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Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) 2009 Workgroup

Meeting Notes

November 23, 2009, Yakima Arboretum in Yakima, Washington

Review of November 9, 2009 Meeting Notes

The Workgroup had the following comments on the November 9, 2009 Meeting Notes:

- In the comment attributed to Michael Garrity on page 1, the consultant team will add that Michael stated that the workgroup will be in a better position to reach consensus after the Basin Study is done because how the projects hold up under further analysis will inform what package will ultimately be proposed to legislators.
- Dave Fast's name should be listed under workgroup members, not other attendees.

Bumping Spotted Owl Habitat by Ann Root, ESA Adolfson

Ann Root presented information about spotted owl habitat around Bumping Lake. Ann reviewed estimates of the impact that different scenarios of the expansion of Bumping Lake would have on acres of owl habitat and acres of late successional forest habitat.

The group discussed the following points related to Ann's presentation:

- The last spotted owl nest in this area was documented in 2001, however it is not clear whether additional surveys were completed but nests were not found or whether surveys have not been completed since 2001. The US Forest Service (USFS) usually only actively surveys for the spotted owls in specific project study areas. The consultant team will follow with the USFS by early 2010 to determine if additional information on spotted owl habitat is available.
- The USFS requested that there concerns be placed in the record that Bumping small enlargement would effect existing wells, campgrounds, and private residences. The Workgroup would like additional information. This will be provided in 2010.
- There are opportunities to mitigate for lost spotted owl habitat that the workgroup should look into, in the Naches district and other areas in the Basin.
- The impact from Bumping Lake expansion could be bigger on bull trout than on spotted owls.
- Environmental groups are especially concerned about the area where the Bumping River flows into the reservoir.
- Fish passage at Bumping Lake should be provided regardless of whether Bumping Lake is expanded. This is included in the draft integrated plan.



Municipal Conservation Element by Ben Floyd, HDR

Ben Floyd reviewed the Potential Reduction in Municipal/Domestic Water Production (AFY) handout, noting that these estimates are preliminary and do not account for return flows, which would actually reduce the estimated water conserved. The handout estimates the potential reduction in water production based on various levels of conservation effort participation in the Basin. The group discussed the following workgroup member comments related to this handout:

- The workgroup needs to address the conversion of agricultural lands to residential uses. The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Department of Ecology (Ecology) will address this as part of the 2010 study plan.
- With the package to be funded by taxpayer money, the package should be a model for other parts of the country, including an extensive conservation program and best management practices required as part of water being provided.
- The workgroup needs to address exempt wells in order to create a good groundwater management policy. If exempt wells are no longer allowed in the future, the workgroup must address the domestic demand that would rely on exempt wells.
- The reduction in water production listed on the handout from conservation does not provide much additional benefit to water supply because much of this water currently comes back as return flow from wastewater treatment plant discharges.
- In municipal systems, conservation can make the most significant gains by reducing landscape watering.
- Implementing landscape conservation measures can be difficult for several reasons: voluntary programs have lower participation, lack of economic incentives, and politically difficult to address.

Integrated Package Instream Flow Benefits by Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA

Bob Montgomery reviewed the Changes in Flow Volume from Improvements (Drought Years 1994 and 2005) handout; the winter, spring, and summer Phase I improvements maps; and the winter, spring, and summery Phases I and II maps. The consultant team will validate and refine these preliminary benefit estimates using the RiverWare model in 2010. The preliminary benefits provided to the Workgroup were based upon the flow benefit analysis results presented in the State's Final EIS on the Integrated Water Resource Management Alternative (Ecology 2009). In the EIS, the Anchor QEA consultant team organized the basin into discrete reaches (see Table 3-4 in the EIS), showing benefits from different actions on specific reaches. New water was allocated by 2/3 benefit to supply and 1/3 benefit to flow. It should be noted that this is a simplified modeling effort to estimate benefits and return flows from additional supply are not accounted for, therefore the benefits are understated.

The group discussed the following workgroup member comments related to these handouts:

- Would be helpful to see how much the increased supply available for flow would contribute toward meeting flow objectives and a more normative flow regime.

