

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup Meeting
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Statement From: Chris Maykut, President

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From a personal perspective, I applaud the Yakima Workgroup for thinking ahead and working to try and head off future issues we may all face in the state of Washington with regards to irrigation and crop viability. As the owner of two restaurants I depend on produce from the Yakima Valley and proudly communicate that we use truly local produce to our customers. My close relationships with these farmers are vital to my understanding of their hardships, booms and busts. The availability of water is something that is imperative to the past, present and future of our state economy as well as our state identity – and it is something that merits thoughtful consideration, legislation, collaboration and implementation.

Also from a personal perspective come my objections to certain parts of the plan. The Yakima River Basin Water Plan includes the construction of two massive dams in an era where dam removal is publicly lauded as a true renewal of the environment. One of those dams, at Bumping Lake, would cause the inundation and destruction of the cabin my great grandfather Ben Nutley and my grandfather Van Nutley built in 1938. This cabin is –without hyperbole – the heart and soul of our family.

Our family is not alone, as there are 14 other historical cabins, a boathouse, and an extensive campground on the shores of Bumping Lake. Generations of families by the thousands have enjoyed this extraordinary area for nearly 8 decades. I have spent the better part of my life there in this electronics-free paradise, and proposed to my wife there in a blizzard on New Year's Day 2004 under a massive 200-year old cedar.

Bumping is tucked in between high ridges surrounded by huge old growth trees and is the only true wilderness left in Central Washington. Trading something pristine and beloved to preserve far-flung areas and potentially replace water that could be conserved does not meet the needs of people in Central Washington: the trade-off is not equal. Since the dam would only be filled several months out of the year, this would transform a beloved pristine lake into a massive, stump-filled mudflat.

Bumping Lake is well loved by many in this region for the recreation it offers: swimming, fishing, kayaking, canoeing, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and just soaking up the mountains far away from freeways. The area was an inspiration to William O. Douglas himself and this wilderness is named for him. This is an atrocious thing to do to this legacy and the area he most loved. How can one put a value on that?

Thank you for your time today,

Chris Maykut



Friends of Bumping Lake