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highest Friday 103 at Presidio, Tex. Lowest this morning 15 at Drummond, Mont.

will display the articles

trial

Careful look at Benham Falls situation urged at forum

By Phil F. Brogan
Bulletin Staff Writer

Water, Central Oregon's most vital resource, was again in the spotlight here Friday. The occasion was another Bend Chamber of Commerce forum dealing with the proposed construction of a reservoir at the upper Benham Falls site on the Deschutes River. Sportsmen, recreationists and others who believe the Deschutes flow may have a greater future value than even the growing of crops had their inning. But also present were representatives from practically every

irrigation district in the tri-county area, including a group of five from the North Unit project of Jefferson County.

Most speakers agreed that the Benham Falls subject deserved far more study than it could be given at a few luncheon meetings. Some expressed the opinion that the construction of another reservoir on the upper Deschutes may not be the solution to the problem of obtaining additional water for existing projects, to tide them over in arid years. The other possible solutions, it was agreed, should receive serious study. Carlos Randolph, manager of the North Unit project, suggested

that directors of the various mid-Oregon projects expecting to receive water from another reservoir hold a series of meetings to consider the matter.

"It is the districts that will have to pay," Randolph added later. But, he said, "our friends in Bend should be invited to join us in the talks." Throughout the meeting, which lasted until nearly 2 p.m., speakers urged that the storage matter be considered through cool reasoning by all concerned, not by heated debate. Representatives of sportsmen joined in this suggestion. D. J. Ward, as Chamber irrigation director, presided. Kessler

Canon was master of ceremonies. Bill Niskanen headed the sportsmen's part in the discussion and introduced his speakers.

Robert W. Sawyer, Bend, former president of the National Reclamation Association who was nationally honored for his work in the field of conservation, traced the history of the Benham Falls reservoir plan, dating back some 40 years. "In the years that have elapsed, many changes have occurred in our local economy and in our way of life," Sawyer said. He mentioned highway development, the increased interest in recreation, the coming of tourists in great numbers.

Noting that many angles must be considered before construction of a new reservoir on the upper Deschutes can be urged, Sawyer reviewed existing financial obligations of irrigation districts.

Possibility of obtaining water for the North Unit through pumping from the Round Butte dam was noted. Pointing to the rapid growth of Oregon, Robert W. Chandler, editor and publisher of The Bend Bulletin, said that "in the foreseeable future we will have to provide storage for every bit of water which falls on the ground—at least that which runs off to the oceans without being consumed." He added:

"We will have to be much more efficient in the storage or use of available water than we are at present." He said that less than half the water which flows into Wickiup and Crane Prairie reservoirs ever reaches the head-gates on the farms.

"Danger of a community-wide fight over the irrigation districts get the water they need, then mentioned the loss of from 7,000 to 8,000 acres along the Deschutes if a reservoir is built at the so-called Benham Falls site. "Any rash statements made at this time would be out of order until a study is made," Stokesberry added. He suggested that the \$5 billion or more needed for construction of a new reservoir

open minds in the whole matter."

Francis Stokesberry, representing the Deschutes Sportsmen's Association, said the Deschutes river above Bend is a great asset. He said people of the community are greatly interested in seeing that the irrigation districts get the water they need, then mentioned the loss of from 7,000 to 8,000 acres along the Deschutes if a reservoir is built at the so-called Benham Falls site. "Any rash statements made at this time would be out of order until a study is made," Stokesberry added. He suggested that the \$5 billion or more needed for construction of a new reservoir

would go a long way in the repair of ditches.

Rodney Rosebrook reminded his audience of the vital role the irrigation districts play in the economy of the area, and Kenneth Slack said a word in behalf of the farmers who produce the nation's food. Niskanen summarized the case for the sportsmen. Clinton Bowman, representing the Oregon Water Resources board, presented charts dealing with river flow. Fred Shepard said the discussion can be continued at a meeting of the Deschutes Water Resources board here on May 25. Some 65 persons were present for the discussion.

There's a lot of it—and it's yours...

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Phil F. Brogan, Associate Editor
William A. Yates, Managing Editor
Lou W. Meyers, Circulation Manager
Loren E. Dyer, Mechanical Superintendent
Robert W. Chandler, Editor and Publisher

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Water is our most important resource, causing most trouble

At a recent forum luncheon of the Bend Chamber of Commerce, the editor of The Bulletin was among those expressing views on water problems. Several requests were received for copies of his remarks. The speech is being printed as an editorial for those who wished copies.

