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Meeting Notes

March 9, 2011

Yakima Arboretum, Yakima WA

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup

Opening Comments

Ben Floyd of Anchor QEA welcomed the Workgroup members and the public, led introductions, and provided an overview of the agenda.

Targeted Watershed Protections and Enhancements *by Dan Silver, Ecology Consultant*

Dan Silver, consultant to Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), presented the watershed protection and enhancement package, developed to support key components of the proposed Integrated Plan. The package was developed by a group of individuals including representatives from the Yakama Nation, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, American Rivers and other conservation organizations. It includes watershed protections and also enhancements to minimize impacts to sensitive areas potentially affected by Integrated Plan actions.

The following items were discussed:

- Derek Sandison – The package is comprised of additional components to include in the Integrated Plan, expanding the ecosystem protection measures of the plan.
- Michael Garrity – There is an acquisition component. If the acreage targets for recommended locations cannot be met, the same acreage targets will be sought elsewhere. The components of this package would be negotiated for whatever works best for the basin. Ultimate support of the Integrated Plan by key conservation groups relies on the inclusion of these watershed protection and enhancement details.
- Paul Jewell – (Disclosed that his comments do not represent Kittitas Board of County Commissioners, nor do they indicate lack of support). A large portion of Kittitas County is already in public ownership, and acquiring more public land does not seem reasonable in light of tax redistribution concerns. Additionally, the vast majority of this watershed protection and enhancement package is in Kittitas County, when the Integrated Plan is for the whole basin; there is uncertainty that the people of Kittitas County need to bear this entire burden. The goals of the conservation piece are unclear. The cost of the proposal is a concern. Land ownership and land management is still unknown. Wilderness designations could negatively affect opportunities for commerce for Kittitas County.



- Jeff Tayer – Stakes go up significantly when dealing with endangered species. With the additional protections and habitat acquisition, this plan will improve the trend facing endangered species in the basin. It is better to include in the Integrated Plan these components that help endangered species move off the track to extinction and on to the track of recovery. A standard mitigation package is not going to be as good as one that includes these components.

Yakima River Basin Study Report Overview, Review Schedule/Workgroup Q&A by Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA

Ben Floyd of Anchor QEA presented an overview of the Yakima River Basin Study Report, including the key elements contained in the Proposed Integrated Plan (Volume 1 of the Yakima River Basin Study), and also the contents of Volume 2 Technical Memoranda.

****Comments to the Proposed Integrated Plan are due March 18, 2011.**

****Technical corrections to Volume 2 technical memorandums are due March 31, 2011.**

The following items were discussed:

- The theme of ‘watershed and ecosystem restoration’ needs to come through more clearly in the Integrated Plan.
- How will comments be responded to? *Comments on the proposed Integrated Plan will be summarized and shared with the Workgroup; however, there will not necessarily be an opportunity for an additional feedback. Comments will also be included in the upcoming scoping process for the Planning Report and EIS.*

Integrated Plan Summary Support Document and YRBS Volume 1 – Proposed Integrated Plan Adjustments by Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA

Ben Floyd presented three recommended updates to the existing language in the Integrated Plan Summary Support Document and the Proposed Integrated Plan (Volume 1) of the Yakima River Basin Study.

The three revisions and associated comments are as follows:

- Item 1 – Introduction to the Integrated Water Resource Management Plan Summary Support Document
 - The language in the introduction will be expanded to include a disclaimer clarifying how Federal, state, local or Tribal agency support of the proposed Integrated Plan should not be construed that these agencies view any statutory or other legal obligations are or can be met through the proposed Integrated Plan. It confirms the understanding that these agencies must still comply with all legal, regulatory and other requirements as the plan moves forward for additional consideration.
- Item 2 – Revised Fish Passage Action Descriptions
 - Revised language for fish passage action descriptions was shared (see meeting handout).

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was concerned not all actions in the Integrated Plan were being treated on equal footing. The proposal should describe actions for providing passage at every dam, recognizing passage at all dams may not ultimately be found feasible.
- There is some concern that the revised language does not address any of the potential items that could be an issue where structures may not support passage, e.g., due to dam safety concerns on physical location. More discussion about technical details will need to be worked through as part of pursuing desired passage.
- Item 3 – Watershed Protections and Enhancements
 - The watershed protection and enhancement language provided in the meeting handout will be added to the habitat enhancements portion of the summary document (it is already included in the proposed Integrated Plan).
 - This language presents mitigation for action elements of the plan and enhancement provisions for the upper watersheds. The terms ‘mitigation’ and ‘enhancement’ will be further characterized in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The Workgroup accepted the three proposed revisions to the Integrated Plan Summary Support document and proposed Integrated Plan. With these changes, the entire Workgroup supported forwarding the proposed Integrated Plan to Reclamation and Ecology for further consideration.

