

YBSA Monthly Report December, 2009

Work group Integrated Management Plan: The Final 2009 YRBWEP Work Group meeting was held December 17th. A consensus vote (1-6) was taken. The comments raised during the vote ranged from agreeing to move forward (1), abstain because not enough information was available (4) on water supply projects, and some projects may be unattainable (6). Everyone agreed the process needs to move forward and include more detailed information on each element. The Department of Ecology and Bureau of Reclamation have \$1.3 million available to evaluate each project. The Work Group process will continue in 2010 with additional review of instream and out of stream water needs, a description of each project, and environmental and legal constraints. Most of the storage projects proposed have been studied in the past and have been rejected. Environmental groups and others oppose the enlargement of Bumping Lake. Bumping Lake enlargement would contain the majority of new water for the Yakima Basin.

YBSA Concerns: The new and expanded surface storage reservoir part of the integrated plan does not provide the water to solve the water supply requirements for fish, agriculture and municipal needs in the Yakima Basin.

Climate change concerns, cost of each proposed project and the total cost of the IWRMP, identifying those projects that may never be built, how the benefits of the projects improve fish runs, and the amount of water provided during droughts need to be identified and quantified.

The estimated cost of the YRBWEP integrated water resource management program is estimated to be \$4+ billion, without cost of operation, contingencies and mobilization. That amount mirrors the estimated costs of the proposed Columbia River Pump/Storage (Black Rock) with few of the benefits. The remainder of the management program, ground water storage, structural and operational changes, enhanced water conservation measures, market driven reallocation, fish habitat restoration and construction and operation of fish passage at existing reservoirs would continue to be included in the pump/storage project with sufficient water protecting our fish runs and our economy.

Score Card: A comparison of water supply and costs has to be included in a score card. The score card should compare the costs/benefits of the Integrated Water Resource Management Program with the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study (Black Rock). More than 500,000 salmon could return to the Yakima River with the additional water made available by the Black Rock Reservoir project. With stimulus money available for infrastructure and creation of more than 10,000 jobs needed to bolster the economy the pump/storage project should be proposed. Consensus by the Work group could move the Columbia Pump/Storage project forward.

Funds Given to Salmon Recovery Projects: Salmon recovery projects totaling more than \$1.8 million were awarded Tuesday in four Central Washington counties. The State Salmon Recovery Funding Board approved the grants based on recommendation from local groups. Statewide, the board has allocated nearly \$43 million to projects designed to improve fish habitat. Central Washington is home to two species listed as threatened on the Endangered Species List: the middle Columbia River steelhead trout and bull trout. Yakima County received the lion's share of the area funding \$1.1 million for four projects. Among them are removal of fish barriers on Cowiche Creek and Nile Creek, reconnecting Tepee Creek in Klickitat River subbasin to its floodplain, and relocating the levee at the county's Eschbach Park, northwest of Yakima. The Kittitas County Conservation District will receive \$328,500 to remove a small irrigation dam on the Teanaway River, northwest

of Ellensburg, and modernize an irrigation delivery system. In Klickitat County, \$265,650 was awarded to purchase six acres of flood plain that salmon use to spawn. The Benton Conservation District will receive \$115,362 to install fish screens on 13 irrigation diversions. (Dave Lester YH-R) Projects have been funded over the past 9 years and come from Federal Government and matched by the State through the sale of bonds.

These programs continue to improve Salmon habitat in the Yakima Basin. They improve structure and operation of existing water facilities and fish habitat at restoration and enhancement in the Yakima River and its tributaries which are part of the Integrated Water Resource Management Program being considered by the 2009 Work Group.

With the largest amount of additional water coming from the expansion of Bumping Lake and the environmental community and others opposed to the expansion, sufficient water for instream and out of stream use in the Yakima Basin is in jeopardy.

The drought in California is taking its toll. See <http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=6027412n&tag=api>

For additional information see www.ybsa.org

YBSA wishes everyone a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous and happy New Year.