



WASHINGTON STATE
VOTER

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Barbara Seitle, President
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Water Study Educational Article #1

by Denise D. Smith

The 2005 State convention approved the “adoption of a two year study to inform members, legislators and citizens of the challenges confronting water in Washington State.” This study will address the issues of “adequate flow for fish and sufficient supply for agriculture” and for municipal needs. It will address the “importance of water to economic stability and the threats to water resources.” Finally, it will consider “conservation as a supply enhancement.” The outcome of the two-year study will be a review and update of the League’s positions on water resources, including the Columbia River and groundwater.

The first year of the two-year process will be a series of educational articles published in the state *VOTER* which will address state policies and rules regulating water resources, and issues affecting the management of water resources. We hope this information will prepare League members to better understand and critically evaluate the convoluted and often conflicting federal, state, and local regulations and policies that influence and direct the management of water resources in our state. A planning sub-committee will research and develop these articles. League members statewide interested in water resources are encouraged to participate in this initial email phase of the study. Those interested should contact the League office for details.

This introductory article will give an overview of the jurisdictions, government agencies and statewide policies that overlay the management of fresh water for multiple concurrent and competing uses. Each segment of the water puzzle presented will have a web address to a program or report that further explains that aspect of water management. The remaining articles in the next three *VOTERS* will elaborate on these aspects of water management.

The Washington State Department of Health 1998 Municipal Water Conservation Analysis and Recommendation presents estimated water use in Washington State from US Geological Survey data.¹ This data shows 74% of water use to agriculture, 11% to industry and 15% to municipal needs. Water usage evolves as our population changes, and is flexible (since water has dual purposes), but these percentages give an idea of the resource use. What is most interesting is that when the state is divided into regions, the proportion allotted to agriculture and to municipal use reverse from eastern Washington to western Washington. These differences in use effect the perception of how water should be used, and may explain many conflicts between eastern and western views of water management.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

The *Washington State VOTER* is published quarterly by the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4710 University Way N.E., Suite #214, Seattle, WA 98105. Yearly subscription: \$10.00. Members of the League of Women Voters of Washington subscribe through their annual dues. Call 206-622-8961 for a local League in your area. Send address changes to the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4710 University Way NE, Suite #214, Seattle, WA 98105.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 22, 2005 - Action Workshop, Bellevue
See Page 8

November 11, 2005 - Symposium on Judicial
Selection and Independence

November 12, 2005 - Women Engaging Globally,
9 - 1, Kane Hall, U.W.

January 23, 2006 - Lobby Day, Olympia, WA

June 2,3,4, 2006 - LWVWA Council, Ellensburg.

June 10-13, 2006 LWVUS Convention -
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Don't forget to check out your local League's
websites at www.lwvwa.org

Winter *VOTER* Deadline

January 13, 2006

Board Splinters

September, 2005

- There will be two Lobby Team organizational meetings before the 2006 Legislative Session: September, 29 and November 10.
- Approved: that LWVWA opposes any proposed "takings" initiative that is substantially similar to Oregon's Measure 37 or to Referendum 48 in Washington. League will review this position when the initiative has been filed, in order to determine whether this statement of position needs to be revised.
- Approved: that LWVWA join the Keep Washington Rolling coalition to fight I-912 on this November's ballot
- There will be an on-line forum on October 13 at 7pm on ballot issues. This forum is co-sponsored by LWVWA, LWV/Seattle, and King 5.
- LWVWA received a letter from the LWVUS in response to our resolution sent to them opposing torture and rendition by the US Government.

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Fall – the time of year when the natural world is going dormant, and the political world comes alive! This is a time of high energy for the League of Women Voters: a time of voter registration, candidate and issues forums, and, on some occasions, advocacy for one or more League positions at the grass-roots level.

