

YBSA Monthly Report November, 2007

Roundtable 4: The Bureau of Reclamation held roundtable 4 of the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study. The report indicated there would be no change in the irrigation or municipal supply targets. The Fisheries Target flows were still being updated with additional information based upon climate change. The schedule and milestones for the Storage Study are release a draft PR/EIS to the public in January, 2008; a public review period for sixty days; hold informational meetings and hearings during the public review period; and prepare the final PR/EIS publication for presentation to Congress December, 2008.

Newspaper Advertisement: YBSA placed an information letter in the Yakama Nation Review along with a list of benefits available from the Black Rock Project.

Meeting with Strong and Meninick: The YBSA Executive Committee met with Ted and Theo Strong and Jerry Meninick. Ted indicated the ad YBSA ran in the Yakama newspaper was very timely and created discussion among the staff and members of the Yakama Nation. He said the Yakama Nation is getting more concerned about climate change and that the Nation needs to find water soon to take care of problems. Ted asked Jerry to relay to the executive committee comments he received about the advertisement in the Review during meetings with the tribal leaders and staff.

Jerry pointed out the following questions need to be answered: who is YBSA, how is Washington State involved, how much authority does BOR have, and why YBSA isn't meeting with the Yakama Nation. The Nation needs to be involved in writing the legislation necessary to ensure the Yakima River Basin Restoration Act include the resource management plans that have been approved. The new water from Black Rock needs to be made available to continue salmon restoration and the Cle Elum Supplementation project. YBSA needs to meet with tribal council and the natural resource and legislative committees.

YBSA's policy position should include building the legislative process around (S-2322).

Meeting with Chandler: The Executive Committee also met with Gary Chandler, Association of Washington Business (AWC). Gary was a Grant County Commissioner and State Legislator from Moses Lake. He emphasized that we need storage. Without storage in place within the next twenty years we will fail. Add the effects of climate change on our available water and the problem worsens. We need to step forward and find a solution and storage is the answer. Seepage is a concern, but it can be addressed. Gary commented that cost was not a factor when one looks at the benefits of such a project in real terms.

Contact with Jack Stanford: The Executive Committee participated in a conference call with University of Montana's Jack Stanford, who is director of the Flathead Lake Biological Station and an expert on salmon recovery. YBSA and Jack have a common goal: salmon recovery in the Yakima River. Our discussion included, besides additional water in the river, other issues such as habitat needs to make our common goal a reality. Chairman Sid Morrision asked, "What do we do to work with you to get salmon recovery accomplished?" Jack stated we need to get water in the river and develop some visualization of flow and habitat needed to accomplish our goal.

Jack will come to Yakima between Christmas and the middle of January to meet with YBSA and others to discuss our needs to meet our common goal, "salmon recovery". Jack states, "If we don't fix a couple of these rivers the size of the Yakima River it won't meet my expectations, I would be disappointed."

Contribution Request: The Finance Committee met numerous times. Letters were sent asking Black Rock Supporters to contribute to YBSA so we can continue the push to make the environmental restoration of the Yakima River Basin a reality.

See www.ybsa.org for additional information.