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STATUS REPORT

Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study

August 1, 2005

Completed Activities:

Appraisal Assessment of the Black Rock Alternative: Presented the technical documents of the Black Rock Appraisal Assessment to the stakeholders and public on March 29, 2005. This report displays technical and engineering aspects of the Black Rock alternative, one of at least four alternatives to be analyzed in the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study (Storage Study). This report includes one Summary Report and six technical reports on geology, hydrogeology, water supply, engineering designs and costs, and water delivery systems to the Roza, Sunnyside, Terrace Heights, Union Gap, and Selah-Moxee irrigation systems.

Meetings:

July 28 – Made a presentation about the Storage Study to Yakama Nation (YN) General Council members, Tribal Council members, department heads, and staff.

June 30 – Met with Yakima Basin Storage Alliance (YBSA), YN, stakeholders for “Roundtable” discussion.

April, May, June – Met with Ethan Raup, YBSA, and discussed the Storage Study communication, process, and schedule.

Ongoing Activities:

Fishery habitat data gathering: Reclamation is completing the gathering of streambed data for various models. Reclamation is coordinating the development of habitat models to help determine the benefits for any alternatives in the Storage Study. The models analyze temperature, sediment, habitat quantity, and quality parameters. A meeting was held on June 14, 2005 for the model developers, biologists and others to discuss the model development and schedule.

Economic benefits analysis: In April, Reclamation started gathering recreation demand information. A meeting was held to explain the recreation demand analysis process (the U. S. Forest Service in Cle Elum and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife were in attendance). Recreation use information was gathered during the week of June 6, 2005. The data gathering included talking to entities managing recreation facilities, guides, counties and cities. Reclamation is also analyzing economic information for agriculture and fish for the Storage Study.

Geologic Investigations: Plans are being developed to complete engineering, geologic and water seepage information for all alternatives. The first part of the work will include drilling at the Black Rock dam abutments for geologic information and will start in 2005.



Yakima River Basin Appraisal Assessment Report: Work is progressing on this report, which will serve as an appraisal assessment of the three in-basin alternatives previously identified: Bumping Lake enlargement, Wymer Dam, and Keechelus-Kachess pipeline. This report will analyze these alternatives to the same level as the Black Rock alternative, as presented in the *Black Rock Appraisal Assessment*. It is expected to be released by the end of 2005.

Schedule: Reclamation is monitoring and updating the Storage Study schedule as necessary to show the relationship of all the tasks. We are still on schedule to complete the Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement by the end of 2008.

Future work:

Plan Formulation: Reclamation will work with the Washington State Department of Ecology, the YN, irrigation districts, YBSA, and other interested parties to structure plan elements into alternative plans and to evaluate the alternatives in the plan formulation phase of the Storage Study. The “no action alternative” (future without project), the alternative which reasonably maximizes net National Economic Development (NED) benefits, and other alternatives which may not maximize NED benefits but do address national, state, and local concerns, will be formulated. The final product is the selection of alternatives for further detailed evaluation in the feasibility phase.

Ongoing Public Involvement: Stakeholder and public meetings will be held this summer and fall to explain what we have accomplished and the future work to complete the study. Reclamation is having a stakeholders meeting on August 12, 2005 to explain the study process, schedule, and modeling activities. Another stakeholders meeting will be held on September 1, 2005 to explain the economic analysis. Public meetings will be held in September.

Budget:

The Storage Study was funded at \$1,332,000 for FY 2005 by Congressional write-in. This funding will be expended by September 30, 2005, the end of FY 2005. Storage Study funding was not included in the President’s budget for 2006. About \$2 million of the State’s \$4 million 2003 appropriation has been spent to date.

For further information regarding the Yakima River Basin Storage Study, visit

www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/storage_study/index.html