There are five initiatives on the ballot this November. We are currently developing the pros and cons regarding the initiatives and are preparing the simplified ballot measures. These will be sent on-line to all local Leagues for distribution to public places such as libraries, senior citizen centers, etc. They will also be posted on our web site www.washingtonvoter.org. Full text of the initiatives may be found on the Secretary of State's web site at www.secstate.wa.gov.

At this time, the state board of directors has taken a position on two of the measures. We are supporting the anti-smoking initiative I-901. We are **vigorously opposing I-912**, the attempt to repeal the new gas tax designed to fund transportation improvements and passed with bi-partisan support in the legislature. It is a matter of public safety and economic necessity to maintain our major transportation corridors, to repair and strengthen bridges and to improve dangerous intersections across the state. We have joined the coalition "Keep Washington Rolling" (www.keepwashingtonrolling.org), and have two representatives attending the coalition meetings; one from our state Transportation Committee and our Transportation Portfolio Chair. We hope that all of you will actively participate in vigorously opposing I-912. The economic viability of our state and the safety of our citizens may well be at stake.

Barbara Seitle
bseitle@whidbey.com

Women Engaging Globally Poverty, Globalization and Trade

University of Washington, Kane Hall
November 12, 9 AM – 1PM

Don't miss this important forum. Convened by LWVWA
LWVUSEF, the Center for Women Policy Studies and
the Women's Environment and Development Organization

Most of the world's poorest of the poor are women. Women make up the vast
majority of both low-wage workers and consumers. How does U.S.
macroeconomic policy impact women around the world?

For details go to www.lwvwa.org

Water Study Continued from Page 1

Water rights direct who uses water and how much water is used. In Washington, the guide is Western Water Law: “first in time first in use.” Water claims predating statehood, and the water code of 1917 and groundwater code of 1945, are senior to most other water rights. These claims include Federal and Indian reserved water rights for public land reserved for specific purposes, such as National Forests, National Parks and Military reservations; large municipal claims; irrigation claims; and small home-steader claims.² Other limiting factors may be water levels needed by the Bureau of Reclamation for hydroelectric power,³ and the environmental requirements from the Water Resource Act of 1971⁴ or the Instream Flow Rule.⁵ Water availability and use is overseen by the department of Ecology.⁶

Water for municipal use comes under the jurisdiction of the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) which is the state agency charged with enforcing the safe drinking water act.⁷ The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is mandated by congress to oversee the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) but states may agreed to “primacy” the acceptance of responsibility to enforce the SDWA.⁸ DOH regulates water systems throughout the state that supply drinking water using the Water Supply Plan and Small Water System Plans submitted by water districts, public and private systems, and water companies.⁹

The responsibilities of DOH and DOE came into head-on conflict with the passage of the Growth Management Act in 1990. GMA restricted where urban growth would continue to expand without a direct link to water availability. Several years of local water shortages, moratoriums, and over-appropriations brought on several legal battles. In an effort to address these issues, the legislature passed the Municipal water bill of 2003.¹⁰ This bill expanded the role of DOH in regulating the expansion of water districts, and changed the working relationship between DOH and DOE. The water conservation component of this bill addressed some of the concerns of the environmental community, but the specifics of this component have not been established, and effectiveness is not known.¹¹

Water for agriculture remains under the jurisdiction of DOE in most cases but is influenced by decisions of the Water Shed management areas and Conservancy Boards.¹² Thirty seven water resource inventory areas (WRIA's), representing 45 of the 62 distinct watersheds across the state, were charged under the 1998 Watershed Planning Act (Chapter 90.82RCW frequently referred to as 2514) to address the water needs of individual watersheds. These plans have been developing over the last several years in a local arena, with participation of local elected officials, local stakeholders, state and county staff, including fish and wildlife staff. The watersheds not planning under 2514 are planning under another process such as Habitat Conservation Plans and include large watersheds such as Cedar-Sammamish and Duwamish-Green River.¹³

The WRIA's were the key focus of the Salmon recovery program started after the listing of 14 species of salmon as threatened or endangered since 1991.¹⁴ They are also involved in setting instream flow levels which DOE defines as “the amount of water needed in streams and rivers for aquatic life, water quality, and other instream values that occur in them.”¹⁵

