

Water Bank Update

December 13, 2022

11:00 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Pollock, Commissioner Swope, Commissioner Brummer, Eric Eisenberg, Jamie Morin, Amanda Cronin, Andrew Purkey, and Nic Scott

Guest(s): Isabel Vander Stoep, Jared Wenzelburger

Recorder: Tammy Martin

Public Comment: None

Amanda Cronin said AMP Insights has spent time researching the area for water banking overview and figuring out the next steps. The goal is to determine where water will be needed in the future. Water banking sets rules, pricing, matches demand while offsetting supply, handles the state admin processes and determines priorities for banking transactions.

Amanda said it takes due diligence when setting up water banks. Each water bank is water shed specific.

Jamie Morin said there will be mitigation needed for new water rights within Lewis County. The Chehalis Basin and the Cowlitz Basin are the two options available for Lewis County. Jamie said there are two identified potential water rights available. The TransAlta water bank has water rights available, and there is an agriculture water use available north of Toledo. Jamie said there needs to be a letter of intent or a purchase agreement to apply for the Rural Headwater Water Banking Grant.

Jamie said a user would need to apply to the state Department of Ecology for water rights. The Cowlitz Basin is still open to issuing water rights. In closed basins, no new water rights are being issued. Water rights need to be obtained from other water rights users that are no longer utilizing their current rights. These can be used as mitigation.

Eric Eisenberg said limits apply to usage in most basins. At this time, Cowlitz Basin is the only basin that does not have limits to water right usage.

Commissioner Brummer made a motion to direct staff to move forward with a letter of intent for the Rural Headwater Water Banking Grant to be submitted by the February 1, 2023, deadline.

Commissioner Swope seconded. Motion passed 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.