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Meeting Notes

June 4, 2014

Yakima Arboretum, Yakima WA

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup

Welcome/Introductions and Agenda Overview

Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA meeting facilitator, welcomed the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup members and other attendees, led introductions, and provided an overview of the agenda. Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation, and Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Ecology, commemorated the 5-year anniversary of the YRBWEP Workgroup. Wendy discussed the work performed and accomplishments achieved over the past 5 years. Accomplishments include meeting with Yakama Nation Chairman Smiskin, Interior Secretary Salazar, Governor Gregoire, and others, on September 18, 2011; receiving the 2012 Integrated Water Resource Award from the American Water Resources Association, and organizing a Federal Agencies DC Leadership Group¹. Derek congratulated the Workgroup on its progress over the past 5 years. Derek emphasized that the Workgroup's achievements are a testament to its commitment to the Integrated Plan goals. He also recognized that there is still much work left to be done in order to realize these goals.

Highlights from the presentations and Workgroup comments are summarized below. For more detail, please see the full presentations which are available on the project website

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

Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Funding Opportunity

Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited, and Peter Dykstra, Plauché & Carr LLP, discussed the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) grant funding opportunity. The NRCS program was recently announced by the Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack. It is a 5-year national program intended to promote the restoration and sustainable use of natural resources on regional scales. Characteristics of the NRCS program include: fostering partnerships to leverage large conservation projects, developing collaborative solutions and integrated approaches to conservation, and establishing measurable results. These NRCS initiatives are in line with the Integrated Plan goals.

¹ The DC Leadership Group provides the Regional Leadership and the Implementation Committee with assistance on addressing questions of national policy, clarifying and strategizing on authority issues, and identifying potential funding opportunities.



Approximately \$400 million in NRCS funding is anticipated to be awarded in fiscal year 2014 to 2015. The NRCS program is composed of three available funding sources; these include national funds (40% of total funding), state funds (25%), and Critical Conservation Areas (CCA) funds (35%). Peter emphasized that the Columbia River Basin (which encompasses the Yakima River Basin) was selected as one of the eight CCAs. As such, CCA funds are a potential source of financing for Integrated Plan projects. Lisa noted that Roylene Rides-at-the-Door, the Washington State Conservationist, advocated for the Integrated Plan region to be included as a CCA; this is largely due to the collaboration efforts and relationships formed by the YRBWEP Workgroup Implementation Committee.

An ad hoc group of the Implementation Committee, led by Lisa Pelly, is currently developing a pre-proposal for NRCS CCA funds, due July 14, 2014. The final proposal is due September 26, 2014. The group is in the process of working with the NRCS to better understand the requirements and process involved for state and national funding. Lisa Pelly can be contacted for further information or to discuss potential projects.

Workgroup Discussion

- Sid Morrison: Studies show water issues in the Yakima River Basin are primarily due to lack of storage, not inefficient use of irrigation water. Does storage qualify under the NRCS funding requirements? *Yes, the NRCS conservation efforts are focused on instream flow improvements, which include storage improvement projects. A portion of NRCS funds are intended to improve natural resources through on-farm projects.*
- Mike Livingston: Are coordinated efforts being considered with other entities in the Columbia River Basin CCA? *Yes, the group is looking for areas of common interest with other entities in the Columbia River Basin. Additionally, outreach efforts are being pursued to identify other projects within the same geographical region. The Columbia River Treaty process has also stimulated conservation project discussion among counties in the region.*
- Seth Defoe: From the Columbia River Basin CCA borders, it is evident that a key focus of the NRCS program is salmon habitat enhancement. *Yes, this is among the key goals of the NRCS program.*
- Alex Conley: It was noted that funds are available for technical services. What is meant by, or qualifies as, technical services? *In general, NRCS funds are intended for technical services and not administrative costs. The goal is to produce measurable results through technical work. However, this stipulation is not yet fully understood; efforts are underway to get a better understanding of funding requirements.*
- Mike Leita: Who reviews project proposals? Do project proposals go through all three state governor's offices (Washington, Oregon, and Idaho)? *It is still uncertain who reviews project proposals. The group is looking into these types of details.*

Technical Work Update

Andrew Graham, HDR, and Walt Larrick and Wendy Christensen, Reclamation, presented updates on technical work in progress. Wendy began by emphasizing the balanced portfolio of projects which are included in this technical work update. All of these projects are moving forward.

