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Meeting Notes - Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup

June 21, 2017

Washington State Department of Ecology, Union Gap, WA

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Overview

Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA, welcomed the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup members and other attendees, led introductions, and provided an overview of the agenda. These notes summarize the YRBWEP Workgroup presentations and the public comments. For details, please see the full presentations, which are available on the project website: <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/index.html>.

Implementation Committee Update

Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Office of Columbia River (OCR), provided an update on the Implementation Committee. The committee is working with both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives on Integrated Plan legislation (HR 714). The Bureau of Reclamation was recently awarded an additional \$8 million in Federal discretionary funds for water conservation and fish passage for Federal Fiscal Year 2017. The State Legislature is also in session and considering funding in the 2017-2019 biennial budget. Implementation Committee members met with legislators in Olympia and provided follow-up communications.

Public Input on this Agenda Item: None

Outreach Update

The Outreach Workgroup representatives, Steve Malloch, Western Water Futures, and Nicky Pasi, American Rivers, provided an overview of recent outreach activities and shared three video vignettes highlighting elements of the Integrated Plan. The videos highlighted the following topics:

- **Farmers:** the Integrated Plan and drought and climate change risks to agricultural products produced by Yakima River basin water supply.
- **Teaway Community Forest:** recreation, conservation, restoration, and climate change risks to stream flows for fish and water supply, the connection of the forest and river as a functioning ecosystem, and importance of healthy watersheds.

- Yakama Nation: the importance of the Integrated Plan for members of the Yakama Nation, and the aim to protect and enhance water supplies for fish and agriculture for future generations. Working together is occurring within the Yakama Nation and on the implementation of the Integrated Plan.
- These videos can be accessed on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIansPZCImLL0PeW6PB46Ug>

Dave Brown, City of Yakima and Chair of Municipal Subgroup, reported that the subgroup recently sponsored two meetings focused on water conservation, water rights, and water system management with municipal water purveyors in the basin.

Nicky reported that recent public outreach activities featured the Integrated Plan in several community events throughout the Yakima River basin and on the west side of the State.

Public Input on this Agenda Item: None.

Technical Work Updates

1. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Overview

Mark Schuppe, Ecology, presented information on SEPA and the environmental review process and described how it helps State agencies in making decisions. SEPA provides a disclosure process for agencies and the public, addresses regulatory gaps and overlaps, helps identify and provide opportunity for review of potential impacts from proposed actions early in the process, and helps streamline decision-making. SEPA has the authority to require mitigation, if not covered by permits. SEPA can be integrated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. A SEPA process timeline was reviewed.

2. NEPA Process Overview

Wendy Christensen, Reclamation, introduced the NEPA topic and Beth Reinhart, NEPA specialist from Reclamation's Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Boise, ID. Beth described how NEPA compliance could be accomplished through categorical exclusions (CE), environmental assessments (EA), and environmental impact statements (EIS), depending upon the type of Federal action being considered. She explained the following:

- A CE is a minor act with no significant impact; it applies to actions that do not have significant effects on the human environment.
- An EA is prepared when a CE cannot be used, because there are minor impacts; therefore, a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) can be issued to allow a project to move forward.
- An EIS requires more steps and a planned timeline, as there are potential significant impacts on the environment that must be disclosed and potentially mitigated, and reasonable alternatives must be considered.

She focused on the EIS process noting that it can take 2 to 5 years to prepare, depending upon the nature and complexity of the proposed action and the number of cooperating agencies participating and making decisions. Beth discussed the steps of NEPA process and minimum timelines required. Beth encouraged participation in the NEPA process and described how Reclamation provides notice for public comment opportunities through the *Federal Register*, websites, letters, and emails to interested parties. She reviewed the following required NEPA steps:

- Notice of Intent (NOI) is published in the *Federal Register* to notify the public that an EIS is being prepared.
- Public scoping begins with public meetings, open houses, and solicitation of comments on the project, as Reclamation actively seeks public participation.
- The agency sorts through comments associated with public scoping.
- A draft environmental impact report (DEIS) will be released for public review and comments, more public meetings will be held, and more comments collected.
- Public comments collected on the DEIS will be reviewed and responded to in the final environmental impact statement (FEIS).
- The FEIS will be released to the public.
- The lead agency can issue a record of decision (ROD) 30 days after EPA has published the Notice of Availability (NOA) of the FEIS.

