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Yakima River Basin Study– Out of Stream Needs (Task 2) Subcommittee

Meeting Notes, August 11, 2010, City of Yakima Public Works Offices

Welcome and Introductions

Andrew Graham said one objective today is to begin reaching closure on the out-of-stream water needs assessment. We would like to hear from the Subcommittee whether the “bottom-line” quantities of need defined in the Technical Memorandum are reasonable as a basis for the integrated plan.

We will also discuss the agricultural conservation element as described at the July 28 Workgroup meeting; plus the municipal/domestic water conservation element including a recommendation to be covered today. We would like to determine whether the Subcommittee is comfortable advancing both conservation elements to the Workgroup as recommended elements of the Integrated Plan.

Don Gatchalian asked whether there is going to be formal public comment on elements of the Integrated Plan, including the water needs assessment, as they are being developed. It is easier to incorporate public input and make changes before a proposed action gets fully developed. Andrew will pass this comment to Reclamation and Ecology.

Approve Notes from Prior Meeting

- Notes from the July 14 meeting were approved.

Status of Technical Memorandum – Water Needs for Out-of-Stream Uses

Andrew reported on the status of this technical memorandum.

- The Subcommittee and Workgroup received the document in July, and we received comments from a number of individuals.
- Written comments, plus input received at the July 14 Subcommittee meeting were processed using a Comment/Response table. The table was distributed to Subcommittee members yesterday.
- Andrew reviewed the Comment/Response table with Wendy Christensen.
- The technical memorandum was then updated, and a copy was sent to the WSU Peer Review Team last Friday. We have requested comments from them by August 20.

Andrew provided a few minutes for the Subcommittee to skim the Comment/Response table and asked if the Subcommittee has any initial feedback. Feedback from the group included:



- Michael Garrity said he would like to see analysis of conservation opportunities on residential lands within irrigation districts. Andrew said this is covered separately in the municipal/domestic water conservation technical memoranda. That includes all residential lands, inside and outside of irrigation districts. Michael will review and consider how the pieces fit together.
- Jerry Kelso said the Yakima Project is not authorized to provide municipal and industrial (M&I) water. If writing legislation for the Integrated Plan, it will need to address authorization for M&I. And that component needs to be kept separate from Total Water Supply Available (TWSA).
- Ron van Gundy said the technical memorandum says that non-federally-supplied users won't benefit from the Integrated Plan. That's not accurate – their water supply will become more reliable if the plan is implemented. This needs to be addressed because people receiving benefits should help pay for the projects. We need to get into the post-1905 rights to address this.
- Chris Lynch asked for a specific reference to where in the updated document is clarification added on why the crop irrigation requirements are used for federally-supplied lands. This relates to a comment from Max Benitz, listed in the table.
- Michael Garrity asked about a comment from Steve Malloch. Is the analysis looking at economics of different combinations of projects? Andrew said that the project scope, as currently structured, does not provide budget to run the economic model on different combinations of projects. However, individual projects will be analyzed for cost-effectiveness in terms of the benefits they deliver. Michael said it would be useful to also run the economic analysis for a smaller, intermediate package. This would improve decision-making.

Further feedback on the Comment/Response table can be provided as the Subcommittee continues to review it over the next week or so.

Municipal/Domestic Water Conservation

Andrew presented a draft recommendation for municipal and domestic water conservation. This is intended to advance the discussion of this element of the Integrated Plan, building on the “bookends” technical memorandum that explored effects of two scenarios for water conservation. Andrew summarized comments that were received on the “bookends” memo, including review by the Subcommittee and from Mike Dixel of the Washington State Department of Health. (Mike is the Water Resources Policy Lead at WDOH, and is responsible for implementing the State’s 2007 Water Use Efficiency Rule for municipal water systems). The recommendation was developed with those comments in mind.

The recommendation includes three main elements:

- A locally based Advisory Committee to organize outreach to local elected officials and liaison with Reclamation, Ecology and DOH. This can provide a focal point for advancing municipal water conservation across the many local jurisdictions and rural residents who would need to take actions.
- Assuming the Integrated Plan will include a block of supply for municipal and domestic use and mitigation, it should also include development of water conservation standards for access to the new supply.
- The Integrated Plan should create a fund to promote water-use efficiency basin-wide, using voluntary, incentive based programs. This could be a basin-wide program, or competitive grants to local communities.

Michael Garrity suggested a fourth element be added: look at ways to encourage residents within irrigation districts to use outdoor water more efficiently. Dave Brown suggested this could apply to any residents served by dual water supplies (potable and irrigation).

