

# Monthly Briefing

A Summary of the Alliance's Recent and Upcoming Activities and Important Water News

## ANNUAL MEETING

### Key Officials Will Respond To National Academy's Report

An important report recently released by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) will be discussed by high-level policy officials on the last day of the Family Farm Alliance's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference.

Alliance sessions will be held Thursday and Friday, March 2-3, at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas (NEVADA). The theme of the 2006 conference is "Keeping the Family in Farming."

A **PANEL PRESENTATION** scheduled for March 3 will include a presentation by Roger Patterson (a member of the NAS committee), with responses from David McCarthy (Reclamation Deputy Commissioner), Tom Donnelly (Executive Vice-President of the National Water Resources Association) and Bennett Raley (former Assistant Secretary of the Interior).

"We look forward to providing western family irrigators with an opportunity to hear first hand from the experts how this policy document  
*(Continued on Page 4)*

### Task Force Gives Recommendations On NEPA Reform

An important set of draft recommendations has been released by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources that identifies problems and offers potential solutions associated with a law familiar to many Western water users—the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

In a draft report presented to the public on December 21, 2005, the NEPA Task Force addresses the 35-year old law. NEPA implementation can have a direct bearing on the success or failure of water supply enhancement projects.

**REP. CATHY** McMorris (WASHINGTON), the chairwoman of the NEPA Task Force, was asked last year to lead the bipartisan panel of House Resources Committee members around the country to gather input on the implementation of NEPA. The Task Force primarily examined whether the  
*(Continued on Page 2)*

## Reorganization At Reclamation

### Third Deputy Commissioner Added; Reporting Structure Is Changed

Over the last several years, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Commissioner John Keys has made a number of organizational changes in an effort to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Commissioner Keys last month announced a significant Reclamation leadership reorganization, adding a third deputy commissioner and changing the

reporting structure for several important agency programs. The plan, which took effect January 6, has been approved by Interior Secretary Gale Norton.

"As we move into the 21st Century, it is crucial for us to have



John Keys

the right people in the right places, doing the right jobs," Keys said.

**ONE OF THE MOST** significant aspects of the reorganization is the merging of several existing program areas under the new Deputy Commissioner for Policy, Administration and Budget, Larry Todd.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

# Common Sense Advocate for Species Protection Leaves Dept. Of Interior



A strong proponent for employing practical means of protecting fish and wildlife has left the U.S. Department of Interior (Interior) and returned to the West.

Craig Manson, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, resigned from Interior to accept a teaching post at the University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento (CALIFORNIA).

Manson appreciated the role rural landowners could play in fish and wildlife species recovery and was an accessible policy leader during his four-year tenure in Washington (D.C.).

Manson was the keynote speaker before a large crowd attending the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Family Farm Alliance Annual Meeting and Conference at the Monte Carlo Resort and Casino in Las Vegas in 2004. At the conference, Manson addressed modernization of the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The federal ESA is now 30 years old and, Manson said, has done a good job for a few species but has not well served

the vast majority of species that have been listed.

The law, he contended, has "not done well at all for those who work the land. There have been dubious dichotomies of environment vs. economics."

Manson told growers at the 2004 Alliance meeting, "You are the authentic conservationists. You live on the land and understand the land."

One of the ESA's biggest lessons since its 1973 passage, Manson said, is that the government needs to work with those who work the land and recognize that "families also depend on that land for their economic well being."

"This is how we're going to make the Endangered Species Act work," Manson said, "by giving it over to people who live and work on the land."

U.S. Interior Secretary Gale Norton commended Manson's stewardship of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service in his four years as assistant secretary and, particularly, his role in advancing President Bush's commitment to cooperative conserva-

*Former Assistant Secretary of the Interior Craig Manson*

tion. Secretary Norton also praised Manson as an advocate for reason and action on endangered species issues.

"The decision by the House of Representatives to pass a comprehensive reform of the Endangered Species Act is a tribute to your powers of persuasion," Norton wrote in a letter to Manson thanking him for his services.

Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), Chair of the House Resources Committee and author of the ESA reform act referred to by Norton, also publicly thanked Manson for his service, noting that Manson's "thorough knowledge and dedication to conservation based on scientific evidence were crucial to ensuring successful policies."