3. Land Acquisition Process Overview

Wendy Christensen, Reclamation, introduced the land acquisition topic and Steve Wake, realty specialist with Reclamation's Pacific Northwest Regional Office in Boise. Steve reviewed a diagram of the land acquisition process. Reclamation land acquisitions are predicated on determined needs; they consist of easements, fee purchases, and temporary and permanent acquisitions. Each type of acquisition has specific requirements and steps to follow. The Reclamation Office of Valuation Services performs appraisal evaluations, which are required for acquisitions greater than \$25,000.

Public Input on this Agenda Item:

Why is only positive information shared in the videos? Adverse impacts should also be acknowledged, including where the water comes from.

- Adverse impacts along with other potential effects are considered in the SEPA and NEPA environmental review processes and in decision-making for specific projects, which is a separate process from outreach communications that highlight the overall benefits of the Integrated Plan from a variety of perspectives.

What happens to comments provided during environmental review? Do the agencies address the substance of public comments, or do comments just go into a "black hole"? It feels like comments are made, but that these are not addressed.

- Because the SEPA and NEPA timelines can extend over multiple years, some commenters may feel like their concerns are not being considered, but all comments are categorized, read, considered, and responded to. There can be a significant time lapse between the public comment period and responses provided, depending upon the nature and complexity of the environmental review process.

What is the schedule for the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant (KDRPP) draft EIS?

- Reclamation released the DEIS early 2015. Based upon changes in the proposed actions, Reclamation and Ecology are now preparing a supplemental draft EIS (SDEIS). The SDEIS will be available to the public by the end of 2017. Reclamation and Ecology will respond to all comments previously received, as well as additional comments submitted for the SDEIS. Reclamation and Ecology will address comments and their responses will be documented in the final EIS (FEIS).

4. Cle Elum Dam Fish Passage Facilities Update

Wendy Christensen, Reclamation, introduced this topic. Reclamation continues to make progress on Cle Elum Fish Passage with the secant pile construction underway. The contractor is using the road and bridge constructed in 2015/2016. More than 200 concrete columns will be poured, and these columns extend 116 feet below ground.

Dave Fast, Yakama Nation, updated the Workgroup on the importance of fish passage for sockeye reintroduction efforts. The basin used to produce more than 200,000 sockeye, and this run was extirpated when the reservoirs were constructed, as passage was not provided. The Yakama Nation and others propose to restore this and other fish runs. Dave shared the history of sockeye reintroduction efforts and results from recent years. The new passage system will allow juveniles to out-migrate at different pool elevations and, potentially, allow adults to return to the reservoir through cost-effective and safe passage facilities. Testing of the adult system will continue this summer.

Joel Hubble, Reclamation fisheries biologist, shared more details on the current testing of the adult Whooshh™ passage system. Reclamation conducted prior tests at Roza and Prosser dams, and the next test will be at Cle Elum Dam in July. It will be a 1700-foot passage tube operated with pressure differentials, 150 feet high, and the adult fish will be transported through the tube for approximately 45 seconds. A sorting system will ensure that the right size and species of fish enter the transport tube, while others will be redirected to the river. The test will include tracking tagged fish from Roza Dam up to and over Cle Elum passage facilities. Survival rates will be evaluated.

Public Input on this Agenda Item:

Will this type of technology potentially work at Bumping Lake Dam, including the existing dam?

Yes, it should work at Bumping Lake Dam and theoretically at any height, as pneumatics are used to transport the fish.

Are there plans for fish passage and sockeye restoration at Kachess Reservoir?