The Columbia River Initiative is a coordinated state program to address the multiple needs within the Columbia River watershed. This multiple year project lead by DOE has resulted in an extensive report, which received much attention in the eastern regions of the state and provides a thorough overview of water uses and conflicts in that watershed.¹⁶

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Water Study Continued from Page 4

With population growth, the demands on water have increased and often changed the traditional use of water in an area from agricultural to municipal or individual. Additional issues of normal climate variations and global warming also influence supply and availability.¹⁷ The issues and challenges of water supply in the state have only become more complicated and the solutions more costly. The League must be ready to actively participate in the public debate with current knowledge and up-to-date League positions.

1. <http://water.usgs.gov/watuse>
2. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/rights/water-right-home.html>
3. <http://www.doiu.nbc.gov/orientation/bor2.cfm>
4. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/wac173500.html>
5. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/instream-flows/isfhtm.html>
6. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/wrhome.html>
7. <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/default.htm>
8. <http://www.epa.gov/region5/water/cwa.htm>
9. http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/Programs/water_sys_plan.htm
10. http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/municipal_water/municipal_water_law.htm
11. http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/dw/our_main_pages/water_use_efficiency.htm
12. http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/conservancy_boards/cb-home.html
13. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/pubs/0306009.pdf>
14. <http://www.governor.wa.gov/gvro/>
15. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0311007.html>
16. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cr/crhome.html>
17. <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/drought/2005/drthm.html>

"Good In Government" Event Needs Your Help!

The **"Good In Government"** event, to be held in February 2006, will be sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Washington. Barbara Bush, new LWVWA Development Chair, is looking for folks willing to work on the event. Please contact her at 425-349-5184; omi.bush@verizon.net to volunteer.

Now Accepting Nominations for "Good In Government" Award!

We are now accepting nominations for the League's **"Good In Government"** Award to be presented at our event in February 2006. Local Leagues, submit your nomination to LWVWA office by November 30, 2005. Your nomination should include the person's name along with a statement describing their good government contributions. Criteria for the award include:

- Past service in public office, past or current service in a commission, agency or organization.
- Advocate for better government, education, etc.
- Demonstrated civility in public discourse.
- Not currently holding elective office.
- Work efforts had a state wide (or broader) influence.

No On I-912 Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Repeal:

The backers of Initiative 912 argue that the new gas tax does nothing to relieve congestion: The opponents of Initiative 912 argue that it will not only relieve congestion, but that public safety is at stake.

The total cost of projects over the 16 year life of the tax is over \$ 7.1390 Billion. \$2.592 Billion of this is directly related to eliminate traffic choke points and congestion areas..

The major expenditures beyond those for congestion is safety related and is slated for so-called "At Risk" structures. It includes the replacement or repair and retrofit of over 200 bridges throughout the state, the addition of passing lanes, installation of guardrails, revision of dangerous intersections and repair or replacement of earthquake vulnerable structures like the Alaskan Viaduct. The goal of these projects is to save lives by reducing collisions or the severity of collisions at particular locations, and reducing the probability of bridges and overpasses collapsing from age or damage during an earthquake.

There are about 260 projects, large and small, on the statewide list. A few examples of those projects include:

- New lanes on I-5 between Centralia and Grand Mound in Thurston County
- New passing lanes on portions of SR 240 in Benton County
- New bridge at the junction of SR 3 & US 101 in Mason County
- New passing lane for northbound traffic on Blewett Pass in Kittitas County
- Ramp reconstruction of I-5/downtown Bellingham ramps in Whatcom County
- Realign SR 530 away from the Sauk River because of bank erosion in Skagit County
- Partial funding of projects to replace SR 520 bridge and SR 99 viaduct in King County
- Partial funding of new Columbia River Crossing in Clark County
- Seismic retrofit on bridges in high-risk and moderate-risk zones in Snohomish County

Please go to www.wsdot.wa.gov and click on the 2005 Partnership Program Funding and Project List, under Accountability, to find the complete list of projects in your area, or go to your local library for that information. The projects are listed both by category and by county.

