

**EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD  
UPRIVER PRESENTATIONS**

**April 19, 2022**

**6:00 P.M.**

**Commissioners Present:** John Brown, President; Sonya Carlson, Vice President; John Barofsky, Matt McRae, Mindy Schlossberg, Commissioners

**Others Present:** Frank Lawson, General Manager; Mark Duvall, Customer Service Team Lead; Lisa Krentz, Generation Manager; Karl Morgenstern, Watershed Restoration Program Manager; Julie McGaughey, Chief Customer Officer; Tyler Nice, Electric Operations Manager; Jeannine Parisi, Strategic Program Manager; Nancy Toth, Environmental Specialist; Mark Zinniker Generation Engineering Supervisor

President Brown called the Upriver Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Welcome and Meeting Overview**

President Brown welcomed those in attendance, and thanked them for being there. He laid out the meeting's format: there would be five five-minute presentations, during which information about EWEB projects pertinent to the upriver community would be shared. After the presentations, the members of the upriver community would have a chance to ask the EWEB Board and EWEB staff questions.

A booklet containing information about presentation topics can be found at:

<https://www.eweb.org/documents/board-meetings/2022/04-19-22/upriver-booklet-v2.pdf>

**Watershed Recovery Status and Investments**

Mr. Morgenstern offered those present a presentation on watershed recovery and upriver investments.

**EWEB and Pure Water Partners Programs for McKenzie Valley Customers**

Ms. Toth offered those present a presentation on the Pure Water Partners programs for McKenzie Valley customers.

**Wildfire Mitigation**

Mr. Nice and Ms. Parisi offered those present a presentation on EWEB's Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

**Leaburg Canal Updates**

Ms. Krentz and Mr. Zinniker offered those present a presentation of the updates on the Leaburg Canal.

**Billing Estimations**

Ms. McGaughey and Mr. Duvall offered those present a presentation on billing estimations and their impacts on the upriver community.

## **Listening and General Question & Answer Session**

An audience member asked how EWEB Board decisions about Leaburg Lake would affect the McKenzie and Leaburg fish hatcheries.

Mr. Zinniker said EWEB had been in close communication with the McKenzie and Leaburg fish hatcheries, and that they had their own processes underway for looking for alternative water sources. EWEB will document and communicate these impacts in the social and environmental effects.

An audience member asked if leakage was the only reason for taking the Leaburg canal out of service.

Mr. Zinniker said that while they were exploring repair alternatives to the canal's seepage, they found that a portion of the canal contained very low-strength soils that were especially vulnerable in seismic events.

The audience member asked what EWEB considered to be a "portion" of the canal in linear measurement.

Mr. Zinniker said the portion of the canal where the initial problem was identified, was roughly 1,000 feet long.

An audience member asked if EWEB was buying properties adjacent to the canal.

Ms. Krentz said that EWEB had bought a property along the canal a few years ago – which is the only home that has been removed. She said that EWEB recently had entered into purchase agreements with two more properties. She added that EWEB is still in the process of determining the work that needs to be done and the exact location, therefore EWEB had no plans to proactively purchase any additional properties at this time and is just monitoring to see if properties are coincidentally listed for sale – which was the case with the two recent properties.

An audience member expressed concern about properties along the canal being brokered for EWEB and local residents by real estate brokers from Portland.

Ms. Krentz said she could not speak to why anyone chose a particular broker, although the broker they are working with, while from Portland, has connections to Lane County. Ultimately, Ms. Krentz offered, they were waiting for a Board decision that would come at the end of this year, then EWEB staff would have a better idea of what the exact plans for the Leaburg canal are.

An audience member asked for more details about the local residents adjacent to the canal who have water rights.

Mr. Zinniker said that out of the 20 or so local residents who are drawing water from the canal, there was only a small number of them who had agreements with EWEB that

were not subject to interruption. He explained that EWEB has been working with a subset of the water right holders to come up with alternative solutions, and is also working with people who have certificates without an obligation from EWEB to try to help them explore alternatives. Water right considerations are being identified and documented for the Board's triple bottom line analysis.