- The benefits have not considered optimizing management for flow and supply benefits. This would be addressed in 2010.
- The numbers used for this analysis are drought year values from 1992–1994 and 2005, and accounts for storage carried over from one year to the next.
- Need further discussion on the priority of flow improvements in different areas, such as beyond Parker during the winter.
- The workgroup should not be allocating water. Let the existing groups such as the System Operation Advisory Committee (SOAC) address how best to allocate proposed new supply.
- Depicted Bumping River summer flow increase is only a little higher than current conditions and shouldn't affect spawning
- The workgroup needs to consider business rules for operating reservoirs. For example, thresholds for diverting water need to be decided.
- It is difficult to tell the magnitude of the benefits and the workgroup would like to see more detail.

Review of Summary Handout (List of Projects) by Ben Floyd, HDR

Ben reviewed the Summary handout that lists the projects proposed for inclusion in the draft integrated package, highlighting the changes made since the workgroup last saw this handout. The project list has been revised to include only two phases (0–11 Years, and 11–30+ years) and many of the project start dates were made earlier. The group discussed the following workgroup member comments related to this handout:

- Mitigation should be added to each project or as a step in each phase in this summary so readers will not think that the workgroup is not addressing impacts. The consultant team will add this.
- Consider eliminating the phasing approach.
- The consultant team will reword the Subordinate Power at Roza and Subordinate Power at Chandler projects to add that the workgroup will find comparable replacement power elsewhere.
- The summary should address the following:
 - New water use should be conditioned with best management practices
 - Exempt wells need to be addressed
 - Add possible Roza dam removal if Wymer can be configured to supply Roza
 - Need to coordinate floodplain work with counties' land use programs
 - Consider special designation and protection of certain areas under the Clean Water Act or Wild and Scenic Rivers Act as part of the implementation plan (concern was raised at this suggestion about whether such designations would affect water supply availability. It could be crafted not to affect supply).
- Environmental opposition to the small Bumping Lake expansion is being expressed in comment letters sent to HDR, as included in the meeting packet and these will also be posted on the Reclamation project website.
- Yakima County would like the phrase “contingent on demonstrated need from climate change or other factors (options with storage or direct pump without storage)” to be removed from the

Columbia River Pump/Storage project in Phase II. Yakima County is not advocating this based on any contingency.

- The workgroup should maximize the Yakima Basin's water before beginning Columbia River projects.
- The Department of Agriculture would like the Pine Hollow project to move forward, potentially as a sub-basin pilot program.
- The workgroup should create a scorecard in order to be taken seriously by elected officials. The consultant team is currently working on a scorecard.
- In-basin storage, including both Bumping and Wymer, are necessary.

Water Supply Benefits Tables

Bob Montgomery presented the revised Water Supply Benefits Tables for 1992-1994 and 2005. These tables do not account for additional return flows that would occur when more water is supplied, so benefits are understated. The modeling in 2010 will describe these and other benefits in more detail. In addition, Phase II of these tables does not include the Columbia River Pump/Storage project. In a multi-year drought, irrigation district boards would need to balance the year's water supply needs with saving water for the next year.

Elements: Flexibility and Adaptability by Jerry Kelso, Consultant to Reclamation

Jerry Kelso gave a presentation showing the possible variations for the Wymer Reservoir project. A Wymer reservoir could be fed from the Thorp pump station, gravity fed off of Cle Elum, or filled through direct pump from the Columbia River. It could also be connected with other off-channel reservoirs, such as on Selah or Burbank Creeks. This presentation will be mailed to the Workgroup and will be available on Reclamation's project website. Workgroup members indicated that they were interested in the presentation and they would like follow-up information in the future.

Public Comment

The Workgroup meeting was opened for public comment. The following comments were received:

- The 1992-1994 Water Supply Benefits tables should include the total TWSA for these years and how contract obligations would be met under Phases I and II. Bob Montgomery responded that the consultant team used numbers presented by Chris Lynch of Reclamation at a previous workgroup meeting as the target for 1992-1994. The analysis of benefits will be refined during the 2010 Basin Study.
- Ron VanGundy summarized Obama Administration comments from a recent national water resources conference: New water storage is important, the administration will be sensitive to Native American water issues, and hydropower is an environmentally responsible way to meet future power needs. The administration will look to modernize existing power sites and add new hydropower facilities.