Keechelus-to-Kachess Conveyance (KKC) and Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant (KDRPP)

Andrew discussed the KKC and KDRPP projects. The design team has identified the alternatives for both projects which were described at the last Workgroup meeting; the KKC and KDRPP projects each have two alternatives under consideration. Further field exploration is occurring this summer/fall to evaluate the new KKC alternative tunnel alignment. For each project, the engineering team is in the process of designing the different project components. This includes consideration of space needed in the future for potential fish passage at the two dams. Various technical memoranda are being developed for each project component. These technical memoranda will ultimately be compiled into a feasibility design report. An economics report and draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are also being prepared.

Bull Trout Enhancement

Walt discussed bull trout enhancement design efforts. Box Canyon is a key tributary for bull trout habitat. Three design options have been identified to enhance bull trout habitat, particularly focusing on addressing affects during low water years. Reclamation is also working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Yakama Nation, and other entities to identify other critical tributaries for bull trout habitat surrounding the Kachess and Keechelus Reservoirs. Bull trout enhancement actions will contribute to mitigating the impacts from the KKC and KDRPP projects. These actions will be incorporated into the draft EIS.

Wymer Dam

Geotechnical exploration work is complete at the proposed Wymer Dam and Reservoir site. Approximately 16 drill holes have been completed and core data is currently being evaluated.

Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement

The progress of the Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement project was discussed. Drilling permits are currently being finalized. Additional geotechnical drilling is expected to begin this month.

Cle Elum Pool Raise (CEPR)

The CEPR final design is in progress. The draft EIS is also being prepared. Reclamation is meeting with landowners to identify methods to protect private property and Federal facilities from potential erosion. The Cle Elum Reservoir shoreline has been evaluated to identify areas of potential erosion. Techniques to address potential erosion on private property and Federal facilities include bioengineering using logs, boulders, and vegetation, or construction of a rock wall. The technique selected will vary, depending on shoreline susceptibility to erosion.

Cle Elum Dam Fish Passage Facilities

Joel Hubble, Reclamation, discussed the progress of the Cle Elum Dam Fish Passage Facilities project. Teams have been working together to review model results, discuss criteria, and finalize each project component, including a recent visit to Reclamation's Technical Services Center Laboratory in Denver, Colorado, by several participants. Emphasis was placed on solving a tail water recirculation issue that could potentially impede adult passage. The design team was able to resolve issues of turbulent flow in the juvenile passage facility (helix) using numerical and physical modeling; thereby demonstrating smooth flow in the helix for juvenile downstream passage. Wendy acknowledged the collaborative efforts between Yakima Basin biologists and Reclamation design team to resolve the issues. A value engineering study is scheduled for mid-June and the 60-percent final design review is scheduled for July.

Tieton Dam Fish Passage Facilities Study

A statement of work is being prepared for the Tieton Dam Fish Passage Facilities Study. Deliverables will include: 1) an Appraisal Assessment report; 2) drawings; 3) a cost estimate; and 4) a summary of environmental impacts.

Clear Lake Fish Passage

A study is in progress to evaluate bull trout activity in Clear Lake by Reclamation and USFWS. The study considers the ability of bull trout to migrate from Rimrock Reservoir to Clear Lake Reservoir. The study will require 2 more seasons of data collection. The 2012 and 2013 reports have been posted to the Integrated Plan project website.

Groundwater Storage, City of Yakima Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR)

Dave Brown, City of Yakima, discussed the progress of the Yakima ASR project. The Programmatic Framework technical memorandum has been completed and is available on the Integrated Plan project website. Testing of Gardner Well is beginning now. This testing includes well efficiency, flow-rate, and recharge testing. Winter recharge of the aquifer will begin this winter (2014-2015), pending permit approval.

Groundwater Storage Basinwide Analysis

The Groundwater Storage basinwide analysis for managed recharge is in the data collection phase. This involves meeting with irrigation districts and biologists to gather data about the system and water use trends. Data will be used to model the timing of water injection and removal. Once the model has been developed, results will be shared with the districts and biologists to ensure the results are sensible.

Manastash Creek Conservation and Tributary Enhancement

The Manastash Creek Conservation and Tributary Enhancement project is now complete and operational. This project successfully delivers water to irrigators and conveys conserved water to Manastash Creek. It is expected that the Reed ditch diversion will be removed summer 2015.

Habitat Enhancement and Agricultural Conservation Projects

Habitat enhancement and agricultural conservation projects have been identified throughout the Yakima River Basin. The Habitat Subcommittee is developing a draft list of projects for funding. The Out-of-Stream Needs Subcommittee (renamed Water Use Subcommittee) is developing criteria for ranking conservation projects. Additionally, a municipal water conservation subcommittee is being formed to identify municipal conservation projects. These and other Integrated Plan projects will continue to progress, based on available funding.

