

YBSA Monthly Report July, 2008

Dr. Jack Stanford International Salmon Restoration Expert: Charlie de La Chapelle and Ted Strong met with Jack Stanford and his associate to request he attend a conference in Yakima to present his recovery proposal for the Yakima River Basin. Jack again stated there is no better place in the lower 48 states than the Yakima for salmon recovery. He stated if we do it right, recovery of 1 million fish is possible. Jack stated that reach based recovery fails, you must integrate the parts starting from the mouth, and have the water volume to moderate temperatures. Jack who authored the "Reaches Study" for the Yakima River also suggested that an update on the Reaches Study maybe appropriate at this time. He likes the Osoyuse (sp) strain of sockeye, and thinks that if left alone, in 50 years the stocks from the Hanford Reach will repopulate the Yakima. "They are tough beasts." He believes the Leopard frog is a good indicator species for salmon recovery, you recover the habitat for them then you will be able to support large numbers of fish.

There are 3 rivers in the lower 48 that interest Jack: Klamath, Umqua, and the Yakima. He believes the others south of the Frasier are too difficult to restore.

Meeting with Roza: YBSA met with the Roza Irrigation District Board to explain proposed legislation for environmental and salmon recovery. It includes a guarantee of 70% minimum water supply for all proratable districts during drought years. The draft business plan for the legislation includes that the proratable irrigation districts are levied a fee of \$18/ac based on the BOR study which found 4.2 million in benefits to agriculture, and agriculture can not be made to pay more than the amount by which it is expected to benefit.

Yakima County Commissioner Mike Leita said that there was no more important issue for the Yakima Basin's future than water for our basin and how well we handle it will dictate the next 100 years. The county wants to facilitate the best decision possible. He added that the Umatilla River which once was dry was a great example. Once the Tribes, irrigators and businessmen agreed to the solution of the water exchange program with the Columbia River; the politicians delivered it. The board was interested to know what the Yakama Nation thought of our draft legislation. YBSA had yet to hear from them

Rick Valicoff, Roza chair said there were many ongoing processes going on and that Roza would wait to see how things turned out before they commit to a project..

Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association Meeting: YBSA was invited and included in the program of the Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association Annual Business meeting. Special guests at the meeting were State Representative Bill Gant, House Speaker Frank Chopp and Ecology Director Jay Manning. YBSA presented a proposed financial business plan which included a total cost of all construction work for Black Rock Reservoir and Conveyance Systems of \$2,253,409,200 and miscellaneous expenses of \$2,246,590,800 for a total cost to complete the project of \$4.5 billion. (These numbers can be found in the Bureau of Reclamation Storage Study.)

The proposed funding options include Federal, State, local shares with the Federal share of 65% based upon the ratio agreed to in the Title XII legislation. The Title XII program was developed to improve conservation and provide more water for instream flow and fish. The Black Rock Project would provide about 600-800 thousand a/f annually for instream flow. Power for pumping 600,000 a/f annually was estimated at \$50 million with maintenance costs estimated \$10 million (Bureau numbers). Funding for pumping and operating costs was divided among BPA, power generation revenue and others.

All the Legislators present were very interested in the project and ask to be included in the development of the proposal including the financial package.

Executive Summary: The Executive Summary of the proposed Yakima River Basin Environmental and Salmon Restoration Act will be available shortly. Check YBSA's website www.ybsa.org.

Scoping Meeting: YBSA members attended the Department of Ecology scoping meeting. The State is exploring options to acquire more water and fish in the Yakima Basin. Their EIS will go beyond the options found in the BOR's Storage Study. YBSA suggested the DOE review all studies that have been completed over the years, to consider climate change and include salmon recovery values in their development of the EIS.

County Commissioners: YBSA discussed with the Kittitas Commissioners the timeline remaining for completion of the Yakima River Basin Storage Study and the value of a large volume of water that would become available with Black Rock Reservoir operational. We provided a copy of the Executive Summary of the Environmental and Salmon Recovery Act to the commissioners for their perusal. In addition the commission was interested in the changes that would occur in the volume of water in the existing reservoirs, the effects on ground water, the guaranteed 70% minimum water for proratable irrigation districts, additional fish runs, fish passage over existing reservoirs and the economic value of this project to Kittitas County.

Meeting with Candidates: Sid Morrison met with the legislature and county commissioner candidates and provided them with an update on the need for additional water in the basin and the benefits Black Rock would provide. He also met with Suncadia's new manager to enhance his understanding of the environmental and salmon recovery project that would be accomplished with more water available for instream flow..

Information Dissemination: The YBSA Executive committee has been formulating a process to better inform our elected officials and the people who reside in the Yakima River Basin about the development of the Environmental and Salmon Recovery Act and the need for more water in the Yakima Basin. The concerns raised are Black Rock is too expensive, seepage from Black Rock will accelerate pollution of the Columbia River, we don't need storage just conservation, water marketing will solve the problem and Black Rock won't help fish we just need more habitat. YBSA will answer those questions. A comprehensive long term plan for the Yakima Basin has to include a large volume of water.