Presentation and Discussion of 2010 Workplan and Legislation Consideration by Derek Sandison (Ecology), Wendy Christensen (Reclamation), and Jerry Kelso (Consultant to Reclamation)

Derek Sandison and Wendy Christensen reviewed the Plan of Study Summary handout which describes the basin study that Reclamation and Ecology will conduct to establish the technical basis and decision support for the YRBWEP integrated management plan. The group discussed the following workgroup member comments related to this handout:

- Ecology and Reclamation will involve workgroup members in the study, including those who served on the habitat and fish passage subcommittees.
- In Task 2, proratable irrigation districts are referenced, but this task needs to address all proratable water right holders that might be interested in additional supply
- Yakima County does not like the distinction between short-term and long-term implementation in the second objective on the handout (Pg. 1).
- Note that workgroup recommendations should also be provided to other federal resource management agencies, such as BPA.

Jerry Kelso, Reclamation contract staff, shared concepts on legislation framework:

- The package is integrated and its projects are interrelated, therefore individual pieces of the project cannot be removed.
- The workgroup is attempting to construct a package that includes benefits for all involved interests.
- The package needs to be adaptable.
- The package needs to address funding, including local participation.

Workgroup members should submit any additional comments to Derek or Wendy by the close of business on Wednesday, December 2, 2009. Reclamation and Ecology's goal is to finalize the plan of study by the December 17, 2009 workgroup meeting.

Comments on Summary Document by Ben Floyd (HDR)

Ben Floyd reviewed the Recommendation to Advance a Preliminary Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan handout.

Comments on the Recommendation paragraph:

- Insert "investigation of elements listed below. . ." into the last sentence of paragraph
- Workgroup members will need to see the referenced attached report prior to approval of the recommendation.

Comments on Water Supply #2:

- Add text "Additional water supply through water storage at "some combination of the following:" Wymer Dam..."
- Add text "...and direct pumping from the Columbia River with or without storage."
- Add to the list of potential reservoirs: Selah and Burbank.

- Add a statement: “and exploring possibilities for additional power opportunities.”

Comments on Water Supply #3:

- Change “prior to the irrigation season” to “prior to storage control”
- At the end of this bullet, add “including transfer of agricultural water to municipalities for ASR.”

Comments on Water Supply #4:

- Workgroup member commented that he thinks that the current water right transfer process works well.

Comments on Water Supply #5:

- Change “including completion of the Wapatox Project” to “including completion of the Wapatox canal piping...”
- Change the phrase “subordination of the Roza and Chandler power plants...” to indicate a range of possible actions, such as “the potential for subordination of some or all of the Roza and Chandler power plants...”
- Change “improvement of the Kittitas Reclamation District South Branch Canal to improve...” to “improvement of the Kittitas Reclamation District canals to improve...”

Comments on Habitat Enhancement #7:

- Remove “emphasis on Tier I and II reaches”

Comments on Further Steps:

- Change “improve cost estimates for the major construction projects identified” to “improve comparable cost estimates for the major...”
- Add a bullet that states, “utilize a scorecard to display benefits and costs for all elements in the integrated plan as may be required by the state and federal legislature.”

General Comments

- Add statements about restoring native fish populations
- The workgroup should add “analysis for ways to mitigate impacts to affected habitats by storage” into these recommendations.

In addition, Michael Garrity noted his concern that the inclusion of the Bumping Lake project would keep the package from moving forward due to opposition from environmental interests. Workgroup members should provide any additional edits to the Recommendation handout by Wednesday, December 2, 2009.

Consensus Continuum

Ben Floyd reviewed the Definition of Consensus handout with the workgroup and conducted an informal, preliminary poll to gauge where on the consensus continuum workgroup members stood at this point (the continuum ranges from 1 to 6, with 1 = endorsement and 6 = formal disagreement but will go

with the majority). This discussion was meant as a check-in before the more formal poll at a later workgroup meeting. Workgroup members, who identified themselves as either a 4 through 6 on the consensus continuum, or not at consensus, were asked to explain what changes would need to be made to move to a consensus score of 3 or better.

All workgroup members scored themselves as a “3” or better with the exception of Michael Garrity, Alex Conley, and Mike Leita due to the following reasons:

- Michael Garrity stated that he could not reach consensus with the information as it is currently presented, however he would rank himself at a “6” if the Recommendation to Advance a Preliminary Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan document is reworked to state that the workgroup supports the investigation into the listed projects, but does not yet support the package as listed. He would rate himself a “3 or even a 2” if along with this change the Bumping Lake project was also removed from consideration.
- Alex Conley rated himself at a “1” on elements 5 through 7 (modifications to existing operations, fish passage, and habitat enhancement), but a 4 on the remainder of the package due to a need for more detail and to review this information with his agency board.
- Mike Leita rated himself at a “4” due to a lack of detail (not having the referenced report available for review).
- Tom Ring clarified that he is speaking as technical staff of the Yakama Nation on behalf of the Tribe’s senior Natural Resources staff member, who could not attend. He stated that staff would be recommending to Tribal Council that the Yakama Nation support the proposed package, but that he did not speak for Tribal Council, which had not yet had an opportunity to take a formal position on the proposal.

