

**RECORD ATTENDANCE AT WATER CONFERENCE**

Tom Tebb, Director of Ecology's Office of the Columbia River, kicked off an afternoon of speakers focused on whether drought has implications for the Columbia River Project. Held in Moses Lake by the Columbia Basin Development League, presentations focused on how drought, a state and national issue, affects the Columbia Basin Project, the largest Reclamation project in the U.S. A common theme throughout the conference was how the increased focus on drought has resulted in an intense and growing interest in water use efficiency which directly affects irrigation issues in the Columbia Basin Project.

Washington State Climatologist Nick Bond shared long-term climate models and discussed his projections for next year and the future. Representatives of the three irrigation districts within the Project (East, South and Quincy) shared news on system efficiencies, conservation projects, and water supply security.

Tim Culbertson, Manager of Columbia Basin Hydropower and Clint Wertz, the new Bureau of Reclamation's Ephrata Field Office Manager talked about how they maintained and maximized returns from Columbia Basin Project infrastructure.

Dr. Troy Peters, Washington State University's Extension Irrigation Specialist shared technologies and strategies to improve on-farm irrigation efficiency.

Levi Johnson, the East Columbia Basin Irrigation District's Development Coordinator, gave details on the extensive work in process on the Odessa Ground Water Replacement Program. Ian Lyle, the League's Washington D.C. lobbyist and Mike Schwisow, the League's state lobbyist discussed the state and federal role in investing in infrastructure on the Columbia Basin Project.

The keynote speaker was Washington Senate Majority Leader, Senator Mark Schoesler of Ritzville who discussed agriculture related successes and challenges in the Washington legislature and renewed a sense of urgency on Columbia Basin Project development efforts.

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Since 1964, the Columbia Basin Development League has supported the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project and its future development. We protect its water rights and educate the public on the renewable resource and multiple-purpose benefits of the project.