfway the next day and continue the schedule until all three jet flow valves are opened. He said that this would also allow fish to move and find safe havens. The Committee members and audience discussed pulling bridges. Mr. Chamberlin said that with the three jet flow valves and the Dam Plant running, the releases below the reservoir would total approximately 2,600 cfs.

At 1:24 p.m., Tom Zittercob joined the meeting.

Mr. Corn suggested that the Committee meet again after Mr. Chamberlin has flown over the snow sites. Mr. Nielsen said that releases need to get started as he believes that there is a lot of water that will be coming. Mr. Chamberlin said that according to the long-range forecasts, this is to be a cooler, wetter spring and early summer.

Mr. Chamberlin reiterated his belief that the Committee should leave a 100,000 acre foot cushion in the reservoir. Mr. Keester noted that the storms are currently coming out of the South. Mr. Chamberlin said when the Boise and Snake River flows come up, water starts backing up the Owyhee River to Owyhee Junction.

Robert Peterson said that the Owyhee River will overflow its banks once flows get to 4,000 cfs. Mr. Chamberlin said he believes this will happen at 2,500 cfs. Mr. Allison said that there are a lot of beaver dams and debris in the lower river and that this will have to go somewhere.

Mr. Chamberlin said that the sheriff's emergency services did handouts in 2006 to people with interests along the river and that helped a lot.

Mr. Nielsen asked when the canals should be started. Mr. Chamberlin said that OID might be able to take some water into the canal system on April 6. Mr. Keester said that the South Board could take a little bit, but not much. The matter was discussed. Mr. Keester said that he would prefer to stick to April 11 for the date to turn water into the canal system. He said that in the meantime, South Board could take 30 to 40 cfs. Mr. Chamberlin noted that once the canal systems are watered up, the ditchriders have to maintain and ride the ditches.

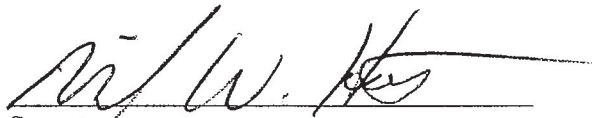
Deputy Hunsucker said that he has spoken to people in low lying areas along the river. He said that all of them had already been contacted by Owyhee Irrigation District staff and that they have done a good job of contacting people. He said that his office will station sandbags at Owyhee Junction. Mr. Chamberlin said that he will do some press releases and that District staff will notify campers along the river.

A discussion on releases from the Dam was had. Chairman Ausman asked for a motion on water releases. A motion was made by Mr. Corn that the first jet flow valve be opened halfway right away and that it be opened the rest of the way after twelve hours and that the schedule of opening valves continue until all three jet flow valves are at full capacity. The motion was seconded by Mr. Nielsen. Mr. Sherk made a motion to amend the motion to have the Joint Committee meet on Friday, April 1, here in Mr. Horton's office at 11:00 a.m. The motion to amend was seconded by Mr. Nielsen and passed unanimously. A vote was had on the original motion which passed unanimously.

A discussion was had with regard to emergencies in the event of flooding and which entities will be responsible for various tasks. Notifying people with interests along the river about the Joint Committee's action today was discussed.

ADJOURNMENT. There being no further business to come before the meeting, the same was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Secretary

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_