The group agreed with the recommendation, including the fourth point. This recommendation should be taken to the YRBWEP Workgroup at the next meeting.

Other comments included:

- Joel Freudenthal suggested the Basin will need to be closed to new exempt wells, as they have done in the Walla Walla Basin.
- Don said that there are lots of small water systems in the basin, and many of them do not charge very much for water. The customers would use less if their monthly bills were higher. It would be better if those small systems tied into public water systems, were upgraded, and would conserve more due to higher cost of water. But the money isn't there for the upgrades. Andrew said that sounded like it would be more complex to build into the integrated plan, so he suggested it not be included in the recommendation at this time. Andrew will check DOH water-use efficiency regulations – he thinks they apply to private systems as well as public systems.

Agricultural Water Conservation

Bob Montgomery reviewed the agricultural water conservation information that was presented at the last Workgroup meeting. It is also contained in a new technical memorandum distributed to the group.

- Ron said some of the information on Roza is from old studies. Less water will be saved than is indicated in the information for Roza, because a lot of that has already been achieved.
- Jerry asked how much of the water being used on non-federally supplied lands is post 1905. If they are part of TWSA, then some outreach and funding will be needed for conservation among those water users.
- Charlie de la Chapelle said that pump-back projects should be eligible for funding. They reduce diversions and could also help irrigators meet water quality requirements related to pesticides and nutrients. Since this has environmental benefits, it would help if these projects were subsidized. Bob said that pump-back projects are eligible. We can add text to the memo on pump-backs and reuse, to make this more clear.

The group agreed that the agricultural water conservation program outlined should be advanced as a recommendation to the YRBWEP Workgroup for including in the Integrated Plan.

Ongoing Activities – Agricultural Water Needs

Bob Montgomery presented information on this topic. The water needs assessment has been updated to account for water transfers that occurred during recent droughts. After the transferred water has been accounted for, this shows a slightly larger amount of need in order for proratable water rights to receive 70% of supply.

Ron said there seems to be a basic math problem. Roza has a much larger entitlement than KRD, so Roza's need should be shown as a lot higher than KRD. Could it be that the Terrace Heights diversion

is not being accounted for in Roza's numbers? *[Note: after subsequent review of information provided by Anchor/QEA, Ron indicated the numbers are satisfactory as presented.]*

Bob presented information on idle lands within the Wapato Irrigation Project. If brought into production, they could require 45,000 AF during non-drought years. However this does not affect the need for drought years, since that is based on 70% of the entitlement, and that would not change.

Bob reviewed information on climate change effects on agricultural water needs. This was based, in part, on analysis performed by Vano et al. It focused on apples and cherries only, and found that with climate change water needs for these two crops would be reduced, due to changes in the timing of fruit production.

The group indicated that this doesn't make sense. Hotter temperatures and longer growing season should result in higher water need, not lower. Joel said that USGS (Vaccaro) has looked at this and found that water needs would increase with climate change.

Bob will review Vaccaro's work, and will also review crop irrigation requirements in California at locations where current climate is similar to projections of future Yakima Basin climate.

Overall Conclusions of Water Needs Assessment

Andrew said that the out-of-stream water needs assessment, as updated, shows water deficiencies as follows (before accounting for climate change):

- Agriculture: 300,000 AF
- Municipal/domestic growth to year 2060: 50,000 AF total; 20,000 AF consumptive

Andrew asked the group to indicate whether these figures, based on the analysis performed, are satisfactory for moving ahead to develop the Integrated Plan. Responses were as follows:

- Charlie de la Chapelle: Yes. The figures are similar to previous studies. *[Note: in a later email, Charlie said he thinks the agriculture number may need to be increased by up to 100,000 AF. This is because supplemental well production seems to be declining over time and more will be needed in the future].*
- Michael Garrity: He would like more time to review the numbers before rendering an opinion.
- Dave Brown. Yes.
- Ron van Gundy: The numbers are in the right ballpark.
- Joel Freudenthal: He would like to see recurrence probabilities and relate them to climate change.
- Jerry Kelso: The numbers are OK, but may be 10% to 15% low.
- Don Gatchalian: The municipal/domestic numbers are a best estimate, but seem to be on the low side.

Attendance

Dave Brown, City of Yakima
Charlie de la Chapelle, YBSA
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County
Chuck Garner, Reclamation
Michael Garrity, American Rivers (phone)
Don Gatchalian, Yakima County

Gerald Kelso, Consultant to Reclamation
Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation
Ron Van Gundy, Roza Irrigation District
Andrew Graham, HDR
Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA