

## **YBSA Monthly Report November, 2009**

The Economy: The Yakima Basin Storage Alliance continues to pursue the need for more off stream storage to protect and enhance our economy and environment. Without an adequate supply of water to increase the number of anadromous fish in the basin, guarantee a minimum of 70% water for proratable irrigation districts, and provide water for municipal growth including enough to recharge exempt wells, the Basin will start on an economic downward cycle. The number of jobs will decrease, fewer purchases will be made, and schools, cities, counties, and fire districts will have less money to provide vital services. When there isn't enough water in the Basin to protect and enhance fisheries someone will determine who will receive the limited supply. In other basins, such as the Sacramento, the Klamath, and the Okanogan, fish have won out. If that would occur in the Yakima Basin our economy would be damaged and unemployment would increase.

New Water from Outside the Basin: We now have an opportunity to solve the water problem for future generations even with climate change. The solution is pump/storage of water from the Columbia River when it's not needed in the Columbia River and use the water for irrigation purposes, freeing up large amounts of water in the Yakima Basin. The water can be used to address the Yakama Nation Treaty Rights, return more than 500,000 salmon to the Yakima River, provide the water needed to build fish ladders over existing dams, and create many miles of fish habitat without damaging the existing environment in the Yakima Basin.

Will the Work Group Process Solve the Problem?: YBSA is concerned with the direction the Work Group is taking. We have asked repeatedly for a score card to be able to evaluate the costs, amount of water provided, how many more fish will be produced, and how long it will take to complete each project. YBSA's request has been ignored so far and the Work Group is moving on making decisions on projects without important information. The Work Group is trying to find the least amount of water for the least cost with no regard to the urgency or the need for a large amount of new water in the Yakima Basin. The Phased approach proposed would allow a few projects to possibly get funded now with others being postponed or forgotten and never completed. We will be in the same position here in the Yakima Basin as we have been during the last 30 plus years. The Audubon Society provided a letter to the Work Group stating that they oppose the inclusion of enlarging Bumping Lake in the proposal. The other environmental groups expressed their doubt that Bumping Lake will ever be enlarged. Raising the elevation of Lake Cle Elum and/or pumping water from dead storage have been reviewed in the past and have been rejected. The proposed Keechelus-to-Kachees pipeline would

only be useable and cost effective if climate change doesn't reduce the amount of water available in the head waters of the Yakima River. Both the irrigation community and those interested in returning the Yakima River to its historical fish runs need to acquire water to accomplish those tasks.

Will a Package be Ready for Congress?: The review of the proposed components of the Basin Study and the Integrated Management Plan, including those which have been rejected in the past, will include eleven tasks and those tasks will be evaluated during 2010. In 2010 the DOE and BOR will spend more than \$1 million evaluating the projects once again. The goal is a package to present to Congress. YBSA believes the package will be reduced to a minimum with very little water available to meet the Basin's needs. The only additional water will be the water made available through conservation. Some of the other proposed projects for resolving water supply and stream flow may never come to fruition. Our elected officials are looking for a proposal which solves the water and fish problem. The package needs to produce enough water for fish and agriculture during consecutive drought years.

See [www.ybsa.org](http://www.ybsa.org) for a comparison of pump storage vs the integrated management plan being reviewed by the Work Group.

The December 7<sup>th</sup> Work Group meeting has been canceled. Only the December 17<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held.