

Water Measurement and Reporting Workgroup Report

House Water Committee
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Caylin Barter, Wild Salmon Center

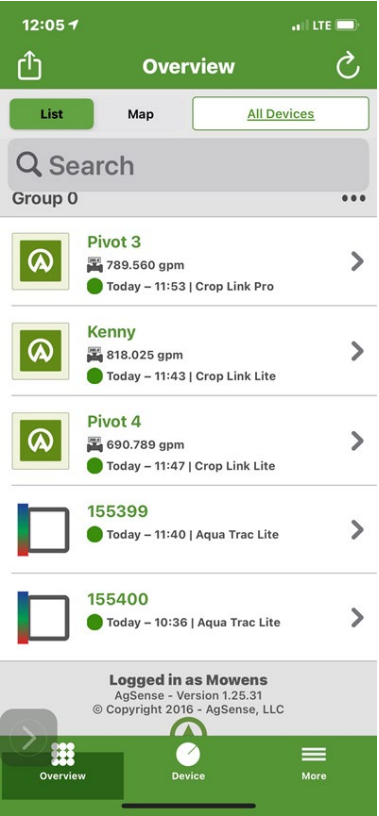
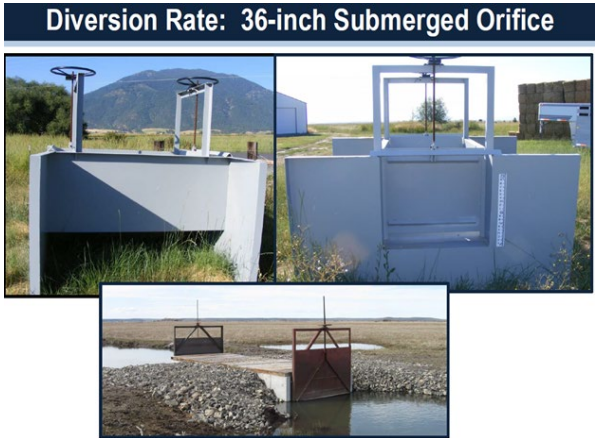
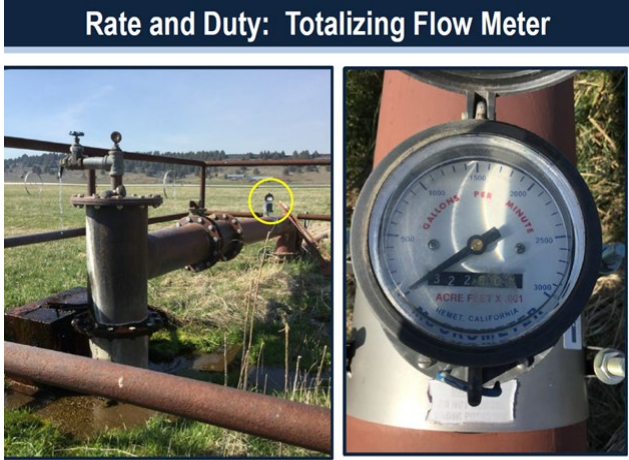
Mary Anne Cooper, Oregon Farm Bureau





Background and History

- Integrated Water Resources Strategy: critical need for better data and information on water use.
- Water data is used for water distribution, planning, basin studies, water availability assessments, conservation projects, compliance, etc.
- The Department has authority to require measurement of water use. OWRD has limited authority to require reporting of water use.
- Commission's 2000 Surface Water Use Measurement Strategy directs OWRD to focus on measurement of significant points of diversion with biggest impact on streamflow in areas with greatest fish need.
- Since 1993, most new water rights have measurement and reporting conditions, some of which need to be activated by the Department.
- Government entities (including municipalities and irrigation districts) must measure and report monthly water use on annual basis.
- Measurement and reporting can occur with designation of a Serious Water Management Problem Area or Critical Groundwater Area.
- Measuring devices can range in cost from several hundred dollars to thousands of dollars depending on system characteristics.
- Water measurement cost-share program can cover up to 75% of the cost of installation, repair or replacement of device.