An audience member asked if EWEB had a plan for upkeep and vegetation management for its properties adjacent to the canal.

Ms. Krentz said EWEB would be developing property management plans for the parcels they have purchased and will purchase, although, she added, it was not the utility's intent to have either the structures or the properties themselves fall into disrepair.

An audience member asked if removing the dam would have implications such as the creation of new flood plains.

Mr. Zinniker assured her there would be no measurable changes with or without the dam; he explained the Leaburg complex was run of the river or pass-through, meaning the volume of water that flows into Leaburg Lake is immediately released downstream – either to the river or the canal, and there is not a storage capacity. Debris that currently passes through the roll gates would continue unobstructed if the dam itself were not there.

An audience member asked what would happen to the properties upstream of the dam should the dam be removed.

Mr. Zinniker said the property lines, which are the edge of the river currently, would move toward the other side of the river channel, adjacent to Highway 126.

The audience member wanted to know if EWEB owned the property around the Leaburg facility, and if so, he wondered if they had any specific plans for the property.

Mr. Zinniker said the portion of lakeshore adjacent to the park was EWEB property, but the majority of lakeshore property was privately owned.

The audience member asked if any of their tax lots were going to change.

Ms. Krentz said as far as she knew the property line moved according to the high-water line, and when that line changes—as it would in the event of taking the dam offline—so does the property designation, but she was not certain.

The audience member asked if someone from EWEB could follow up with him.

President Brown said of course, and reminded the audience member to leave his contact information with EWEB staff.

An audience member asked if the only options for the Leaburg facility currently being discussed were full return to service or complete removal of the dam and draining of the canal.

Mr. Zinniker made clear that EWEB had two return-to-service options. He went on to describe several of the four alternatives saying that in one case, the canal would remain and be operated as it has in the past. Another option would restore the site to pre-project conditions whereas the dam would essentially be gone. In another option, the canal would be used as a stormwater conveyance system; creeks would continue to flow through the canal and back to the river in some locations.

An audience member wondered if the left-hand spillway would be brought back to 2,500 cfs if the canal was brought back to full operation, adding that anything under 2,500 cfs would be generating less power.

Mr. Zinniker agreed that less power would be generated, but said it was in the utility's best interest to make full use of their water right.

An audience member wondered if the Walterville pond would be included in EWEB's reconstruction efforts.

Mr. Zinniker said the Walterville pond was decommissioned about a decade ago, and although it was originally used for pump storage, it had not been used in that capacity for some time.

An audience member thanked the Pure Water Partners. He said he had asked EWEB about undergrounding utilities three separate times with no response from the utility in over a year. Finally, the audience member asked if there was an EWEB Commissioner designated for the upriver area.

President Brown said they did not, but Commissioner Schlossberg held the at-large position.

Richard Tracy said that, to his knowledge, he held a water right from the Johnson Creek drainage, although EWEB had challenged him about it in the past. He said that for four years now, he had not had access to the water stipulated in the right.

President Brown said EWEB was working as hard as possible, and spending as much money as possible on this issue, but unfortunately, they were at the mercy of the federal government.

Ms. Krentz urged those present to take the survey currently being distributed, so EWEB can hear how community members are personally impacted and include that information in the triple bottom line analysis.

An audience member suggested any work EWEB did on the canal should allow for continued use of the canal bank as a foot- and bike-path.

An audience member said he could not understand why EWEB was even considering taking the Leaburg dam out.

President Brown clarified the dam diverts water, and if there was no need to divert the water, the cost of keeping and maintaining an already-old dam had to be taken into consideration by the utility.