Implementation Subcommittee Update *by Dan Silver, Ecology Consultant*

Dan Silver explained that in April 2011 he will convene the Implementation Subcommittee on behalf of the Workgroup. Subcommittee members include Phil Rigdon (Yakama Nation), Mike Leita (Yakima County), Michael Garrity (American Rivers), Ron VanGundy (Roza Irrigation District), and Derek Sandison (Washington State Department of Ecology). This subcommittee will be responsible for advocating Integrated Plan consideration in the Federal and state processes, and supporting plan implementation, recognizing there are review processes, adjustments, timing and sequence and other details yet to be worked out for the plan. Federal agencies will not be participating on the Implementation Subcommittee.

The following items were discussed:

- Concern about how the proposed Integrated Plan would move forward together as a package of actions.
- What are the ground rules if it [proposed Integrated Plan] begins to come apart during implementation, i.e., if some actions move forward but others stall out? How do we move it all forward at once? *The Implementation Subcommittee will keep the collective cooperation alive; we know we cannot secure all the money at once, so one charge of the subcommittee will be to figure out how to move forward in a phased approach.*

Coordination Request from Ecology/Kittitas County on Developing Domestic Well Water Reserve or In-lieu Mitigation Fund *by Paul Jewell, Kittitas County & Tom Tebb, Ecology*

Derek Sandison provided an introduction on this topic. The Workgroup’s knowledge and experience can offer important guidance and support for this effort. He advocated a need to find an interim

approach to some existing water supply problems before actions in the Proposed Integrated Plan would be implemented.

Tom Tebb of Ecology gave an overview of the water availability options being considered for Kittitas County in light of the moratorium on exempt wells, and the Domestic Water Reserve Program Cooperators' Agreement (included in the Workgroup packet) which was approved last week by Ecology and Kittitas County.

Paul Jewell explained that this program is trying to provide options for people who have been left without water due to the Ecology moratorium on permit-exempt wells in the county. Paul believes the Workgroup members all have an interest in this issue and welcomes input from Workgroup members. The county is considering several potential tools to support implementing existing land use plans. These include:

- Connecting to systems with existing water rights
- Obtain mitigation water through existing water banks (and local tributaries as applicable) to offset impacts
- Updating the county's development code to allow cisterns in areas where mitigation water is not available and exempt wells are not allowed. The code is under development and will be ready for public review in a few weeks.

The following items were discussed:

- The Kittitas County effort should be considered as an early action of the market reallocation element of the Integrated Plan.
- A committee is being proposed that would ideally meet regularly for the next six months or so.
- The committee shouldn't consist of the whole Workgroup. There should be a process for choosing members from the Workgroup for this committee. Committee representation should cover all the interests necessary for involvement, such as water managers and users, fisheries, Yakama Nation and others.
- Basic questions need to be answered. Negative impacts to a specific tributary should be addressed, including addressing the question of how water supply options would affect fish habitat.
- Conversations are ongoing and will continue. This conversation is important to the Yakama Nation. Several folks are involved (e.g., SOAC, Tribe, irrigation folk, etc.). Workgroup permission is not necessary for this effort to move forward. Other committees are in place through the existing YRBWEP program that could provide this coordination function.
- Consider referring the matter of committee membership to the implementation committee?
- Reclamation doesn't have a seat at the Implementation committee table so a different approach preferred.

Ecology wants to collaborate with Yakima Basin affected stakeholders, but also wants to be aggressive about moving this effort forward. Help and guidance from Workgroup members will be diligently

sought. Tom will develop a request for membership for the committee and provide this to the Workgroup by April 2011.

Information Updates and Next Steps

Wendy Christensen of Reclamation and Derek Sandison of Ecology shared updates on next steps and recent communications regarding the process for preparing the Planning Report and Programmatic EIS. The next planning process is initiated with the proposed Integrated Plan. Scoping will begin soon. During scoping, comments and reasonable alternatives will be evaluated. Items such as likely impacts, special considerations, and the content of the EIS will also be reviewed.

The following items were discussed:

- How will we know which alternatives to the Proposed Integrated Plan will be included in the EIS? *Alternatives will need to meet certain criteria such as accomplishing the objectives at a lower environmental cost. Toward the end of scoping, alternatives will be evaluated to determine if they are reasonable (i.e., meet the purpose and need).*

The Draft EIS is scheduled for review by November 2011, and the Final EIS is scheduled for completion in early 2012. Ecology and Reclamation recognize this is an aggressive schedule, but they are committed to moving the effort forward as quickly as possible. Quarterly Workgroup meetings are being proposed for the following dates:

- June 8, 2011
- September 14, 2011
- December 14, 2011

For 2012 and beyond, Workgroup meetings will be held quarterly (planning for the months of March, June, September and December). Meeting dates could be adjusted based upon progress in the planning effort and the status of interim work products.

