

MINUTES  
FOR THE MEETING OF THE  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

DATE: June 21, 2012  
TIME: 9:00 am  
PLACE: DLNR Board Room  
Kalanimoku Bldg.  
1151 Punchbowl Street, Room 227  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Chairperson William Aila, Jr. called the meeting of the Commission on Water Resource Management to order at 9:08am.

The following were in attendance:

**MEMBERS:** Mr. William Aila, Jr., Mr. Sumner Erdman, Mr. Ted Yamamura, Mr. William Balfour, Dr. Lawrence Miike, Ms. Loretta Fuddy

**ABSENT:** Mr. Neal Fujiwara

**STAFF:** William Tam, Lenore Ohye, Roy Hardy, Ryan Imata, Denise Tu, Robert Chong, Basil Gomez, and Amanda Sawa

**COUNSEL:** Julie China, Esq.

**OTHERS:** Barry Usagawa (HBWS), Kapua Sproat (UH, Earthjustice), Jonathan Starr, David Takeyama (Oceanit)

**A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

May 16, 2012

**MOTION: (Miike/Erdman)**  
**To approve the minutes.**  
**UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

**C. GROUND WATER REGULATION**

- 1. Advatage Webco, Application For A Water Use Permit, Hawaii Raceway Park Well (Well No. 1906-07), TMK (1) 9-1-075:044, WUP No. 953, Future (irrigation) Use For 250 gpd, Malakole Ground Water Management Area, Oahu**

Chairperson Aila, Jr. notified the Commissioners that Item C-1 had been withdrawn from the agenda.

Roy Hardy (Commission on Water Resource Management) explained that Item C-1 had been withdrawn from the agenda due to erroneous information in the application and the public notice. The applicant will be asked to reapply.

**2. Request for an Increase in Funding to Update the Irrigation Water Requirement Estimation Decision Support System (IWREDSS) for the Determination of Reasonable Water Use Quantities for Selected Crops in Hawaii**

SUBMITTAL PRESENTATION by: Roy Hardy

Item C-2 is a request for an increase in funding to update the Irrigation Water Requirement Estimation Decision Support System (IWREDSS) that was presented to the Commission in March 2012. The request is to increase the contract from \$50,000 to \$55,000 (\$5,000 increase). The College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawaii (UH) created the first version of the irrigation model to estimate reasonable amounts and the need for irrigation requests in conjunction with water use permits (WUP). The regional scope is attached to the submittal. The initial increase in funding requested by CTAHR was \$67,000. The changes in the scope of work are also attached in the submittal on page 2. The field verification portion of the contract was eliminated to reduce the request for funding from \$67,000 to \$55,000.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Commission:

1. Approve \$5,000 of additional funding to update the IWREDSS software application. The total approved funding is \$55,000 when combined with \$50,000 of funding approved at the Commission March 28, 2012 meeting.
2. The second recommendation approved by the Commission in the March 28, 2012 IWREDSS submittal (Exhibit A), which authorized the Chairperson to make such further amendments or modifications of the contract agreement (consistent with the terms set forth above) as may be necessary to accomplish the goals described here, provided that any amendment or modification does not require additional Commission funding, remains in full effect.

**(DISCUSSION)**

Commissioner Balfour commented on the increasing number of funding/contract requests and the Commission's limited supply of money. He pointed to Exhibit B (2.3) and the use of the word "potential" to describe things in the future that are not guaranteed. Commissioner Balfour said farmers must understand soil types and their crops in order to be successful and questioned the need for this type of study. Forecasting and future predictions are not an exact science. What is needed is adaptive management – something a computer model cannot do.

Commissioner Yamamura said he understands the usefulness of this type of tool but shares some concerns. He asked about the cost of the original contract.

Mr. Hardy replied that he could not recall off the top of his head, but said the amount was somewhere between \$90,000 and \$100,000 for the initial development of the software and studies.

Commissioner Yamamura asked if the software automatically updates the data.

Mr. Hardy answered “no.” Much of the data is hardwired in the GIS application and will eventually include data from the Rainfall Atlas. The goal is to update the system with new information as it is made available.

Commissioner Yamamura asked if any farmers or ranchers were interviewed for the original study.

Mr. Hardy replied that CTAHR and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would have been responsible for conducting interviews. He said that NRCS works closely with many of the farmers, but as far as he knew no interviews were conducted.

