

Friends of Bumping Lake
4000 Aurora Avenue North, Suite 224
Seattle, WA 98103
info@friendsofbumpinglake.org

Concerns Regarding New Economic Effects Report from Yakima Workgroup

December 14th, 2016

The purpose of this letter is to outline concerns we have regarding an upcoming Workgroup Economic Subcommittee consultant report looking only at economic benefits of the Yakima Plan to brace up the 2012 “Four Accounts” analysis. We have stated previously that the “Four Accounts” analysis omitted several critical points that reduced its legitimacy and resulted in the corrections brought forward in the award-winning 2014 Water Research Center report. In addition, the ECONorthwest report will have little credibility because ECONorthwest was the lead consultant for the Workgroup in preparing the “Four Accounts” analysis in the first place. An “economic effects” report must include the negative economic impacts that the Yakima Plan will have on the Yakima Basin.

Passive Use Value of Bumping Lake

Much like the “willingness to pay” number that has been assigned to potential salmon recovery, there is an intrinsic cost to destroying 1000 acres of ancient forest that was not included in the Four Accounts analysis. Per the WRC report, and utilizing the same methodology as the Four Accounts analysis, the estimated damages from the loss of ancient forest is \$1.85 billion dollars.¹ Not taking this into account while cherry-picking the emotional value of salmon returns completely delegitimizes any study that you would conduct, and we ask that you give this the same weight in your analysis of Bumping Lake’s ancient forest.

Loss of Recreation on Bumping Lake

The Four Accounts analysis curiously concluded that there would be no net impact to recreation on Bumping Lake, because the increased size of the reservoir would “enhance recreation” and mitigate all other recreational losses. This is a misleading and irresponsible assumption. Make no mistake, that everything that is known, loved, and utilized by the 20,000 visitors that come to Bumping each summer is slated to be flooded and destroyed: all campgrounds and camping facilities, popular lakeside hiking trails, the bustling boathouse and dock facilities, the public dock and boat launch, car access to popular wilderness hiking trails, and historical family cabins that have been passed down through generations.

The Bureau of Recreation has no stated plan or goal to move, save or rebuild anything that will be destroyed. Even if there was a plan, the resulting shoreline would be a mud flat for much of the years following a drought-induced drawdown, and any lakeside facilities would be unusable or unreliable for public recreation. The Forest Service stated in a 2012 letter to the Workgroup that it would be “unlikely” that new camping facilities could be restored on the lake, due to the resulting shoreline being too shallow to utilize.

Most of the people who recreate on Bumping Lake are middle class or low-income citizens from the Yakima Valley who can’t afford to go on expensive vacations to far-flung places. Bumping Lake is their accessible and irreplaceable jewel for restoration, relaxation, and getting in touch with the natural world. The Bumping Lake area provides recreational opportunities to the local area, included the Hispanic community. Not taking this into account would not give the public much confidence that this new analysis is being conducted with much rigor.

Adjusting Salmon Return Expectations in High Temperature Scenarios

While we support re-establishment of fish runs in the Yakima Basin, salmon returns can be greatly affected by high temperatures in the Lower Columbia River and in 2015 contributed to massive die-offs of returning Sockeye salmon. This was not included in the Four Accounts analysis, and should be taken under consideration when forecasting returns.

Thank you,

Chris Maykut, President
Friends of Bumping Lake

¹ “Benefit-Cost Analysis of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Projects”, p. 108-109, Yoder et al