Workgroup Discussion

- Sid Morrison: Is NRCS funding being considered for these projects? *Yes, work is being done to include several of these projects on the NRCS funding list.*

Roza Reach Study

The Roza Reach 2014 field season study is complete. The preliminary results for 2014 will be presented at the Yakima Science and Management Conference.

Teanaway Community Forest

Mike Livingston, WDFW, discussed the Teanaway Community Forest (TCF) planning effort. The TCF advisory committee has been tasked with making management plan recommendations to WDFW and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. A field tour of the TCF occurred in May. This provided advisory committee members the opportunity to identify potential issues to address in the management plan. Plan considerations include community values and legislative goals.

Update on Economics Study

Jonathon Yoder and Steve Katz, Washington State University, updated the Workgroup on progress made on the Economic Study since December 2013. This study was directed to occur by the State Legislature. It evaluates the economic impacts of Integrated Plan projects related to fish populations, irrigation water reliability, and municipal/domestic water supply, for each project individually. The analysis is based on the following existing models (modified where appropriate): the Yakima Basin Riverware model; a habitat/fish productivity model; and a valuation model. Steve discussed four reaches WSU has evaluated and the impact to steelhead populations in these areas. Uncertainty is a key issue in forecasting fish populations and has resulted in a wide range of potential outcomes. This uncertainty is attributed, in part, to fish activities in common areas outside of the Yakima River Basin. Work is being done using historical project data to better understand the system. Evaluation of historical data will be used to assign confidence levels to results and to reduce uncertainty. Jonathon and Steve are expecting to have a draft report available by early November and a final report by December 15, 2014.

Workgroup Discussion

- Ron VanGundy: Will outside factors such as ocean conditions be included in the analysis? *No, the objective is not to build a new model, but to refine the existing models. Although external factors are not included in the model, it will be possible to determine their relative contribution. This could be compared to the Integrated Plan's contribution to fish populations.*
- Sean Gross: If it is determined that the Integrated Plan has a meaningful impact on delisting species, will these benefits be monetized? *No, benefits will not be presented in monetary terms. To do this, management of specific species would need to be separated from management activities for all other fish.*
- Alex Conley: Would the modeling strategy for species such as sockeye salmon be the same as for steelhead? *No, sockeye salmon are not as migratory as steelhead. Therefore, an evaluation of sockeye populations would require a fundamentally different approach. For the purposes of the Integrated Plan, sockeye salmon are not among the fish species that require analysis.*

Implementation Committee Update

Derek Sandison, Ecology, introduced the Implementation Committee. The committee is hoping that Federal elected officials will introduce legislation related to the Integrated Plan by the end of 2014. Various funding opportunities were discussed. The Water Resource Reform and Development Act provides Federal funding for water-related infrastructure projects. This is a potential source of funding for Integrated Plan projects. The committee is also targeting the Land and Water Conservation Fund and NRCS funding opportunities. Additionally, the committee is in the process of prioritizing projects for the upcoming State budget (fiscal year 2015-2017). Proposed projects for state funding will be submitted to the governor's office in September.

Executive/Subcommittee Updates

Habitat Subcommittee

Jeff Tayer summarized work of the Habitat Subcommittee. In January 2014, the Habitat Subcommittee was tasked with developing a list of habitat projects. Emphasis was placed on maintaining a balanced portfolio of Integrated Plan projects. Several criteria have been identified for use in evaluating projects. Projects should be: 1) scientifically defensible; 2) synergistic with other projects and funding sources; 3) expand on the Yakama Nation, Kittitas, and Yakima County floodplain restoration efforts; 4) improve bull trout populations in relation to the KKC and KDRPP projects; 5) enhance watershed protections for fish and water supply; and 6) support other elements of the Integrated Plan. Efforts have also been made to avoid potential permitting issues and build relationships with the Forest Service. Jeff presented a draft list of larger scale projects which the Habitat Subcommittee has identified. Moving forward, the subcommittee will update this list of proposed projects based on comments from the Workgroup. The Habitat Subcommittee's proposal will ultimately be integrated with the proposals developed by other subcommittees. The list of recommended projects will be shared with the Implementation Committee in July.

Workgroup Discussion

- Seth Defoe: Will the projects be linked with any individual projects sponsored by other partners? *Yes, coordination with project sponsors will occur as the project list is further refined and finalized.*

Out-of-Stream Needs Subcommittee (Water Use Subcommittee)

Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District, summarized work of the Out-of-Stream Needs Subcommittee. Because the purpose of the Out-of-Stream Needs Subcommittee has evolved, the Subcommittee has changed its name to the Water Use Subcommittee. The subcommittee has identified criteria to rate projects; these criteria are flexible and encompass the key Integrated Plan objectives. The subcommittee aims to have a draft list of proposed projects completed by the end of July.