Commissioner Yamamura commented on the lack of field testing and in-ground field tests. He said that farmers and ranchers know the impacts of water and irrigation better than anyone and found the absence of field visits to be a major omission. He said he would like to see the original scope of work restored and require CTAHR to carry out calibration and field validation. Without the field tests, the system is purely an information tool rather than something the Commission can base decisions on. A lot of information comes from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties. Commissioner Yamamura said he is not comfortable using this system for decision making.

Mr. Hardy clarified that the system is a tool to augment decision making and should not be seen as a constraint. The IWREDSS provides a measuring stick for staff to make recommendations. In many cases, the IWREDSS estimates more than what is requested by the applicant. This tool is one way to measure the reasonable and beneficial use of the applicant’s request. It does not replace the applicant’s request.

Commissioner Yamamura said the Commission needs a model to test whether or not the applicant’s request is reasonable.

Mr. Hardy agreed and said this is the best we have right now. As long as users are accurately reporting their water use, the tool can keep averages down and is not intended to speak for the farmers.

Commissioner Yamamura asked if the field testing component can be restored and if other areas can be eliminated.

Mr. Hardy said the field testing component was not seen as critical, which is why it was removed. He could not see any other areas that could be eliminated.

Chairperson Aila, Jr. asked Commissioner Yamamura if updates from the NRCS would quell some of his concerns.

Commissioner Yamamura said he is unsure what the software produces and the reliability of it for decisions like Na Wai Eha.

Commissioner Miike said the IWREDSS provides a benchmark to assess requests. In the future, the CWRM could have the applicant justify their requirement and see how it matches up against the modeling.

Commissioner Yamamura reiterated his suggestion to restore the field testing component.

Mr. Hardy said changes could be made as long as those changes did not increase the request for \$55,000.

Commissioner Erdman suggested approving staff recommendation with the recommendation that staff look into the potential of doing future field tests.

AMENDED RECOMMENDATION:

That the Commission:

1. Approve \$5,000 of additional funding to update the IWREDSS software application. The total approved funding is \$55,000 when combined with \$50,000 of funding approved at the Commission March 28, 2012 meeting.
2. The second recommendation approved by the Commission in the March 28, 2012 IWREDSS submittal (Exhibit A), which authorized the Chairperson to make such further amendments or modifications of the contract agreement (consistent with the terms set forth above) as may be necessary to accomplish the goals described here, provided that any amendment or modification does not require additional Commission funding, remains in full effect.
3. Staff to look into including additional field verification information for the scope of work, such as new Natural Resources Conservation Service data/review, as provided for in Recommendation 2.

Commissioner Yamamura agreed.

Commissioner Balfour opposed.

**MOTION: (Erdman/Yamamura)  
To approve the submittal as amended.  
APPROVED (6 aye, 1 nay)**

**D. UPDATES AND BRIEFINGS**

**1. Status of Oceanit Computer Project**

The Commission on Water Resource Management (CWRM) is the only government entity with the authority to gather water use reporting statewide. The manual process for inputting ground water use reporting is onerous and inefficient. The Oceanit project started in June 2008. During Phase I the CWRM's existing databases for complaints, violations, permits, etc. were supposed to be migrated into one database warehouse at a cost of \$45,000. Phase II began in January 2009 and was intended to enhance the integrated database

and set-up the online water use reporting system. There have been two extensions since the two-year 2009 contract. The second phase is being administered and funded in conjunction with the Army Corps of Engineers for \$400,000. These extensions have been granted by the Army Corps. The Oceanit project is stuck in Phase I and technical “bugs” still remain. The CWRM is committed to finishing up Phase I by July 2012, but does not believe the online water use reporting will be ready by July. Once ready, the online system will be rolled out in phases to ensure proper functionality.

#### (DISCUSSION)

Commissioner Erdman asked if the online system will incorporate the reporting of surface water as well.

Mr. Hardy replied “yes.” The CWRM plans to update the 1992 policy decision about exempting surface water and make online reporting mandatory. Studies have been conducted to assess the different methods used for surface water use reporting across the country.

Commissioner Miike said that not many of the current stream diversions are measured.

Mr. Hardy agreed.

Commissioner Miike asked if gauge requirements for streams and diversions could be instituted.

Mr. Hardy said “yes” that would be something to revisit when updating the 1992 policy.

Commissioner Erdman agreed that major management areas should be addressed first.