(Continued from Monday, April 27)

One must recognize that there are years of water shortage in irrigated lands, here and everywhere. Those who are short of water—and I am owner of one irrigated farm and part owner of another in this area—naturally are vocal in their desires.

On the other hand the growth of our population, coupled with increasing amounts of leisure time available, make for more pressure on recreation resources. This situation is not likely to get better in future years.

In forty years our population will double. And at the same time the work week will shrink to an average of 25 hours.

This may sound fantastic. Yet our population has increased nearly 50 per cent in the last 20 years, and the average work week has lost nearly ten hours.

So, on the one hand we have those who wish more water for irrigation purposes. On the other we have those who are worried about having a place to enjoy their extra leisure time a few years from now. Each group represents a problem.

What I am worrying about is that the two problems—which are often represented as being mutually exclusive but are not necessarily so—will create a third problem—a community-wide fight—which will be worse than either of the other two.

Frankly, Benham Falls is in danger of becoming a nasty word in Central Oregon. If there must be two sides—and I do not believe this is necessary—let's hope each can avoid some of the comments about the other that I heard following the last meeting called to discuss the subject.

There is no reason why to some Benham Falls should immediately bring to mind a picture of a greedy fisherman. Nor is there any reason for the rest to conjure up a greedy dairy, potato or livestock farmer when Benham Falls is mentioned.

In many minds it has now become a matter of Benham Falls or nothing at all. This is not necessarily the situation—and it should not be allowed to become the situation. It will not become the situation if a few persons will keep open minds on the whole matter.

The largest user of water is irrigation. Power generation, through steam or if the water is falling or has sufficient head, is another. Human consumption is another. Manufacturing—whether cooling or as an integral part of the process is another. Recreation is still another, and becoming more important to us and our local economy each day.

Actually irrigation has a relatively low dollar and cents value in the whole picture.

For example:

It takes the same amount of water to produce one ton of alfalfa hay as it takes to produce one ton of steel or two tons of paper. Based on current prices, a ton of alfalfa hay is worth approximately \$25 at the farm, the steel is

worth about \$100 at the mill and the paper is worth about \$270 at the plant.

So, from a manufacturing standpoint, water is worth four times as much in steel production and eleven times as much in paper production as it is for irrigation.

This is something worth considering.

The cost of Benham Falls—by the estimates of a notoriously poor estimator—the Bureau of Reclamation, whose costs figures usually are at least 50 per cent low and quite often are considerably below that—is now nearly six million dollars.

This is a lot of money. At least I think it is a lot of money.

Perhaps there are other answers to what we all must consider to be a problem.

Perhaps a real effort to make better use of irrigation water on the farm would pay off. We could get a lot of mileage out of the water which now is wasted.

Perhaps better transmission of water from the diversion point to the farm is a possibility. A considerable portion of the water diverted by each irrigation district now is lost from a leaky transmission system.

Perhaps more efficient storage is the answer. We are all aware of the poor storage record of Crane Prairie, for example.

Perhaps water can be obtained from another source. With the construction of Round Butte dam in a year or so, the level of the river near the North Unit will have been raised nearly 500 feet. Since about 60 per cent of the planned storage at Benham Falls is for the North Unit, would not pumping from somewhere in that area—doing away with leakage and evaporation loss in some 40 miles of open canal—be something to consider?

Would another storage site be better? Recent experiments in similar geologic structures in Nevada have indicated tremendous possibilities of low-cost, underground storage, with no leakage and evaporation losses. This has been done through the underground explosion of obsolete—believe it or not—atomic bombs. These have created what amounts to a glass-lined, underground storage room.

When we measure all the potential solutions to this particular problem we may find that our first and most obvious answer—in this case the Benham Falls project—is by no means the best.

Quotable quotes

Because he is so typically an American, Harry Truman has been able to symbolize the meaning of America to all the world. — Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo.), at ceremonies dedicating the birthplace of former President Harry S. Truman as a national monument.

I was definitely elected by the majority of the people of the Fifth District of Arkansas in the finest tradition of a democratic election.—Rep. Dale Elford (D-Ark.), on a House committee's decision to investigate his surprise write-in election victory of last November.