Windpower Presentation *by Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance*

Sid Morrison of Yakima Basin Storage Alliance presented the Columbia Renewable Energy Storage Project, or “CRESP” (see handout). Sid explained the Bonneville Power Administration has stated they cannot integrate wind energy into the Northwest power grid and is proposing to turn the wind turbines off, resulting in a loss of almost \$50 million in tax dollars.

Sid advocates that CRESP efforts could compliment the YRBWEP efforts. The cost to integrate could range from approximately one to two billion dollars, but these efforts could be integrated into the pump storage elements of the Integrated Plan.

Public Comment

- Rick Glenn, Banker – Habitat enhancements are not going to generate economic revenues. According to his calculations, the cost/benefit ratio for the proposed Integrated Plan is lower than Black Rock. The Integrated Plan could be a real hard sell when the plan does not provide enough water supply benefits.

- David Ortman, Sierra Club – Read letter to the Workgroup reaffirming support for aggressive conservation, metering, water efficiency and water markets, and low impact storage such as aquifer recharge; and opposition to new storage. Written comments were provided.
- Barb Lisk, Office of Representative Richard Hastings – There has been significant land acquisitions discussions since the last meeting that could affect much of the public, and this will to be reviewed. Need to provide opportunity for broad public comment and review as the EIS moves forward.

REMINDER

Comments to the Proposed Integrated Plan are due March 18, 2011, and technical corrections to Volume 2 technical memoranda are due March 31, 2011.

Next Workgroup Meeting

The next Workgroup meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2011 and this date and meeting details will be confirmed by email notification in May.

Workgroup Members in Attendance

Jim Beaver, Benton County Commissioner
 Dave Brown, City of Yakima
 Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board
 Kirk Cook, Washington Department of Agriculture
 Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
 Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District
 David Fast, Yakama Nation – Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project
 Michael Garrity, American Rivers
 Sean Gross, NOAA Fisheries Service (attending for Dale Bambrick)
 Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner
 Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
 Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
 Scott Revell, Kennewick Irrigation District
 Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
 Derek Sandison, Washington Department of Ecology
 Jeff Tayer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
 Jeff Thomas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District
 Dawn Wiedmeier, Reclamation

Other Attendees

Max Benitz
 Bill Blaylock, HDR
 David Bowen, American Forest Land Co.
 Tom Carpenter, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
 David Child, Yakima Basin Joint Board

Wendy Christensen, Reclamation
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
Charlie De La Chappelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Warren Dickman, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Nona Diediker, HDR
Pat Dunn
John Easterbrooks, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Beneitta Eaton
James Fitch
Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County
Adam Fyall, Benton County
Chuck Garner, Reclamation
Don Gatchalian, Yakima County
Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA
Andrew Graham, HDR
Bob Hall, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance/Yakima Auto Dealers
Ken Hasbrouck, Kittitas Reclamation District
Lynn Holt, Reclamation
Joel Hubble, Reclamation
Jerry Kelso, Consultant to Reclamation
Chuck Klarich, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Paul La Riviere, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
David Lester, Yakima Herald
Edwin Lewis, Wapato Irrigation Project
Barb Lisk, Office of Representative Richard Hastings
Bill Lover, City of Yakima
Joe Lukas, Grant County PUD
Chris Lynch, Reclamation
Steven Malloch, National Wildlife Federation
Larry Martin
Daniel Martinez, S. Martinez Livestock
Cheri Marusa, Speaker Frank Chopp's Office
Tina Mayo, U.S. Forest Service
Keith McGowan, Reclamation
Candy McKinley, Reclamation
Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
Tom Monroe, Roza Irrigation District
Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA
Bryan Myre, Yakama Reservation Irrigation District
David Ortman, Sierra Club

David Reeploeg, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
Landon Schilperoort, South Yakima Conservation District
Teresa Scott, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jan Sharar, Aqua Permanente
Tom Tebb, Washington Department of Ecology
Christine Whittaker, HDR
William Woods, Jr.
Reid Yamamoto

Where to Find Workgroup Information

Meeting materials, notes, and presentations from the Workgroup meetings will be posted on the project website (<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2010workgroup/index.html>). A bibliography of information sources, many of which are available online, is also 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 Anchor QEA, Richland office, (509) 392-4548, or bfloyd@anchorqea.com.