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Meeting Notes

March 14, 2012

Yakima Arboretum, Yakima WA

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup

Welcome/Introductions and Agenda Overview *by Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA*

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

Wendy Christensen, Reclamation, and Jeff Tayer, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), first took a moment to recognize the outstanding contribution by Charity Davidson with WDFW in coordinating the preparation of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act report for the Integrated Plan. An award was presented to Ms. Davidson for her excellent collaboration and coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies involved with preparing the report.

Final Programmatic EIS, Framework for Implementation and Early Action Funding *by Wendy Christensen, Reclamation and Derek Sandison, Ecology*

Final Programmatic EIS

Wendy Christensen and Derek Sandison reviewed with the Workgroup the environmental review process for the Programmatic EIS (PEIS) including a general overview of comments to the Draft PEIS, how comments were responded to and next steps. *(For Workgroup meeting notes and information on all other topics discussed at the March meeting please see*

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/meetings/index.html>*).*

The Final PEIS was released March 2, 2012. The PEIS was framed by comments received during the scoping period (spring 2011). Key comments and responses included the following:

- Many requested more detail on impacts be included in the EIS – *The programmatic EIS framework for the Integrated Plan was explained. The approach included considering a broad range of proposals and a wide range of elements over an extended time period and geographic area (Yakima Basin). This approach is effective in addressing cumulative effects of actions, and identifying mitigation strategies, and sets the framework for project-specific analysis in the future. By the very nature of the approach, it is designed for more general analysis. However,*



where more detail was readily available, it was incorporated, recognizing more detailed analysis will occur for individual projects as appropriate.

- *More than one action alternative should have been considered – After more than 30 years of studies and discussions and the work of the Workgroup, Reclamation and Ecology determined that the Integrated Plan Alternative was the only one that reasonably met the Purpose and Need of the project. Other alternatives that were proposed in the comments have been evaluated in the past and are included in the Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study section of the FPEIS.*
- *Opposition to land acquisitions – The land acquisition program is an integral part of the Integrated Plan’s Watershed and Habitat Protection and Enhancement Element. All properties would be acquired from willing sellers.*

The Columbia River Pump Exchange project should be included in the Integrated Plan – Reclamation and Ecology have evaluated the potential for a Columbia River Pump Exchange in the past (Black Rock Reservoir and Wymer Dam Plus Pump Exchange as part of the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study (2008)) and determined that the high costs and environmental uncertainties associated with such projects did not warrant carrying a pump exchange project forward in the Integrated Plan. The Integrated Plan does include a study of a Columbia River Pump Exchange, which could be further evaluated if future conditions warrant.

Framework for Implementation document

Wendy discussed the next step in the planning process for the Integrated Plan, which is preparing a Framework for Implementation document. Work is just beginning on this report. Additional engineering analysis and economic analysis (i.e., benefit/cost ratio) will occur. Cost estimates will be refined and cost risk analysis will be performed. Sequencing of projects and the implementation scheduling will be further evaluated. A plan is being developed to conduct further geological explorations for the Wymer and Bumping potential storage sites. A preliminary cost allocation for the entire plan is under development. The Framework for Implementation report should be available this summer.

For historical context, Wendy also handed out during this agenda item a 1967 report on Bumping Lake enlargement that included a Statistical Summary of costs, cost allocation, benefits and costs, and repayment.

Wendy also noted that interest in the Integrated Plan (IP) continues to grow. More agencies and organizations from the Pacific Northwest (Oregon and Idaho) are taking notice and are requesting presentations on the IP.

Early Action Funding Status

Wendy and Derek presented and discussed an early action funding status table. So far, approximately \$6 million of the \$21.9 million in early action items has funding in place or nearly in place. This is good

progress considering the short time that has passed since this request was approved by the Workgroup (October 2011 meeting). In addition to the \$6 million in funding, the state has also contributed an additional \$1.8 million to support the PEIS development and Framework for Implementation report preparation.

