Building A Future for Water, Wildlife and Working Lands

Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan

Yakima Basin Plan - Initial Development Phase

Over the past several months, the Yakima Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (Integrated Plan) Implementation Committee collaborated with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Office of Columbia River concerning the composition of the Initial Development Phase of the Integrated Plan. This phase will span the time frame from passage of the state's Integrated Plan authorizing legislation in 2013 through the year 2023.

Cle Elum Fish Downstream Passage Testing Model (1:9.5 scale)

Consistent with the objectives of the integrated plan, the projects and activities that Reclamation and the Washington Department of Ecology Office of Columbia River are including in the Initial Development Phase will advance concurrently some portion of all seven elements of the Integrated Plan. The Initial Development Phase represents a set of projects and activities that will quickly achieve tangible improvements in stream flow, habitat, and fish passage as well as to provide increased security of existing out-of-stream water supplies.

The Initial Development Phase will involve requests for funding for a number of specific capital projects including the:

- Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant – $205 million,
- Fish Passage at Cle Elum Reservoir – $87 million, and
- Three-foot pool raise at Cle Elum Reservoir – $18 million.

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A fourth project, the $159 million Keechelus to Kachess Conveyance project, will likely be included as an adjunct to the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant project, pending verification of its efficacy in improving the speed and reliability of Kachess Reservoir refill, or improving summer flow conditions in the Keechelus-to-Easton reach of the Yakima River, or both.

Other components of the Initial Development Phase include proposals for $85 million in agricultural conservation projects that would make available about one-half of the 170,000 acre-feet of conserved water envisioned by the Integrated Plan, $100 million in floodplain and tributary habitat restoration projects and acquisitions, $90 million for additional fish passage projects, $6 million in aquifer storage and recovery projects, and $500,000 for fostering water banking and exchange programs. Attaining Wild and Scenic River designations for vital headwater stream reaches will also be advanced during the Initial Development Phase beginning with portions of the upper Cle Elum River system.

Subject to the results of an ongoing fatal flaw analysis, about $15 million will be sought in the latter half of the Initial Development Phase to conduct a feasibility study and prepare an environmental impact statement to ready one of the two large storage facilities identified in the Integrated Plan for possible inclusion in the plan's subsequent development phase. The subsequent or middle development phase would span the time frame from the year 2024 through 2034.

The total estimated cost of the Initial Development Phase could range from about $607 million to about $766 million. These costs represent the best available estimates based upon current information and may be subject to change as feasibility studies proceed.

The estimated costs do not include the $99.3 million appropriated by the state legislature for the Teanaway watershed acquisition, nor the $31 million in current state funding for Integrated Plan projects. Those projects include environmental review, design, and permitting for the Kachess and Cle Elum projects necessary to allow construction of those projects to commence as early as the end of 2015; fish habitat improvements; water conservation projects; water banking and exchange programs; and aquifer storage and recovery projects.

Upon completion, the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant will provide 200,000 acre-feet of water for drought relief.

Questions?
Please give us a call.

Derek Sandison, Washington Department of Ecology
509-457-7120
dsan461@ecy.wa.gov