Nadine Scott, the President of the McKenzie Chamber of Commerce, said the area's economy relied heavily on tourism at Leaburg Lake, and the proposed work would be devastating in that regard. She also pointed out Leaburg Lake was the only area accessible to those with disabilities.

An audience member said that since EWEB ratepayers pay 100% of the estimated project costs for upriver projects, they should be able to vote on those projects.

President Brown said EWEB had 2,300 customers in the upriver community, and over 88,000 customers in all, so everyone—even those in Eugene—would have to vote on it.

An audience member asked how much the Leaburg project would cost ratepayers monthly.

Mr. Zinniker said they did not have an answer to that question yet, but would share it with the upriver community as soon as they had it.

An audience member asked if Leaburg Lake belonged to another agency—like a State agency, would it be able to be saved.

President Brown said that was a good suggestion.

An audience member suggested future upriver meetings at which a representative or representatives of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was in attendance, to take some of the pressure off of EWEB and its Board.

Vice President Carlson thanked those upriver community members who had spoken, and assured those present that EWEB and the Board were committed to the upriver community, and showed no favoritism to any other region in the utility's service area.

An audience member wondered if any of the scenarios will involve using water to generate electricity.

Mr. Zinniker said yes.

The audience member asked if any future Leaburg projects would involve generating clean energy.

Mr. Zinniker said yes.

An audience member asked what projects were in store for the Carmen Smith site.

Mr. Zinniker said EWEB was in its fifth year of work at the Carmen Smith site, and the utility was still working on rehabilitation of the turbine generator.

Ms. Krentz also mentioned that EWEB had several fish, wildlife, and recreation projects underway at the Carmen Smith site.

Will Rutherford asked if it would be possible to include on his monthly bill if the bill was an estimated bill.

Mr. Duvall said located on the top left corner of the EWEB bill, there was a message letting the ratepayer know if it was an estimated bill or not.

An audience member asked if EWEB would be receiving any federal infrastructure money.

Mr. Lawson said that staff are looking into Federal and State opportunities, and EWEB recently hired a grant writer to help with infrastructure projects. He added that EWEB has leveraged several million dollars so far.

An audience member asked what if anything was going to replace hydroelectric power in the region.

Mr. Lawson explained that we are part of a large grid and there are pressures and challenges for the various types of resources that have typically operated in the West. In the northwest we are fortunate to have access to a lot of carbon-free hydroelectric power, however it is also under attack because of fish and wildlife and operational constraints. He said this topic is a big concern for him personally; as the timing of hydro generation is controlled by people, unlike wind and solar which is controlled by mother nature, resulting in the need to overbuild the latter for reliability. These factors go into EWEB's decisions around the Leaburg project and the Utility's Integrated Resource Plan.

An audience member asked if a new power plant was built at Leaburg, would it be more energy efficient than the previous plant.

Mr. Zinniker replied that not only would it be more efficient, but it would be built to current seismic regulations as well.

An audience member asked why EWEB conveyed water from the canal four miles downstream.

Mr. Zinniker said after the water was diverted at the dam, as it flows downstream, it gains elevation while the river itself falls away. He said that diverted water eventually falls 80 feet, and it is in that drop that electricity is generated.

An audience member asked, out of the four options EWEB has for the Leaburg complex, was there only one which generated revenue.

Mr. Zinniker said that two of the options—the partial, and the full return to service—would generate revenue

An audience member surveyed her neighbors in the room, asking if anyone would complain if, in the event of a wind/fire event, EWEB preemptively shut off the power to the area, before the area was actually on fire. Her fellows seemed in support of the idea.

An audience member asked if, in the return to service alternatives, the entire dam would be rebuilt.

Mr. Zinniker said no. He said EWEB would continue maintenance on the existing dam, and other than a few specific seismic reinforcement upgrades, the dam was in great shape already.

President Brown adjourned the Upriver Presentations Session at 8:19 p.m.

*Recorded by Rodney Cimburke*

---

Assistant Secretary

---

President