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Meeting Notes

December 14, 2011

Yakima Arboretum, Yakima WA

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup

Welcome/Introductions and Agenda Overview *by Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA*

Ben Floyd welcomed the Workgroup members and public, led introductions, and provided an overview of the agenda. Ben also reminded the group of the Draft Integrated Plan Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) Public Open Houses taking place later in the day, at 1:30pm and 5:00pm.

Two revisions were made to the October 12, 2011 Workgroup meeting notes. A comment made by Beneitta Eaton was updated in the meeting notes. Scott Revell also identified a spelling error that will be corrected. (*For Workgroup meeting notes and information on all other topics discussed at the December meeting please see <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/meetings/index.html>*).

Status on Early Action Items *by Wendy Christensen, Reclamation and Derek Sandison, Ecology*

Wendy Christensen and Derek Sandison updated the Workgroup on the status of the early actions request approved by the Workgroup at the October meeting. Secretary Salazar was provided the request on November 1. . . A federal budget for 2012 has yet to be passed by Congress, and significant reductions in the range of @ 15% are expected. . Since federal budgets are prepared 3 years in advance, 2014 will be the first chance to request funds specifically for the IWRMP. Reclamation will look for available funds in existing appropriations in the 2012 and 2013 budgets, but amounts will likely not be significant. However, the leadership in Reclamation and Department of the Interior are aware of the request and the broad-based support, and continue to look for potential funding to support early actions. This is a very high priority of both the Commissioner and Secretary and the IWRMP is a topic during budget discussions in D.C. Additional briefings and discussions are planned.

Derek provided a status on the state funding outlook. The expected State share to fund from the early action request is still rough, ranging from approximately \$3 to 6 million. State support for the Integrated Plan remains strong. In addition to the early actions, state funding will be needed for additional planning efforts such as preparing a framework document, which will include additional engineering and economic analysis.



Both Wendy and Derek noted that the Workgroup, the Integrated Plan and the associated draft PEIS are receiving a lot of positive attention. It is important to stick together as group and continue to move the plan forward at the local, state and federal levels.

Watershed Lands Conservation Subcommittee Proposal for Workgroup Action *by Jeff Tayer, WDFW and Andrew Graham, HDR*

Jeff Tayer and Andrew Graham reviewed the Watershed Lands Conservation Subcommittee's process to develop a refined Watershed Lands conservation proposal. This proposal will be used to update the interim description included in the Integrated Plan. Several components are included in the proposal including, protection, management, recreation and maintaining private ownership. A summary table listing proposed actions is included in today's handout materials.

The subcommittee received very few comments from the Workgroup on the draft proposal. Those received were clarifications rather than changes to the proposed actions. The subcommittee worked through these comments in November and made the following updates to the proposal, as reflected in the proposal sent to the Workgroup for the December meeting discussion:

- Land acquisitions would be from willing sellers (land owners).
- Land acquisitions include fee simple purchases and also conservation easements.
- Updated fisheries benefits discussion, particularly regarding bull trout.
- Improved the maps and factual information.

Ben asked each Workgroup member to indicate whether they were ready for the proposal to be included as an update to the Integrated Plan.

Workgroup members responded as follows:

- Mike Shuttleworth (on behalf of Commissioner Jim Beaver) – Benton County is generally in support.
- Paul Jewell – Kittitas County supports the document in its entirety. “Acquisitions from willing sellers” and “maintaining recreation” are key components in the County's support; the County does not support additional wilderness areas because they have already gone on record against that; but they recognize this is a piece of the overall package and they support the overall package.
- Jeff Tayer – WDFW supports the proposal. The Workgroup needs to figure out how to collectively speak in support of all Integrated Plan elements, including the Lands proposal.
- Michael Garrity – Supports, and believes the Lands proposal is key to reaching a balance with the plan (PEIS). The Workgroup will need to continue to work at maintaining balance in advancing the plan; it is the plan elements and the support by the varied interest that makes this plan unique.