Workgroup Comment:

- Jeff Thomas – Is the K-to-K pipeline funding specific to construction under Interstate-90 (I-90)? *Yes. Is it a good idea to build before conducting an environmental review? Building will not begin until after environmental review has been completed. Does the reported amount include a budget for environmental analyses? Funds defined are inclusive of all analyses (environmental compliance) and construction.*
- Alex Conley – Would love to see the Habitat Subcommittee included in discussions regarding allocating funding identified for habitat restoration projects.
- Jeff Tayer – In reviewing the 1967 Bumping report (referenced above) several identified actions for Fish and Wildlife Enhancement at Bumping are still not completed, which is a testament to how challenging completing some of the larger actions can be.
- Mike Leita noted it is important for the Workgroup to remain united in support of the plan and continue to collectively support implementation of plan actions.
- Michael Garrity – Pleased to see flexibility in acquisitions and K-to-K funding approach, which will improve flows in upper Yakima.
- Kirk Cook – Nice to see the follow through of a balanced funding approach for the various actions in the Integrated Plan.
- Paul Jewell – How will K-to-K crossing affect the I-90 project? Will it cause a delay? *WSDOT latest plans for reconstructing this portion of the I-90 (2014/2015) should work with the implementation schedule for constructing the I-90 crossing of the K-to-K pipeline.*

This has been a challenging budget year at both the state and federal level, with a lot of scrutiny on proposed funding allocations. The significant support for the plan as reflected in the early actions being funded is a good sign of continued interest from the state and federal government that they have a continued commitment to solving problems in the basin.

Implementation Committee Update by Derek Sandison, Ecology and Dan Silver, Consultant

Dan Silver updated the Workgroup on progress made by the Committee since the last meeting. Two areas are being focused on:

- 1) Education and outreach through a communications consultant and
- 2) Communications with federal and state government and elected officials on how best to advance the plan within existing authorities while efforts are underway to provide additional authorizations and appropriations.

Working relations have been established in both Washington D.C. and within the Yakima basin. Implementation subcommittee members are heading back to Washington D.C. in mid-April. The committee is working to support the establishment of a coordinating group of federal agencies to collectively support implementation.

As part of the education and outreach effort, the Implementation Committee is also addressing recent communications related to off-road vehicle concerns for the land protection element of the plan, and continues to work on concerns expressed regarding Bumping Lake expansion.

Workgroup Comment:

- Charlie de la Chapelle – Is this typical for an agency to introduce a modified proposal during the EIS review process (i.e., introduce new information)? (Note: this comment is in reference to the modification of the watershed land protections action description revisions made between the draft and final PEIS, which was modified based upon input from a subcommittee working on fine tuning the watershed land protection recommendations and comments on the draft PEIS.) *From a NEPA and SEPA procedural process, this approach is sound. The two things that were considered included: (1) does the new information affect the original proposal; and (2) will the modification cause significant environmental adverse impact? Both these items were addressed in updating the watershed land protections actions and finalizing the programmatic environmental review. Procedurally, this approach is acceptable for meeting environmental review requirements.*
- Michael Garrity – Regarding the public lands piece, Kittitas County had concerns regarding additional Wild and Scenic designations; however, better funding and management were created with these designations. Concerns were also expressed on maintaining and enhancing recreational opportunities, which is one of the reasons why National Recreation Areas were identified.

In the near-term, land acquisition administrative steps are being implemented included property appraisals. The subcommittee will also continue to work on maintaining a balanced implementation approach for early actions.

Public Comment:

- Chris Maykut, President of Friends of Bumping Lake – I applaud the group for already taking into consideration certain issues with Bumping Lake. However, the dam will cause inundation of land and property that are important to several people including impacting pristine wilderness. It's hard to put a value on this area, and I encourage you all to visit the area (Mr. Maykut's complete statement is included with the March 2012 meeting materials posted on Reclamation's website).

- Rick McGuire, Alpine Lakes Protection Society – Concerned with the National Recreation Area (NRA) proposal included in the watershed lands protection action and encourage all to see the letters with comments on NRA concerns included in the meeting packet.
- Samantha Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake – Bumping Lake is more than just an area; there are a lot of people who go there. I'm also saddened by water use practices observed in the basin (e.g., sprinklers running in mid-afternoon). Maybe changes in water conservation should be made instead of taking away Bumping Lake. We should all remember the communities that will be impacted.
- Chuck Klarich, YBSA – The early action group should review all the funding available/awarded this year by various agencies, including the Bonneville Power Administration.

YRBWEP Phase 2 Program Implementation Status Report by *Tim McCoy, Reclamation YRBWEP Program Manager*

Tim McCoy provided a presentation highlighting YRBWEP accomplishments including diversion reductions, land and habitat restoration, conservation, tributary enhancement and Yakama Nation projects. Significant water conservation savings have been realized with additional projects underway. The presentation was concluded with brief budget figures for the past 5 years.

