

## **YBSA Monthly Report August, 2009**

Solution to Work Group Elements: The Work Group continues to listen to presentations explaining each element of DOE's proposed integrated water enhancement plan. The purpose of the explanation of each of the seven elements is to provide information which could be used to assemble a single integrated package by the end of December, 2009. Water supply to allow the package to be implemented is the single part of the package that appears to be the most difficult to quantify. The irrigation community need additional water currently with frequent droughts occurring, fish need cool, clear water to survive and return to spawn and municipalities need water to address the increases in population. With climate change occurring, along with frequent droughts, quantifying the amount of water needed for the survival of fish, to enhance our agricultural base, and the growth in population can only be solved by inter-basin transfer of water from the Columbia River to the Yakima River.

BOR Study: The \$18 million study by the Bureau of Reclamation is complete. The good news is that a pumped-storage reservoir at Black Rock can be built, and surplus water is available from the Columbia River during high-flow months when electricity is cheap.

The federal study recommends "no action". All of us at YBSA believe our Basin cannot survive with no action as climate change will squeeze the water supply and drought years come closer together.

Work Group Meetings: The State Department of Ecology (DOE) has advanced their own plan for water management in the Basin. They put together a Work Group and asked that all interested parties come together, look at all the studies that have been done through the years, and find an answer that works for everyone, both now and in the future. YBSA concurs with this approach.

The BOR and DOE have taken the lead and are now holding roundtable meetings every two weeks. Most of the group represents government at some level, including irrigation districts, the Yakama Nation, fish agencies, and city and county officials. YBSA is the only broad-based volunteer group involved.

YBSA announced at the opening roundtable session that we would be fighting to meet the three congressional mandates; water for fish, for people, for irrigation, and for satisfying these needs with the least-cost alternative. Since studies have a tendency to look only at the past, we are insisting that climate change projections be included.

Large Bumping Lake expansion, supported by the state DOE, has a "fatal flaw" because of the Bull Trout listed under the Endangered Species Act and was removed from consideration by the Work Group. The DOE's version of storage at Wymer includes 44 miles of canal and 4 of tunnel to solve about 10 percent of the water supply shortage.

Climate change has to be taken into consideration when reviewing the water needs for each of the seven elements of the plan. Most of the projects in the integrated water resource plan have

been discussed and studied for years. Additional conservation and ground water storage would provide very little of the water needed to solve the ongoing water needs of the Yakima Basin now and in the future. Fish passage, modifying structures, fish enhancement elements, and tributary habitat improvements enhance the salmon recovery and resident fish survival but provide no new water.

The potential of an inter-basin water exchange from the Columbia is still viable and may be looking better as we proceed with the Work Group process.

See [www.ybsa.org](http://www.ybsa.org) for more information.