



September 20, 2010

To: Yakima Basin Work Group Meeting

The Endangered Species Coalition is a national network of over 400 organizations – conservation, scientific, religious, sporting, outdoor recreation, business and community organizations, dedicated to protecting our nation’s imperiled wildlife and their last remaining wild habitats.

We have received and have examined a copy of the Work Groups’ Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan, as approved at its December 17 Work Group meeting. This “management plan” proposes construction of a new Bumping Lake dam, Wymer dam, and direct pumping from the Columbia River.

The Endangered Species Coalition finds that each of the above projects would seriously and adversely impact endangered or threatened species, to wit: Bumping Lake enlargement – spotted owl and bull trout; Wymer – sage grouse; Columbia River pumping – chinook, coho, sockeye, and steelhead salmon. Of special immediate concern is the ancient forest habitat which would be drowned out by the proposed Bumping Lake enlargement. Due to all the losses of this ecotype, from liquidation-logging and other development over the past century, this specific ancient forest is now simply irreplaceable. Its loss can not ever be “mitigated” in any credible or justifiable manner.

It is quite disappointing to see the Bureau of Reclamation engaged in a planning process with extremely limited public participation, which, and perhaps because of this fact, seems headed towards approval of a massive and very costly new dam building program in the Yakima Basin. This situation seems to us to be particularly ironic, considering that Yakima Basin irrigators have still not paid off the costs of the existing dams built over the past near-century, nor carried out significant water conservation measures-- which have previously been identified -- nor even negotiated a better and more conservation-oriented water allocation system.

We respectfully and strongly urge the Yakima Basin Work Group to support only proposals which focus on enforceable water conservation practices, and which do not destroy more already fast-vanishing endangered species habitats.

Sincerely,

Brock Evans  
President  
Endangered Species Coalition