- Jim Trull – Supports.
- Sid Morrison – If all counties support, then YBSA supports it.
- Scott Revell – Supports.
- Rick Dieker – There’s been no formal Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District action on this proposal, but the District generally supports.
- Jeff Thomas – Supports.
- Alex Conley – There’s been no formal action by the Yakima Basin Fish & Wildlife Recovery Board on this proposal, but it’s expected the agency supports it.
- Ron Van Gundy – Supports.
- Tom Ring – There’s been no formal action on this by the Yakama Tribal Council; supported at the staff level.
- Mike Leita – Yakima County has some edits to the proposal related to water storage, funding sources and a few other topics. Comments will be provided by noon on December 15 to the consultant team. Yakima County also has taken action through their authority under the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) to protect shrub steppe habitat. County code was cited and a handout provided to the consultant team.
- Bill Lover – The City Council has not taken formal action but he has consulted with City staff and he supports the proposal.
- David Fast – The Yakama Tribal Council hasn’t taken formal action; but we generally support the proposal as an amendment to the Integrated Plan.
- Dawn Wiedmeier – Supports.
- Derek Sandison – Supports.

Workgroup member Dale Bambrick (NMFS) provided comments on the proposal in advance of the meeting via email, and also expressed his support. Andrew Graham shared these comments. Dale has a few updates he would like to see made to the proposal related to factual information on spring and summer Chinook, statements on funding contingency and thinks that the photos on the title page should be deleted to be consistent with other Integrated Plan documents.

Ben summarized the discussion. It appears the overall Workgroup consensus is to update the Integrated Plan to include the Lands proposal. However this is contingent on the comments yet to be provided by Yakima County.

Paul Jewell then briefly updated the Workgroup on Kittitas County’s progress in their own evaluation and analyses of the Lands proposal by a separate Kittitas County advisory committee. In March of this year, Paul expressed Kittitas County’s concern that the proposed lands piece would have negative impacts on the county. In response, Kittitas County formed an advisory committee to further analyze potential impacts. The advisory committee has held three meetings, and identified key issues. Kittitas County is working with a consultant and expects to have initial results in approximately one week.

These results will include a detailed cost/benefit analysis and will hopefully give the County a broad overview and perspective in regard to the draft Lands proposal. The full analysis is projected to be complete by late February or early March 2012. Once available, Paul will share this information with the Workgroup.

Implementation Subcommittee Update *by Derek Sandison, Ecology and Dan Silver, Consultant*

Derek Sandison and Dan Silver updated the Workgroup on the progress being made by the Implementation Subcommittee. The subcommittee is meeting regularly to develop strategies to raise awareness of the Integrated Plan within and outside of the basin. Discussion includes:

- Effectively communicating information about the plan.
- Outreach opportunities in the community and education to raise support and help secure more funding.
- Establishing regional and national support.

The subcommittee is also working to develop a proposal for Congressional authorization language. The subcommittee plans to have a draft proposal for the Workgroup to review soon. A major challenge has been finding language that fits so the plan moves together as one piece (e.g., timing and sequence of projects). The subcommittee will continue these efforts with an increased level of effort expected in the first half of 2012. The subcommittee hopes to report significant progress by next March.

Draft Programmatic EIS Update *by Wendy Christensen, Reclamation and Derek Sandison, Ecology*
Wendy Christensen and Derek Sandison reviewed efforts conducted to prepare and issue the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) on the Integrated Plan. The draft PEIS was released November 16, 2011 with the review period that ends January 3, 2012. A handout was provided to the Workgroup outlining some suggestions on how to provide input during the review process. They reported that an extension of the comment period was requested; however, because the actual number of days for the comment period is 49 days due to holidays, it was determined that 49 days were adequate for a programmatic document.

Public meetings have been held, and two more meetings will be held in Yakima in the afternoon. The public meeting held in Cle Elum on December 5th had approximately 25 attendees. There were no specific questions about the potential Cle Elum 3-foot pool rise from the public; most discussion involved comments on exempt wells. The public meeting in Ellensburg on December 6th only had about 10 attendees. There was a request during one of the meetings for a presentation on the Keechelus-to-Kachess Pipeline in Kittitas County. This presentation will take place Tuesday, December 20th in Ellensburg at the Community Renewable Energy Roundtable. At the public meetings a court reporter will be present to capture oral comments for the record. Wendy made the Workgroup aware of the

several handouts used at these public meetings that might be useful in talking to their respective boards or others. Additional materials are available and can be obtained by contacting Wendy.

A Draft Coordination Act Report (CAR) was developed by United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and WDFW. This report ensures coordination with USFWS occurs in addressing potential effects to endangered species as part of the draft environmental review process. USFWS provided recommendations in the Coordination Act report and Reclamation will provide responses to those recommendations in the FEIS. The CAR is available on the Internet along with the draft PEIS.

Reclamation continues to work with cooperating agencies (US Forest Service and Bonneville Power Administration) on the draft PEIS.