Measuring Devices

Measurement & Reporting: Fundamentals

Conservation Groups

- Authority to OWRD to require reporting where measurement already required
- Increased measurement and reporting in several priority basins, scale up over time
- OWRD discretion to require reporting of rate and/or duty
- OWRD discretion to require reporting more frequently than annually
- No limitation on use or accessibility of water measurement data
- Installed measuring device should be primary means of data collection, with alternate compliance where device is infeasible
- Preserve existing authority for measurement and reporting under other programs
- Support expanded investment in cost-share

Agricultural Groups

- Pilot program to scale up measurement and reporting in priority basins around the state.
- Tie increased measurement and reporting to OWRD's ability to collect other needed data and availability of cost share dollars.
- Annual reporting of monthly volume of water consistent with current reporting requirements.
- Allowance for alternatives to measurement and reporting (i.e. evapotranspiration, gauges, etc)
- Relief from requirements if measurement devices break.
- Aggregation of data by subbasin or basin within OWRD.
- Protection from reported data being used for forfeiture.
- Exclusion of irrigation districts and their patrons.



Agricultural Perspective

- Very few consensus points because depends on a total package, and we remain very far apart on key issues.
- OFB and OAN offered a framework for statewide measurement and reporting that our members were comfortable with. All ag groups didn't have consensus on this framework.
- Broad framework:
 - Allow the Department to require measurement and reporting where they are undertaking a “focused review” – which is defined as the creation of a water budget, a basin study or an assessment of water availability (the idea being that they can only require the data where they are going to use it for actual planning).
 - The proposal allowed the Department to require measurement of rate and/or volume (consistent with current authority), but only allows them to require reporting of monthly water use by volume.

Agricultural Perspective

- Water user compromises:
 - Allowed statewide approach (no longer a pilot program)
 - No data aggregation
- Sticking points:
 - Whether reporting should be annual or more frequent
 - Whether forfeiture protections are necessary.
- Water user needs:
 - Tie to resources, both for focused review and cost share of measurement devices.
 - Need to have flexibility in implementation (alternatives to measurement, protection from live time data transmission, deal with equipment malfunction).
 - Carve out irrigation district and their patrons because their use is already reported.



Conservation Perspective

- Conservation groups support statutory enhancements that give the state the tools and information it needs to proactively steward the public's waters for instream and out-of-stream uses in the face of worsening drought, increasing water demand, and changing climate.
- Workgroup offered opportunity to learn from OWRD and water users, and to consider those perspectives in proposing enhancements to existing authority.
- Conservation groups developed, considered, and offered amendments to multiple proposals throughout course of workgroup:
 - M/R in priority basins with tiered scale-up
 - M/R for developing water budgets
 - M/R in pilot priority basins with scale-up
 - M/R to support focused reviews, etc.
- Consensus on any particular topic area depends on overall package under consideration, and groups are still far apart:
 - Use and accessibility of data, type of data (rate, volume, how measured), reporting frequency, role of cost-share, expansions to cost-share, exceptions to M/R requirements...
- Exploring different concepts in workgroup helped to clarify positions and priorities, including shared understanding of areas where additional investment in OWRD would help address existing barriers.
 - Over time, these investments would increase water data availability, accuracy, and usability.
 - They would also advance the starting point for future discussions.



Shared Funding Priorities

- While we did not have agreement on a policy proposal around enhancements to water use measurement and reporting, there is broad support among both conservation and water user groups regarding the need to invest in water data.
- Shared support for:
 - Scaling up investment in observation wells and streamflow gauges
 - Scaling up basin studies and/or water budget development
 - Investing in water measurement cost share program, including money for measuring devices
 - Investing in field staff to assist with measurement
 - Investing in upgrades to OWRD water use database and water use reporting web interface
- Hoping those investments can move forward in 2021





Questions?