Workgroup Roundtable Discussion

Ben Floyd opened the floor to Workgroup members. Specific comments included:

- Mike Livingston: The NRCS appears to be an excellent funding opportunity.
- Sid Morrison: The Yakima Basin Storage Alliance (YBSA) analysis is moving forward; no results have been produced yet.
- Urban Eberhart: The NRCS selection of the Columbia Basin as a “critical conservation area” is largely due to the progress and accomplishments of the YRBWEP Workgroup, Integrated Plan, and the Implementation Committee.
- Dave Brown: It is evident that the cooperation and initiatives of the Integrated Plan are expanding to projects outside of the Integrated Plan.
- Michael Garrity: The Habitat Subcommittee’s proposed project list looks good.
- Peter Dykstra: Some of the Integrated Plan habitat and conservation projects will be completed this summer. There has been interest from Congressman Reichert’s office to tour these projects and celebrate their completion.
- David Fast: Various Integrated Plan projects will be presented at the Yakima Science and Management Conference. Anyone who is interested in attending this conference can contact David for details.
- Jim Milton: Jim expressed appreciation for the successful completion of the Cowiche Creek Tributary Enhancement project.
- Alex Conley: The Habitat Subcommittee still has lots of work to do to ensure the list of final projects is realistic.

Public Comment

- Chris Maykut: Friends of Bumping Lake have submitted a letter to Senator Murray, Senator Cantwell, and Governor Inslee opposing the Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement project.
- Elaine Packard: The Sierra Club has submitted a letter to Senator Murray opposing the Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement project.

Workgroup Members in Attendance

Dave Brown, City of Yakima
Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board
Seth Defoe, Kennewick Irrigation District
Peter Dykstra, Plauché & Carr, LLP
Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District
David Fast, Yakama Nation - Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project
Michael Garrity, American Rivers
Paul Jewell, Kittitas County
Mike Leita, Yakima County
Mike Livingston, WDFW
Sid Morrison, YBSA
Lisa Pelly, Washington Water Project, Trout Unlimited
Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District
Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
Rick Roeder, Washington State Department of Natural Resources
Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Ecology, Office of Columbia River
Mike Shuttleworth, Benton County
Jim Trull, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District
Dawn Wiedmeier, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office

Other Attendees

Justin Bader, North Yakima Conservation District
Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District
David Bowen, Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce
David Child, Yakima Basin Joint Board
Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Dan Church, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Tony Coluccio, Frank Coluccio Construction
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
James Davenport, JH Davenport, LLC
Charlie de la Chapelle, YBSA
Dean Dennis, Kennewick Irrigation District
Jack and Beneitta Eaton, landowners
Bill Eller, WSCC
Bill Ferry, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA
Mike Frey, Kennewick Irrigation District
Patty Garvey-Darda, U.S. Forest Service
Raelene Gold, Seattle Audubon
Andrew Graham, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Robert Granger, WDFW
Sean Gross, National Marine Fisheries Service
Bob Hall, YBSA/Yakima Auto Dealers
Lynn Holt, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Joel Hubble, Bureau of Reclamation - Yakima Field Office

Eleanor Hungate
Justin Iverson, Golder Associates
Steve Katz, Washington State University
Chuck Klarich, YBSA
Jason Kuiken, U.S. Forest Service, Okanagan-Wenatchee NF
Anna Lael, Kittitas County Conservation District
Walt Larrick, Bureau of Reclamation
Barb Lisk, Office of Representative Doc Hastings
Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation, Yakima Field Office
Steve Malloch, Western Water Futures LLC (alt. for American Rivers)
Daniel Martinez, S. Martinez Livestock
Jason McCormick, Washington Water Trust
Keith McGowan, Bureau of Reclamation
Patrick McGuire, Kennewick Irrigation District
Candy McKinley, Bureau of Reclamation
Scott Merriman, Washington State Treasurer's Office
Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
Bryan Myre, Yakama Reservation Irrigation District
Elaine Packard, Water/Salmon Committee, Cascade Chapter, Sierra Club
Sarah Pistoese, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Kate Prengaman, Yakima Herald-Republic
Joye Redfield-Wilder, Washington Department of Ecology
David Reeploeg, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
Dan Silver, Consultant
Rob Swedo, BPA
Jeff Tayer, WDFW
Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology
Rebecca Thornton, Office of Senator Patty Murray
Michael Tobin, North Yakima Conservation District
Richard Visser, USFWS

Where to Find Workgroup Information

Meeting materials, notes, presentations, and materials submitted during public comment for the Workgroup meetings will be posted on the project website

(<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/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 of these notes or Ben Floyd at Anchor QEA, Kennewick office, (509) 491-3151, or bfloyd@anchorqea.com.