

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

May 28, 2019

An emergency 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 12:30 p.m., on May 28, 2019, Eric White, Chairman, presiding.

The following members of the Joint Committee were present:

Eric White	Bruce Corn
Dan Tschida	Frank Ausman
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; and Jerry Nagaki (OID Alternate).

MEETING NOTICE. Mr. Chamberlin said that emergency meeting notice was given to the public through the District's Facebook page and a call in to the local newspaper.

OWYHEE RIVER FLOWS. Mr. Chamberlin said that Reclamation staff called him on Sunday morning concerned about storms that are circling around the Owyhee watershed. Mr. Chamberlin said that in the last seven days storage in the reservoir is going up by about 5,000 acre feet per day. He said the storms appear to be isolated over the weekend, but there were a number of them which the watershed is picking up. He said that Reclamation is predicting stream flows on the Owyhee River at Rome up to 8,000 cfs for the next few days. He said that later in the day on Sunday, Reclamation's forecast for the river flows went down to between 5,000 cfs to 6,000 cfs. He said he called the sheriff's office and other agencies that the river flows below the dam would start ramping up. He said that they began Monday morning with the goal of having 8,000 cfs in the river below the dam.

Mr. Chamberlin said that he just spoke to Reclamation staff immediately before this meeting. He said they are forecasting another storm hitting in Nevada and that the upper river is full for over 100 miles upstream of the reservoir. He said Reclamation staff is recommending that releases be increased to 2,500 to 3,000 cfs from the Owyhee Dam.

Committee members expressed concerns of potential flooding along the river at those flows with planting of crops already done. Mr. Chamberlin explained by doing this now would prevent the possibility of having to go to 5,000 cfs all at once in 2¹/₂ days when the reservoir will be full.

Mr. Chamberlin explained that that the snow in the watershed is all gone and this is all just from storm activity. He explained there is no time to slowly ramp up in order to clear the channel, but that the flows need to be increase fairly quickly.

Mr. Chamberlin explained that Wild Horse Reservoir is releasing water. Current on-line reports of river flows and storage were reviewed during the meeting. The Rome gauge stands at 3,500 cfs. Storage is at 695,643 acre feet and current releases from the Owyhee Dam are at 654 cfs. Mr. Chamberlin said that the target is to get to 800 cfs by the end of the day.

The Committee members discussed the situation. Mr. Ausman said that the choices are to cause some flooding with 2,500 to 3,000 cfs or cause a lot of flooding damage if action is not taken. Mr. Chamberlin said that the problem is that this is not snow melt and is very difficult to predict. He said that the reason releases were not ramped up when the storm started were because the snow was all gone, the storms do not normally hold on like this, and the reservoir storage had started down. Maximum usage of the canals to help capture some of the flows was discussed.

The Committee members noted that this is an unprecedented situation. They could not recall having two weeks of sustained rains like this late in the season with limited room in the reservoir.


Mr. Chamberlin made a recommendation that flows be set at 1,000 cfs below the Dam by the end of the day and ramped up to 1,500 cfs on Wednesday. The Committee members discussed the recommendation, the risks involved, and potential flooding at length.

Following a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Mr. Nielsen to ramp flows up below the Dam to 1,500 cfs with the canals maxed out with another Joint Committee meeting to be held tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Ausman seconded the motion. Discussion on the motion was had. During the discussion, it was noted that the Snake River is down right now and should not back up the Owyhee River flows. The Committee members voted the motion and it passed unanimously.

Mr. Chamberlin said that he will be notifying all of the appropriate agencies and that alerts are going out. He said the Road District has closed some roads in anticipation of the rising water.

ADJOURNMENT. There being no further business to come before the meeting, the same was adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Secretary

APPROVED: _____