Public Comment

The Workgroup meeting was opened for public comment. The following comments were received:

- The workgroup handouts presented today need to link land use to water management to protect restoration efforts made by different entities. Exempt wells also need to be addressed in these documents. The workgroup should look beyond voluntary conservation measures and require best management practices for water use. The workgroup should consider adding an 8th category to the Recommendation handout, address administrative and legal support efforts necessary for successful integrated plan implementation.
- In addition to habitat loss, the expansion of Bumping Lake, even under the smaller proposal, would have an economic impact due to the loss of campground, trails access, private residences, and a private resort area if these areas are inundated.
- A member of the Yakama Nation commented that he believes that the Yakama Nation is underrepresented in this process. The Yakama Nation Tribal Council has a process where proposed recommendations are considered by various committees, and then a position is taken. The current process does not protect Yakama Nation treaty rights.
- In response to a question from the audience, Tom Ring reiterated that he was speaking as Yakama Nation staff and did not speak for the Tribal Council.

Action Items

- Workgroup members will provide comments to Derek Sandison (Ecology) and Wendy Christensen (Reclamation) on the Plan of Study, and to Ben Floyd with HDR on the draft recommendation document by December 2, 2009.
- The consultant team will follow up with the USFS to learn whether there have been additional spotted owl surveys since 2001.
- The consultant team will collect information to depict impacts of Bumping Lake expansion on existing wells, campgrounds, and private residences.
- The consultant team will revise notes, the Summary and Recommendation handouts as described in the notes.

Workgroup Members in Attendance

Brad Avy, Washington Department of Agriculture

Dale Bambrick, NOAA Fisheries Service

Dave Brown, City of Yakima

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board

Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District

Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District

David Fast, Yakama Nation – Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project

Adam Fyall, Benton County

Michael Garrity, American Rivers

Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner

Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

Tom Ring, Yakama Nation – Natural Resources

Derek Sandison, Washington Department of Ecology

Jeff Tayer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jeff Thomas, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District

Dawn Wiedmeier, Bureau of Reclamation

Other Attendees

Brent Bohan, American Rivers

Kevin Bouchey, Yakima County Commissioner

Tom Carpenter, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

David Child, Yakima Basin Joint Board

Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation

Dan Church, Bureau of Reclamation

Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation

Charlie de la Chappelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

Warren Dickman, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

John Easterbrooks, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Sharon Edgar, HDR Engineering
Ben Floyd, HDR Engineering
Chuck Freeman, Kennewick Irrigation District
Chuck Garner, Bureau of Reclamation
Don Gatchalian, Yakima County
Bob Hall, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance/Yakima Auto Dealers
Justin Harter, Naches-Selah Irrigation District
Ken Hasbrouck, Kittitas Reclamation District
Lynn Holt, Bureau of Reclamation
Joel Hubble, Bureau of Reclamation
Jerry Kelso, Consultant to Bureau of Reclamation
Chuck Klarich, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Barb Lisk, Office of Representative Richard Hastings
Steven Malloch, National Wildlife Federation
Mike Marvich, Aqua Permanente
Tina Mayo, US Forest Service
Jason McCormick, Washington Water Trust
Tom Monroe, Roza Irrigation District
Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA
Carol Ready, Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program, Resource Conservation & Development Council
Ann Root, ESA Adolfson
Mike Schwisow, Schwisow & Associates
Dan Silver, Facilitator
Ric Valicoff, Roza Irrigation District

Next Workgroup Meeting

The next meeting will be held on December 17, 2009 at the Yakima Arboretum.

Where to Find Workgroup Information

Meeting materials, notes, and presentations from the Workgroup's meetings will be posted on the project website (<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/index.html>). A bibliography of information sources, many of which are available online, is posted on the website. If anyone needs help finding an information source, contact those listed at the top of page 1 or Ben Floyd at HDR Engineering's Pasco, Washington office, (509) 546-2053, or ben.floyd@hdrinc.com.