



# Yakima County Republican Central Committee

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## Support for Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan

WHEREAS the Integrated Plan includes seven elements collectively essential for realizing the plan goals: 1) fish passage, 2) structural and operation changes, 3) surface water storage, 4) groundwater storage, 5) habitat protection and enhancement, 6) enhanced water conservation, and 7) market-based reallocation;

WHEREAS the Yakima River Basin is affected by a variety of water resource constraints that adversely impact ecosystem functions for endangered fish and other aquatic species, and water supply for agriculture, municipal and domestic uses;

WHEREAS demand for irrigation water cannot always be met in years with below-average runoff, leading to reduced (pro-rationed) irrigation water for junior water-right holders that in turn reduces farm and related income, and put the basin's perennial crops at extreme risk;

WHEREAS five drought years have occurred in the Yakima Basin since the early 1990s that have severely impacted the basin economy and ecosystem functions, and the potential for future climate change would likely increase the frequency and severity of future droughts;

WHEREAS surface water rights are fully appropriated in the basin, and groundwater pumping for irrigation, domestic and municipal uses can reduce surface water flows in many locations, and hydraulic continuity between groundwater and surface water in the basin creates uncertainty over the status of groundwater rights, with most of these right junior to surface water rights;

WHEREAS the goals of the Integrated Plan are to improve the reliability of water supply for irrigation, municipal supply and domestic uses; and to protect, mitigate and enhance fish and wildlife habitat; provide increased operational flexibility to manage instream flows to meet ecological objectives;

WHEREAS dams, changes in water temperatures, other obstructions and inadequate stream flow block fish passage to Yakima tributaries and spawning grounds;

WHEREAS floodplain modifications and riparian habitat degradation prevent proper floodplain functions;

WHEREAS flow modifications and river operations have affected flows for smolt outmigration, rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids, and other key habitat functions;

WHEREAS the Integrated Plan also includes an adaptive management framework to address potential future changes in water needs or hydrology, including potential climate change effects;

WHEREAS in March 2011 after 21 months of planning, the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup, comprised of representatives of the Yakama Nation, federal agencies, Washington State and local governments, an environmental organization, a local business group and irrigation districts unanimously approved the Integrated Plan elements and actions;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Washington State Republican Central Committee, endorse the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan;

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we call on our elected state and federal officials and government agency leaders to fully support authorization and appropriations necessary to implement the Integrated Plan, including associated environmental reviews, technical analyses, refinements to specific actions, project designs and program development/implementation, and project permitting and construction.



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Max Golladay, Chairman  
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