

YBSA Monthly Report April, 2009

Meeting with Irrigators: YBSA Board of Directors met with Jerry Haak, Chair of the Roza Sunnyside Board of Joint Control, and Ric Valicoff, Chair of the Roza Irrigation Board. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways we might work together to assure the availability of sufficient water which would prevent droughts. Discussions also included the possible reduction of snow pack in the Cascades which is being predicted and how climate change should be addressed. We agreed to exchange memorandums in an attempt to reach a consensus.

Meeting with Dale Bombrich (NOAA): Members of the Executive Committee met with Dale to discuss the merits of a comprehensive legislative package similar to the Environmental and Salmon Recovery Proposal drafted by YBSA. The proposed legislation would be structured to meet the present and future instream and out-of-stream water needs of the Yakima Basin. YBSA understands the concerns of the fish management entities about how the Black Rock Reservoir would be used to help resolve fish flow issues in the basin. After 20 plus years and billions of dollars spent on the Title XII Enhancement program we still have years of insufficient water for fish, irrigation, and municipal growth.

Water Resource Crossroads: A combination of water supply and aquatic habitat measures are necessary to assure the sustainability of our irrigated agricultural economy and enhance our fishery resources. We know what is occurring in other river basins as to water and fishery resources and the supply and demand conflict. We are at a critical crossroads with respect to our water resources and are most concerned if these issues are not fully addressed now, this “hard-to-come-by” opportunity will be lost.

Kiewitt Pacific Company: YBSA met with Chuck Nyland, Assistant District Manager, and Bart Happer, Business Development Specialist from the Vancouver, Washington office of Kiewitt Pacific Company, a large international construction firm. Mr. Nyland and Mr. Happer had reviewed the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) Yakima River Basin Storage Study.

Prior to the meeting with YBSA, Ron Reiland, a retired engineer and volunteer YBSA board member, visited the proposed Black Rock site and Priest Rapids Dam with Nyland and Happer. Chuck Nyland was one of the supervisors during the construction of the East Dam of Diamond Lake in Southern California in the 1990's and both men expressed an interest in the Black Rock Dam Project. If the money was available for construction and being able to build a dam without getting their feet wet, they believed Black Rock

could be completed in 3 years. Kiewitt certainly would partner with other companies because the size of the project merited diversification. They promised to review the BOR's numbers and estimate the construction cost to build Black Rock.

Watershed Planning: The Federal Bureau of Reclamation and the State Department of Ecology are convening a work group to attempt to develop a comprehensive water resource plan for the Yakima River Basin. The Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement project (YRBWEP) 2009 work group will meet for the first time in June. YBSA applauds the effort and plans to participate.

See the YBSA website at www.ybsa.org.