Deputy Director, William Tam expressed his frustration with Oceanit and the recurring delays. Deputy Tam reiterated the tedious and time-consuming task of having to input data by hand and said the online system would help alleviate the burden on staff and likely lead to greater enforcement. The CWRM staff cannot function without the help of this tool.

Commissioner Miike said delays with contractors are nothing new.

Commissioner Fuddy agreed stating that the Department of Health (DOH) has held contractors to task and enforced no-cost extensions until the deliverables are met. She said that in these cases, the reputation of the contractor is on the line.

Deputy Tam explained that once Oceanit’s federal contracts had lapsed, new staff had to be hired and trained, which caused further delays with the project. This has become a systemic problem that needs to be addressed.

## **2. Staff Hiring**

Lenore Ohye (Commission on Water Resource Management) updated the Commissioners on the status of hiring. The CWRM has 22 authorized positions with six vacancies. Three of the vacancies are in the Ground Water Regulation Branch (Engineering

Technician, Information Technology Specialist, Hydrologist VI) two are in the Survey Branch (Geologist II, Geologist I), and one is in the Stream Protection and Management Branch (SPAM) (Geologist I). A selection has been made for the Engineering Technician and an offer is ready to go out for the Hydrologist VI. Interviews for the Geologist II have been completed and an offer will be made. Interviews for the two Geologist I positions are ongoing. Staff is working with the Department of Human Resources to clarify in the announcement that we are seeking a person with GIS skills for the Information Technology Specialist position; once a new list is generated, we will be scheduling additional interviews.

Chairperson Aila, Jr. and Commissioner Erdman thanked the existing staff for their hard work.

Deputy Tam explained that the funds from vacancy savings have given the CWRM the opportunity to hire staff, conduct studies, execute contracts, and purchase new equipment with this year's funding instead of next.

## **B. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Ms. Ohye informed the Commission that staff is currently conducting statewide drought workshops in conjunction with a mainland university that is developing an online impact reporting system. The online impact reporting system will allow states across the nation to login and report on droughts situations that could result in federal assistance funding.

A public hearing for the Lanai Water Use and Development Plan was held on June 13, 2012. All those in attendance supported the plan. Written testimony will be accepted until June 27, 2012 and final adoption of the plan will be presented before the Commission in August or September 2012.

A public hearing for the Ko'olaupoko Watershed Management Plan will be held on July 18, 2012 at 6:00pm at the Waimanalo Public Library.

Staff is preparing a public notice for Appurtenant Water Rights Determination, which will be released shortly.

The CWRM Hearings Officer (Dr. Lawrence Miike) has come out with his proposed decision on the Ainako Stream Decision Order and the exceptions from the parties are due on June 22, 2012.

Chairperson Aila, Jr. acknowledged incoming Commissioner Jonathan Starr.

David Takeyama (IT Director, Oceanit) spoke up in response to the previous agenda item regarding the status of the Oceanit Computer Project. Mr. Takeyama explained that as the contractor, Oceanit must take responsibility for the delays. He said the purpose of the study was to consolidate multiple databases to develop a comprehensive water management system designed to simultaneously manage both ground and surface water resources. The project consists of two phases. Phase I was completed on time and on budget. Certain events, including a down server from May 2011 to September 2011, have led to delays with Phase II of the project. The CWRM server was inaccessible, which prevented Oceanit from doing any work. In September 2011 the system was deployed and end-user training was

conducted. During the end-use training a large number of design changes were requested by staff, many of which were not identified during the needs assessment or workflow analysis. Oceanit is committed to making the system the best it can be for end users. Since September 2011, Oceanit and the CWRM have been involved in back and forth discussions about revisions and user acceptance testing. There are currently four “show stopper” items preventing Oceanit from launching the system. Oceanit is waiting for final acceptance of those four items. In June 2012 the server crashed, preventing Oceanit from continuing their work. A temporary server was set-up to mimic the testing environment. Mr. Takeyama discussed the many unforeseen setbacks and said Oceanit is committed to delivering a state-of-the-art solution.

Chairperson Aila, Jr., the Commissioners, the CWRM staff, and members of the public acknowledged Commissioner Miike’s last meeting as a member of the Commission on Water Resource Management and thanked him for his years of service.

Mahalo nui loa and a hui hou!

Chairperson Aila, Jr. adjourned the meeting at 10:05am.

Respectfully submitted,

KATIE ERSBAK

APPROVED AS SUBMITTED:

WILLIAM M. TAM  
Deputy Director