## NEPA REFORM IDEAS MIRROR ALLIANCE'S RECOMMENDATIONS

*(Continued from Page 1)*

original intent of NEPA is being fulfilled. It also sought input on the economic impacts NEPA is currently having.

**IN APRIL 2005**, Alliance Chairman of the Board Bill Kennedy (OREGON) traveled to Spokane (WASHINGTON) and testified on behalf of the Alliance before the NEPA Task Force.

While Kennedy's testimony focused on an unusual NEPA application – a decision by federal agencies not to prepare full NEPA documentation for the Klamath Project in 2001, when irrigation supplies were curtailed – he also provided recommendations to streamline NEPA regulations as they relate to new water supply and conservation projects.

"Cooperative efforts are important for moving projects through NEPA and permitting processes," Kennedy said. "Establishing working relationships with the agencies involved in the NEPA process and permitting is critical. Good cooperation and communications between agencies and groups,

with an understanding of each participant's expectations, will help in future problem resolution."

**THE TASK FORCE** recommendations, for the most part, mirror those included in the Alliance Spokane testimony, parts of which are actually cited in the Task Force report. As noted in the report, there are several reasons why water users are concerned with current NEPA implementation:

- Uncertainty that undermines public participation in the NEPA process.
- Exclusion of state, local and tribal interests from the NEPA process.
- Costs of compliance that run in the millions of dollars.
- Delays that result in cancellation of projects.

**THE ALLIANCE** is currently developing comments on the draft document, which must be submitted to the House Resources Committee by February 6, 2006.

## ESA Bill Introduced In Senate

Senator Mike Crapo (IDAHO) and Senator Blanche Lincoln (ARKANSAS), co-chairs of a bipartisan working group on Endangered Species Act (ESA) issues, have introduced S. 2110, the Collaboration for the Recovery of the Endangered Species Act (CRESA).

This bill focuses on additional participation by landowners and states to recover species. It also, for the first time, introduces incentives such as tax breaks and conservation banking provisions.

**THE BILL ALLOWS** the federal government to prioritize its resources to get funding to the species most in need, while incorporating local input on recovery plans and species recovery teams.

The tax provisions mean CRESA may receive a hearing before the Senate Finance Committee. Crapo and Lincoln are both members of the Finance Committee.

House Resources Committee Chairman Richard W. Pombo (CALIFORNIA), who authored the House ESA bill entitled the "Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005", applauded the efforts of Senators Crapo and Lincoln.

**HE NOTED** his intent to work with the Senate bill authors and Senators James Inhofe (OKLAHOMA) and Lincoln Chafee (RHODE ISLAND) as the Senate completes its work on the Act's reauthorization.

As was extensively reported last fall, the House in late September approved the first comprehensive revisions to the ESA in 30 years, sending the legislation to the Senate.

# Water Supply

## *Alliance Invited To Participate In Las Vegas Forum On Challenges*

The Family Farm Alliance has accepted an invitation to participate in a water storage panel discussion at a conference hosted by the Center for the New West.

The forum is entitled "Water and the West: Meeting Supply Challenges Today and Beyond." It is scheduled to be held in Las Vegas January 12-13.

Alliance President Pat O'Toole (WYOMING) planned to present an overview of the Alliance's "Western Water Policy – A New Vision."

O'Toole intended to demonstrate how irrigators see dealing with these water issues in a way that maintains a viable agricultural economy (and way of life throughout the West) while meeting expanding urban demands.

**ALSO IN JANUARY**, Family Farm Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON) is to be the keynote luncheon speaker January 18 during the Mid-Pacific Water Users Conference at the El Dorado Hotel and Casino in Reno (NEVADA).

"The Mid-Pacific conference provides a great opportunity to discuss the Alliance's initiatives," Keppen said. Representatives from the St. Mary Working Group (MONTANA) will make the keynote presentation at a luncheon on January 19.

"Their presentation will underscore what the Alliance has been saying about the need to understand the enormity of the scope of infrastructure repair facing the Milk River water users, problems which are being faced by water users elsewhere in the West," said Keppen.