The Department of Transportation publishes quarterly accountability reports, called The Gray Notebooks. Those reports are available on the www.wsdot.wa.gov website. Under the Accountability section of the site, click on Quarterly Performance Measures Report and look for The Gray Notebook, or its summary, Gray Notebook Lite.

The motor vehicle fuel tax portion of the overall package of revenues passed by the legislature in 2005 is estimated to be \$5.5 billion. If I-912 passes, there will be little or no money for most of those projects. Any federal monies earmarked for the cancelled projects will be redirected to other states.

With gas prices as high as they currently are, these new motor fuel taxes add to the economic burden for all drivers in Washington State. But the projects those revenues will pay for are very important projects, and there is no other State money available to pay for them.

As an example: the average car in Washington travels about 12,000 miles a year and gets about 17 miles per gallon. In the first year, that means the average amount paid into the Program is 41 cents a week. In the second year, it will double to about 82 cents a week. And in four years, when we are paying the whole 9 1/2 cents per gallon, we will be paying an average of less than \$1.30 a week to fix our roads and bridges, to take care of some major choke points and congestion and to do other important projects throughout the state.

To figure out how much you would be paying:

- Divide # miles per year you drive by your car's miles per gallon = # gallons you buy.
 - Multiply that result by 9 1/2 cents = total amount you'll be paying for these projects.
 - Divide the result by 52 to see how much you'll pay each week, on average.
- Decide whether safety and congestion relief, among other things, is worth that price.

LWVWA STATE STUDIES

Growth Management Action Study co-chairs are:

- Elizabeth Davis, Ann Aagaard and Rashida Harris.
- Linnea Hirst will be state board liaison

Election Reform Study co-chairs are:

- Marilyn Knight and Betty Sullivan.
- Liz Pierini will be state board liaison.

Transportation Study chair:

- Betty Todd
- Peggy Saari will be state board liaison

Water Study chair:

- Denise Smith.
- This study, for the first year, will consist of 4 articles in 4 *VOTERs* (see this issue).



Mark Your Calendars!

League of Women Voters of Washington and
American Association of University Women
Invite you to attend

LOBBY DAY 2006

Monday, January 23

United First Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia, WA

Check your local *VOTER* and www.lwvwa.org for registration information



Judicial Independence Forum

League of Women Voters of Washington is co-sponsoring a **Symposium on Judicial Selection and Independence** at Seattle University School of Law on **Friday, November 11, 2005**. The Symposium will explore ways by which we can work together to protect judges from undue influence in elections; preserve the appearance of fairness in the judicial selection process; and enhance the public's confidence in our state's judiciary during this time of increasingly harsh criticism of state and federal judges.

Concerns that make this Symposium timely include the increasingly partisan nature of judicial campaigns in Washington State; the escalating costs of funding judicial elections; the lack of judicial campaign financing limits; the growing amounts of special interest money being injected into judicial races; the relative shortage of useful information available to voters regarding judicial candidates, and the difficulties of ferreting out such information; and the skewing of voting results by irrelevant factors such as ballot placement and commonness of names of judicial candidates.

Space is limited. Contact Julie Gardner, King County Bar Association, 206-267-7013, for registration information.

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER FOR LWVWA's

ACTION WORKSHOP

Saturday, October 22, 2005

St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 2650 – 148th Avenue SE, Bellevue

**Registration (\$20) begins at 9:30 a.m. with coffee and rolls
Program 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Enjoy a delicious lunch of salads, home-baked bread and desserts provided by members of League of Women Voters of Seattle, Eastside Units

Registration Deadline: October 19, 2005

Send a check to LWVWA, 4710 University Way NE, #214, Seattle, WA 98105



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