Conference Call by *Reclamation Commissioner Michael Connor, Pacific Northwest Regional Director Lorri Lee, and Washington Department of Ecology Director Ted Sturdevant*

Michael Connor, Lorri Lee and Ted Sturdevant joined the Workgroup meeting by telephone. After introductions, Commissioner Connor applauded the Workgroup for their accomplishments to date. The federal funding allocation for some of the Yakima Basin early action items announced in early February provided Reclamation and the U.S. Department of the Interior the opportunity to express their interest and support for the Workgroup efforts and the Integrated Plan elements. Federal and state funding appear are in place to support the fish passage and water supply package early actions, and help in moving these actions forward. The 2013 budget currently has no specific funding identified because it was put together before the fall meeting with Secretary Salazar; however, priorities will be reshuffled to try to provide continued support for the Workgroup's efforts. Continued dialogue is occurring among Secretary Salazar, Ecology and the congressional delegation, including how to make the most of existing authorizations. There is broad support with moving forward, and he wants the Workgroup to be aware of the continued support of the federal leadership.

Director Sturdevant thanked Derek Sandison, Wendy Christensen and the Workgroup for continually producing good news, and shared that this forward momentum was well-received by the Governor and her administration. Mr. Sturdevant also emphasized the importance of maintaining this momentum in moving forward including upcoming discussion and decisions on funding and policy for implementing the Integrated Plan. Primary interest lies in maintaining momentum for advancing the plan.

Workgroup Comment:

- Jeff Tayer – Commissioner Connor and Dan Silver mentioned the importance of using existing authorization to get this plan on the President’s agenda. Is it possible to develop close coordination with the leadership from the participating federal agencies like USFWS and USFS, etc., to support Reclamation in implementation? *The Yakima plan fits with the national Great Outdoors Initiative, and we plan to move forward with additional support. If Workgroup members see opportunities to further coordinate federal efforts, please pass these potential opportunities along so Reclamation and others can try to take action on them.*

Adjourn

Workgroup Members in Attendance

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board
Kirk Cook, Washington State Department of Agriculture
Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
Jeff Tayer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District
David Fast, Yakama Nation - Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project
Paul Jewell, Kittitas County
Mike Leita, Yakima County
Charlie de la Chappelle/Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Ecology
Jeff Tayer, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jeff Thomas, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Jim Trull, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District
Michael Garrity, American Rivers
Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District
Dawn Wiedmeier, Bureau of Reclamation
Scott Revell, Kennewick Irrigation District
Bill Lover, City of Yakima

Other Attendees

David Bowen, American Forest Land Co.
Dave Brown, City of Yakima
Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation
Dan Church, Bureau of Reclamation
Mike Connor, Bureau of Reclamation, by phone
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
Charity Davidson, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Charlie de la Chapelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
John Easterbrooks
Beneitta Eaton, Rancher
Jack Eaton, Rancher
Bill Eller, Washington State Conservation Commission
Bill Ferry, Bureau of Reclamation
Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County
Chuck Garner, Bureau of Reclamation
Don Gatchalian, Yakima County
Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA
Andrew Graham, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Lynn Holt, Bureau of Reclamation
Joel Hubble, Bureau of Reclamation
Eleanor Hungate
Jerry Kelso, Anchor QEA
Walt Larrick, Bureau of Reclamation
Lorri Lee, Bureau of Reclamation, by phone
David Lester, Yakima Herald
Edwin Lewis, Wapato Irrigation Project
Barb Lisk, Office of Representative Doc Hastings
Edward Lisowski
Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation
Daniel Martinez, S. Martinez Livestock
Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake
Samantha Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake
Tim McCoy, Bureau of Reclamation
Keith McGowan, Bureau of Reclamation
Rick McGuire
Candy McKinley, Bureau of Reclamation
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, by phone
Ann Root, ESA
Mike Schwisow, Schwisow & Associates
Teresa Scott, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dan Silver, Consultant
Elaine Smith, League of Women Voters

Ted Sturdevant, Ecology, by phone
Rob Swedo, Bonneville Power Administration
Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology
Rebecca Thornton, Office of Senator Patty Murray
Cynthia Wilkerson, The Wilderness Society
Dave Kaumheimer, Consultant

Next Workgroup Meeting

The next meeting will be held June 13, 2012. Updates on implementation, status on early action items, information on additional funding (if secured), and an update from the Implementation Subcommittee will be covered at the June meeting. A meeting notice and agenda will be distributed in advance of the meeting.

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/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@anchoragea.com