- Yes, fish reintroduction is planned for all reservoirs. After the Cle Elum testing, the next opportunity will be at Rimrock Lake/Tieton Dam. Comments were provided on KDRPP by Robert Angrisano who expressed concern over project costs, such as, who would pay for the project and that costs need to factor in operations and maintenance, mitigation, legal, and other expenses?
- The proratable irrigation districts have said that they would pay for the KDRPP.

When will the KDRPP EIS be final? This EIS process has been ongoing for more than 2 years. When will we see responses to comments that have been provided?

- All previously made comments will be responded to in the FEIS and additional opportunity for comment will be provided when the SDEIS is issued later in 2017. Comments on both the Draft EIS and Supplemental Draft EIS will be responded to in the Final EIS.

Economic Subcommittee Panel

Mike Leita, Yakima County, introduced a panel comprised of Jonathon Smith, New Vision; Jon DeVaney, Washington State Tree Fruit Association; Leslie Roy, a producer in the Moxee area; and Neil Aaland, Aaland Planning Services. Jonathon, Jon, and Leslie are members of the Economic Subcommittee, and Neil facilitates Economic Subcommittee meetings. The subcommittee was established in 2016 to assemble economic information and develop a report that identifies specific economic benefits of the Integrated Plan. Local government and private business funded the preparation of the report.

The report reaffirms that the Yakima River basin economy runs on water. Forty percent or 96,000 jobs in the basin are dependent upon water. Agriculture and food processing directly employs 28,000 of the 96,000 water-dependent jobs. Seventy five percent of the agricultural products produced in the basin are exported internationally: hay, hops, apples, grapes, and other products. The world depends on the producers in the Yakima River basin for a reliable supply of these products. The production of organic products, such as blueberries, is increasing. Dairy and cattle production are also dependent on water. The Yakima River basin is a premier location for producing a diversity of agricultural products the National and world markets want.

Reliable water supply provides certainty and sustains the permanent crops in the basin. Droughts results in losses in the millions of dollars, and drought impacts can last for multiple years, resulting in losses of market share that are difficult to recover.

Water supports a \$1.2 billion recreation economy in the basin and more than 14,000 jobs. Water supports and maintains Yakama Nation treaty rights and helps maintain Yakama Nation's spiritual, cultural, and economic connection to the basin's water and fish resources. Risk to water supply also creates uncertainty for future development.

The water dependent sectors of the basin's economy produce \$13 billion in annual output compared with the \$4 billion, 30-year cost of the Integrated Plan. Construction projects implemented with the plan will generate more than \$2.5 billion in direct economic output. Recreation and commercial fisheries value will increase between \$100 and \$300 million.

Workgroup Discussion:

Lisa Pelly: Are permanent crops becoming more prevalent in Kittitas County?

Yes, several investments in tree fruit and other permanent crops have been made in the county in recent years.

Public Input on this Agenda Item:

The Washington State Chapter of the Sierra Club submitted comments on the draft economic plan. The comment letter states the report is deficient in findings in several areas, including economic impact from droughts, in identifying how irrigators will pay their share of the Integrated Plan, and in not accounting for loss of ancient forest value. The detailed comments are attached.

- The economic report was prepared by subject matter experts. The investments in projects identified in the Integrated Plan can provide returns for the next 50 to 100 years. We have been fighting for new storage in the basin for nearly 60 years, and it is needed to sustain the Yakima basin's economy.

All agree that the Yakima basin has a vibrant agricultural economy, but everyone also has to look at the on-the-ground impacts. We need to address (1) how much water is needed, (2) how much it will cost, and (3) who will pay for it. This needs to be a complete look and not just from the perspective of special interests.

Workgroup Roundtable

Dawn Wiedmeier, Reclamation: Kudos to the Outreach Committee for their work, and to the Economic Subcommittee for their report.

Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District (KRD): This is a great snow year, allowing KRD to implement the tributaries flow supplementation program. This supplementation effort would not have been possible without the cooperation that has developed through the Integrated Plan. Recreation is also an important component of the Integrated Plan, and the recreation economy is important to Kittitas County. Urban also announced the first steelhead have been seen upstream of Reed Diversion Dam, which was removed in 2016. Tanuam Creek is also producing steelhead. Massive efforts in a short time are resulting in real improvements.

David Brown, City of Yakima: City of Yakima aquifer recharge project continues to move forward.

Paul Jewell, Kittitas County: Good to see the progress at Cle Elum Dam for fish passage.

Jeff Thomas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: The information put together by the Outreach Committee is not propaganda, and suggesting that it is, is disrespectful.

Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited: She and Urban Eberhart (KRD) recently met with Oregon Water Resources, where they shared lessons learned from the Integrated Plan. Thanks to Mike Leita and the Economic Subcommittee for their work. Lisa was skeptical at first, but is impressed with the report.

Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District: Economics can be a difficult and tough issue to determine.

Wendy McDermott, American Rivers: Thanks for the presentations and perspectives shared today.

Peter Dykstra, Plauche and Carr, and Chair, Watershed Lands Subcommittee: Peter announced a recent public acquisition of 215 acres of river and upland area in the lower Teanaway. It will provide additional recreational access, access to the community forest, and opportunity for additional restoration. Water rights will be dedicated to instream flows. This is a shining example of the type of projects that emerge and leveraged by the Integrated Plan and associated partnerships.

Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District: Regarding questions raised earlier in the meeting about funding the KDRPP project, Roza will pay for 100 percent of KDRPP construction and operations and maintenance costs. The State does not pay for one-half of this or any other individual projects as suggested earlier. There is a misunderstanding of Revised Code of Washington 90.38.120, which states: “At least one-half of the total costs to finance the implementation of the Integrated Plan must be funded through federal, private, and other non-state sources, including a significant contribution of funding from local project beneficiaries. This section applies to the total costs of the Integrated Plan and not to individual projects within the plan.” Scott also extended an invitation to meet with Kachess homeowners and to provide them a tour of the Roza Irrigation District.

Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance: Disappointed with the sockeye fish returns in 2017. He is excited about the Integrated Plan projects, but concerned with the basis of benefit being on significant fish returns.

- The returns this year are less than desirable and are a direct result of impacts from the 2015 drought, where 90 percent of the sockeye were lost. We cannot just look at 1 year to say efforts are not working. The Integrated Plan will help with sockeye restoration.

Upcoming meetings

The next Workgroup meeting will be on September 7, 2017, at the Benton PUD Auditorium in Prosser, WA.

Attendance

Workgroup Members in Attendance:

Dale Bambrick, National Marine Fisheries Service

Dave Brown, City of Yakima

Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation - Columbia-Cascades Area Office

Ron Cowin, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District

Seth Defoe, Kennewick Irrigation District

Peter Dykstra, Plauche & Carr, and Chair of Watershed Lands Subcommittee

Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District

David Fast, Yakama Nation

Paul Jewell, Kittitas County

Mike Leita, Yakima County

Mike Livingston, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Wendy McDermott, American Rivers

Jason McShane, Chair of YRBWEP Lower River Subgroup, Kennewick Irrigation District

Jerrod MacPherson, Benton County

Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited

Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District, and Chair of YRBWEP Water Use Subcommittee

Rick Roeder, Washington Department of Natural Resources

Jeff Tayer, Chair of YRBWEP Habitat Subcommittee (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology - Office of Columbia River

Jeff Thomas, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Mid-Columbia River Fishery Office

Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District

Dawn Wiedmeier, Bureau of Reclamation

Mike Williams, U.S. Forest Service

Other Attendees

Robert Angrusano, Lake Kachess resident

Bob Anderson, Geosyntec

Stephanie Balzanini, Department of the Interior

Tammy Bauer, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell

Julius Black, Lake Kachess resident
David Bowen, Washington State Department of Ecology
Bill Campbell, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association
Debbie Carlson, Bonneville Power Administration
Murray Chapman, resident
David Child, Yakima Basin Joint Board
Tony Coluccio, Frank Coluccio Construction
Randal and Sharon Conrads, Lake Kachess residents
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
Jane Creech, Washington State Department of Ecology
John Daugherty, Citizen
Charlie de la Chappelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Jeanne Demorest, Bureau of Reclamation - Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Karen Dera, Bureau of Reclamation - Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Jon DeVaney, Washington State Tree Fruit Association
Kay Duncanson, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association resident
John Easterbrooks, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Jack and Beneitta Eaton, Landowners
Brad Engberg, Lake Kachess resident
Larry Felton, LEF Engineering
Carrey Fincham-Galloway, Board Kachess Lake Homeowners Association
Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA
Tim and Jean Fountain, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County
Don Gatchalian, Yakima County
Lonnie Gienger, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association
Raylene Gold, Audubon Society
Bob Hall, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Carron Hellburg, Bureau of Reclamation
Tim Hill, Washington State Department of Ecology
Elayne Hovde, Natural Resource Conservation Service
Joel Hubble, Bureau of Reclamation
Christian Johnson, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association

Brad Jonas, Lake Kachess resident
Kaitlyn Kelly, EH intern, KLPHD
Ken Kemp, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association resident
Ryan Kemp, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association resident
Brady Kent, Yakama Nation
Chuck Klarich, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Walter Larrick, Citizen
Ann Lewis, Yakima Basin Coalition
Edward Lisowski, Citizen
Jeff and Stacie Loftus, Lake Kachess resident
Mitch Long, Kittitas Conservation Trust
Chris Lynch, Citizen
Thomas Lynne, Lake Kachess resident
Steve Malloch, Western Water Futures LLC (alternate for American Rivers)
Joel Martin, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association resident
Natalie Martinkus, Heritage University
Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake
Saundra McPhee, Citizen
Saun McQuisch, Lake Kachess resident
Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek
Teresa Merriman, Bureau of Reclamation
Holly Myers, EH supervisor, KLPHD
Bryan Myre, Yakama Reservation Irrigation District
Richard and Martin Olsen, Olsen Bros. Growers
George Onwumere, Washington State Department of Ecology
David Ortman, Sierra Club
Laura Osiadacz, Kittitas County Commissioner
Elaine Packard, Sierra Club
Sage Park, Washington State Department of Ecology
Nicole Pasi, American Rivers and the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan
Laila Possam, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association
Joye Redfield-Wilder, Washington State Department of Ecology
Beth Reinhart, Bureau of Reclamation

Tom Ring, Yakama Nation
Charles and Paula Royal, Lake Kachess residents
Leslie Roy, Citizen
Mark Roy, Roy Farms
Jay Schwartz, Lake Kachess resident
Kaitlyn Seguin, Lake Kachess resident
Kerry Seguin, Lake Kachess Homeowners Association resident
Joanne Sheldon, Lake Kachess consultant/resident
Mike Shuttleworth, Yakima Valley Council of Governments
Colleen Smith, Washington State Department of Ecology
Jonathon Smith, Yakima County Development Association
Amy and Roy Sparks, Lake Kachess residents
Danielle Squeochs, Washington State Department of Ecology – Office of Columbia River
Chad Stuart, Bureau of Reclamation – Yakima Field Office
Arden Thomas, Washington Water Trust
Terri Towner, Lake Kachess resident
Duane Unland, Nakaty Enterprises
Ric Valicoff, Roza Boardman
Steve Wake, Bureau of Reclamation
Bret Walters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jerry Watts, Kittitas County Fire District No. 8
Laine Young, Washington State Department of Ecology

Where to Find Workgroup Information

Meeting materials, notes, presentations, and materials submitted during public comment for the Workgroup meetings will be posted on Reclamation’s project website: (<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/index.html>). A list of information sources, many of which are available online, is also posted on the website.

If anyone needs help finding an information source, contact Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology at (509) 575-3989, or Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA Kennewick office at (509) 491-3151 or bfloyd@anchorqea.com.