

YBSA Monthly Report March, 2008

Weekly Meetings: Yakima Basin Storage Alliance Executive Committee met weekly to develop a process to respond to the Yakima River Basin Storage Study Draft Planning Report/EIS.

Benefits: YBSA reviewed the Planning Report and found a tremendous number of benefits either left out or downsized to meet the Principle and Guidelines (P & G) that were followed by the Bureau. We prepared a response identifying the items omitted and how the benefits to the Yakima River Basin and the Regional Economic Development (RED) account would exceed the required value to justify the Black Rock alternative as the preferred solution. (see www.ybsa.org) We urged all interests to send their comments to the Bureau of Reclamation prior to the March 31st deadline.

Meeting with Military: YBSA met with Yakima Training Center Commander Colonel Pullar and others to discuss the Black Rock project. YBSA felt it was necessary to talk with Colonel Pullar about the proposed operation of the reservoir. The location of Black Rock probably would not create an undue hardship on the training center.

Meeting About Need for Water: At the Columbia River Policy Advisory Group meeting Mike Lester, Yakima County Commissioner, pointed out the following:

- Drought is now a frequent event in the Yakima Basin
- Structures built 50 years ago are insufficient for current problems.
- We need to address both growth and protection of endangered species which require water.
- There are permanent crops in the Yakima Basin (orchards, vineyards, hops) that cannot survive without annual water.
- The Yakima Basin is on the verge of failing. We need more than a 5-10 year solution.

Discussion and presentations followed on what can be done with the drawdown of Lake Roosevelt behind Grand Coulee Dam.

Benefits for Fish: The consultants hired by the Bureau of Reclamation reviewed the benefits for fish in the Yakima Basin for the three alternatives: Black Rock, Wymer, and Wymer+. The Storage Study fisheries D EIS modeling results for each species showed Black Rock alternative created the greatest benefit for salmon recovery.

A Healthy Run for Fish: YBSA attended the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Program on some of the habitat restoration projects going on and what that means in terms of improving the overall health of the Yakima River. The program started with an excellent presentation of "History and Condition of the Yakima River" by Dr. Morris Uebelacker, a geography professor at Central Washington University. A question from the audience provided an opportunity for YBSA to share some of the benefits Black Rock would provide for salmon recovery by freeing up more than 400,000 a/f of water to rewater the six reaches identified in the "Reaches Report" by Jack Stanford.

Status of Seepage Report: The status of the Hanford Reservation's seepage report was discussed with Woody Russell, Environmental Compliance Officer for the Department of Energy at Hanford. It appears the report will not be completed until this winter.

Presentations: The following is a list of presentations made during the month of March.

- Tri-City Homebuilders in the Tri-Cities
- Colonel Pullar, commander, Yakima Training Center
- Columbia River Policy Advisory Group in Ellensburg
- Tri-City Realtors Association breakfast meeting in Kennewick
- Bureau of Reclamation Storage Study Fisheries D EIS results report in Yakima
- Association of Engineers in Yakima
- Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board in Ellensburg

YBSA Board Meeting at 5:30 pm, April 7th at New Vision in Yakima.

Check www.ybsa.org for further information