

YBSA Monthly Report January, 2009

Review of Study: Yakima Basin Storage Alliance, with professional help, reviewed the Bureau of Reclamation and Department of Ecology's solutions to solve the problem of insufficient water available in the Yakima Basin. Both of their studies fail to adequately incorporate existing and future impacts to the Basin and fail to address the basin's future vitality. The Study was to find a way to improve fish passage, create a more normal flow in the Yakima River, insure a minimum of 70% water supply even in consecutive drought years, and provide enough water for municipal growth for the next 50 years. The conclusion the Bureau arrived at was to do nothing. The Ecology's program was to continue the programs that have existed for decades with no appreciable increase in available water. Both conclusions leave the Yakima Basin in the same position we've been in for decades, which is a very small number of fish returning to the Yakima River and its tributaries, drought conditions every few years and not enough water for municipal growth. Add to that the climatologists' predictions which state the Yakima Basin could have drought conditions every other year.

Conference with Director of DOE: In a video conference with Jay Manning, Director of the Department of Ecology, YBSA was informed that Bumping Lake was still an option even though it was eliminated as a storage site because the enlarged lake would not fill annually and it would infringe upon an environmentally sensitive area. There was no cost/benefit analysis, but it was still included as the only storage option in the Yakima Basin in the Ecology proposal.

Continuing the Storage Study: YBSA concurs with Benton and Yakima Counties position of continuing the Storage Study for another year. The final report of the Yakima River Basin feasibility Study would explain how the request from Congress to generate more water for fish, restoring the flow of the Yakima River as close to an unregulated hydrograph as possible, provide a minimum 70% of irrigation water to all proratable districts, and provide additional surface water for population growth to the year 2050 could be accomplished. By taking a do noting position the \$18 million spent to find a solution to solve the water problems identified by Congress leaves the Yakima Basin high and dry.

New Guidelines: On November 8, 2007 the Water Recourses Development Act required the Corp of Engineers to revise the 1983 Principals and Guidelines. The revisions are to reflect national priorities, encourage economic development, and protect the environment such as: maximizing sustainable economic development, avoid the unwise use of flood-prone areas and to protect and restore the functions of natural systems. The new guidelines may make the Bureau's No-Action result in direct conflict with the new Principals and Guidelines.

Ground Water Study: The ground water study that will be available shortly will show a direct connection between instream flow and ground water. There already exist moratoriums preventing the use of wells because of a drop in the water tables. How do

you recharge the aquifers? You provide a greater amount of instream flow so the increased volume of water would recharge the shallow aquifers. The only solution to solve the water needs in the Yakima Basin is a large storage project.

To find more information on the reasons why the Bureau of Reclamation should continue the Study see www.ybsa.org.