Keppen will also speak to the Four States Irrigation Council annual meeting in Ft. Collins (COLORADO).

The theme of that event is "Irrigated Agriculture: Today and Tomorrow." The Council focuses on Platte River issues in the states of Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska and Wyoming.

Keppen later in the month will address the Idaho Water Users conference in Boise and, on January 16, is to speak to the Westlands Water District in Fresno (CALIFORNIA).

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## Alliance Plans To Revive 'Family Farm Water Review'

A Family Farm Alliance publication that proved effective in the past in calling attention to local and regional water needs, issues, projects and controversies involving Reclamation facilities is about to make a comeback.

The Alliance has announced plans to this year revive its *Family Farm Water Review*. "Plans call for the *Water Review* to focus on a single subject from somewhere in the 17 Western states or occasionally taking an in-depth look at a Reclamation wide issue," said Alliance Executive Director Dan Keppen (OREGON).

Alliance members from around the West are being asked to suggest topics and provide background information and other details from which Keppen and Alliance editor Randy McFarland (CALIFORNIA) can prepare the text. Photos and illustrations are also welcomed. Please call the Alliance office at (541) 850-9007 or e-mail [kep@cvcwireless.net](mailto:kep@cvcwireless.net) with any suggestions or information.

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## NATIONAL ACADEMY REPORT IS ANNUAL MEETING TOPIC

*(Continued from Page 1)*

might influence the future of Reclamation,” said Dan Keppen (OREGON), Alliance Executive Director.

**THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL** of the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) in late 2005 released a report for the Bureau of Reclamation entitled, “Managing Construction and Infrastructure in the 21st Century Bureau of Reclamation”. As Reclamation’s focus changes from primarily construction of new facilities to a concentration on managing existing infrastructure, it faces a host of new challenges. This report provides the NAS’s assessment of those challenges and offers recommendations about how Reclamation can best address them.

Patterson, a long-time employee of the Bureau of Reclamation and past Director of the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, served on the NAS committee that prepared

the report. He will summarize its key recommendations at the March 3 presentation. McCarthy will outline how Reclamation intends to address the report’s recommendations. Donnelly and Raley will provide water user perspectives.

Reclamation Commissioner John Keys has publicly stated that he is “pleased to have the report from the National Academy of Sciences that provides recommendations on how Reclamation might position itself organizationally to meet the construction, maintenance, and infrastructure challenges of the future.”

**FOR ALLIANCE CONFERENCE REGISTRATION** information, please contact Jane at (707) 998-9487 or [ffameeting@aol.com](mailto:ffameeting@aol.com).

You will also find complete registration materials and frequently updated Annual Meeting and Conference details on the Alliance’s website, [www.familyfarmalliance.org](http://www.familyfarmalliance.org).

## RECLAMATION REORGANIZES ITS LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

*(Continued from Page 1)*

The offices under Todd will include Security, Safety and Law Enforcement; Program and Budget; Program and Policy Services; and the newly established Administration which includes the Chief Information Officer, Human Resources, Civil Rights, and the Management Service Office.

**IN ADDITION, SEVERAL** other executive and senior level positions have been established.

The newly established Director for Technical Resources will report to the Deputy Commissioner for Operations, William Rinne, and will be responsible

for the current Technical Service Center and the Research and Development Program; a new senior level power liaison function with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Tennessee Valley Authority; and the new senior level position of Dam Safety and Design, Estimates and Construction oversight.

Additionally, Rinne will continue to have responsibility for Reclamation’s regional directors; and in the Washington Office, International Affairs and Native American Affairs.

The responsibilities of David McCarthy, the Deputy Commissioner,

External and Intergovernmental Affairs, remain the same. They include, among other functions, responsibility for Reclamation’s national offices of Congressional and Legislative Affairs, and Public Affairs.

**ELSEWHERE IN** Reclamation, Great Plains Regional Director Mike Ryan announced that Fred Ore, Director of Operations in Washington (D.C.), has been named Area Manager for the Reclamation’s Eastern Colorado Area Office, headquartered in Loveland. Ore has over 25 years experience with Reclamation in the West and Washington.

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