

## **YBSA Monthly Report July, 2010**

### Columbia River Water Exchange:

1. The Yakima River Basin has a long history of an inadequate water supply to meet competing water resource needs. Each year we are faced with the need for an adequate snowpack to sustain and enhance our anadromous fishery resources, provide water to irrigate our agricultural crops (a mainstay of our economy), and meet the municipal and domestic needs of our growing population. We have attempted to address this matter through the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project and other programs focusing on conservation measures to reduce irrigation diversions; while progress has been made we are nevertheless faced with the fact that additional infrastructure is necessary (particularly storage) if we are to assure a reliable water supply for the future.
2. YBSA believes a Columbia River water exchange provides us with the best opportunity - - substituting water from the Columbia River to irrigate some of our crop lands and leaving Yakima River water, current diverted, instream for our anadromous fishery.
3. A Columbia River water exchange addresses the Yakima River basin's water resource issues for both the short and long term and once and for all provides a reliable water supply which has eluded us for decades to sustain our economic, environmental, and cultural resources.

A water exchange program with the Columbia River has proven successful in the Umatilla Basin and a similar program has been approved and funding is being requested for the Walla Walla Basin. It's time the Yakima Basin embarks on a long term solution to our need for more water.

More Water for Fish: YBSA will continue to participate in the Integrated Water Resource Manage Plan (IWRMP) Work Group to find a solution for our water short years including consecutive drought years. Additional habitat, fish passage, and additional water in the lower Yakima River will provide an opportunity for up to 1 million returning salmon to the river provided water is available.

IWRMP: The current discussion by the Work Group to provide additional storage facilities are all located within the Yakima Basin.

1. Transferring water from Lake Keechelus to Lake Kachess and drawing down about 200,000 a/f of dead storage below the existing water level that is available now.
2. Wymer Dam and Reservoir would be filled by pumping water from the Yakima River near Thorp to Wymer about midway through the Yakima River Canyon. It would provide 160,000 a/f each year for fish and irrigation.
3. Bumping Lake Enlargement would be created by building a new dam down stream on the Bumping River. Approximately 190,000 a/f could be available with the large reservoir site being constructed. The existing lake shore activities would be inundated and habitat (Bull Trout) would be compromised. Historic figures show a probability that the enlarged lake might not fill every year.

The next step in developing the IWRMP is for the consulting team to refine the concepts and prepare cost estimates for each of the above projects. Additional results will be presented at the September Work Group meeting. Conceptual results for other actions Yakima/Columbia Water Availability and Hydrologic Modeling will be the focus of the August Work Group meeting.

Points of Interest:

- The Colorado River storage system has a 5 year supply of stored water and the Yakima system has less than a 1 year supply.
- The lower Yakima River needs to have all the floodplain made available for salmon recovery.
- More water is needed to develop the lower river for improved temperature and habitat.
- Fish biologists seem to be willing to discard the lower river for anything but passage for salmonoids to get to the upper Yakima Basin.
- Sockeye successes are large in the Columbia River and increasing the run in the Yakima River would require cooler water temperatures and more water.

See updated information at [www.ybsa.org](http://www.ybsa.org)