In addition to the PEIS, Reclamation and the State are planning to develop a Framework for Implementation document that will include additional economic and supplemental engineering analyses of the Integrated Plan, including preliminary benefit/cost analyses and preliminary cost allocation. Several individuals on the Workgroup have expressed interest in seeing additional economic information on the plan. Early analyses results should be available by summer 2012.

Next steps in 2012 include responding to comments on the draft PEIS, preparing a final PEIS, developing the Framework for Implementation document, and Implementation Subcommittee activities related to funding and authorization updates. Workgroup meetings planned for 2012 are as follows:

- March 14
- June 13 (could possibly change)
- September 12
- December 12

Meetings will be held at the Yakima Arboretum.

Workgroup Comments

- Sid Morrison – The Yakima Basin Storage Alliance (YBSA) is constantly looking to bring down costs on water transfers. One week ago, the “hammer was brought down” on the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) related to wind storage integration. There’s a chance BPA may be interested in buying into the Yakima Basin. This could maybe change the costs, and we should keep an eye on this.
- Michael Garrity - American Rivers has also been keeping track the BPA situation. BPA’s situation and the Yakima Basin plan are not intrinsically linked.
- David Fast – Would like to hear public comment at these meetings during the public comment time, instead of throughout the meeting as occurred at today’s meeting.

Public Comments

- Bob Hall – Would like the Workgroup to reconsider YBSA’s request to open the Implementation Subcommittee representation to a larger group including private sector representatives.
- Chuck Klarich – When will specific questions be answered? *The PEIS provides some detail but additional detail will be generated as individual projects are pursued as part of project-specific environmental review.*
- Chuck Klarich – In 2004, Congress passed legislation to address water shortage problems. Is this Integrated Plan addressing this water shortage, or is it addressing other interests? Why are we spending so much time trying to implement items already funded? The Integrated Plan is going beyond water, and not addressing water storage enough.
- David Ortman – Made several comments as provided in Attachment A of these notes.

Adjourn

Workgroup Members in Attendance

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board

Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District

John Easterbrooks, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District

David Fast, Yakama Nation – Yakima/Klickitat Fisheries Project

Paul Jewell, Kittitas County

Mike Leita, Yakima County

Bill Lover, City of Yakima

Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

Scott Revell, Kennewick Irrigation District

Tom Ring, Yakama Nation

Derek Sandison, Washington State Department of Ecology

Mike Shuttleworth (on behalf of Commissioner Jim Beaver), Benton County

Jeff Tayer, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jeff Thomas, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Jim Trull, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District

Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District

Dawn Wiedmeier, Bureau of Reclamation

Other Attendees

Gregg Bafundo, Trout Unlimited

Melissa Bates, Aqua Permanente

David Bowen, American Forest Land Co.

Dave Brown, City of Yakima

David Child, Yakima Basin Joint Board
Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation
Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation
Irene Davidson, US Forest Service, Naches Ranger District
Charlie de la Chapelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Warren Dickman, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Spencer Easton, ESA Adolfson
Beneitta Eaton
Ben Floyd, Anchor QEA
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County
Kristi Geris, Anchor QEA
Andrew Graham, HDR Engineering, Inc.
Bob Hall, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance/Yakima Auto Dealers
Justin Harter, Naches-Selah Irrigation District
Ken Hasbrouck, Kittitas Reclamation District
Lynn Holt, Bureau of Reclamation
Joel Hubble, Bureau of Reclamation
Eleanor Hungate
Jerry Kelso, Consultant to Bureau of Reclamation
Chuck Klarich, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
David Lester, Yakima Herald
Barb Lisk, Office of Representative Richard Hastings
Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation
Larry Martin, Velikanje Halvorson
Keith McGowan, Bureau of Reclamation
Candy McKinley, Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
Scott Nicolai, Yakima-Klickitat Fisheries Project
David Ortman, Sierra Club
David Reeploeg, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
Ann Root, ESA Adolfson
Mike Schwisow, Schwisow & Associates
Teresa Scott, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Dan Silver, Independent Consultant
Bob Tuck, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Kate Woods, Office of Representative Doc Hastings

Next Workgroup Meeting

The next meeting will be held March 14, 2012. A meeting notice and agenda will be distributed in advance of the meeting.

Where to Find Workgroup Information

Meeting materials, notes, and presentations from the Workgroup meetings will be posted on the project website (<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/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 or Ben Floyd at Anchor QEA, Richland office, (509) 392-4548, or bfloyd@anchoragea.com.

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Statement of David E. Ortman to the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup –
December 14, 2011

I have the following questions for the Bureau of Reclamation:

- Is it good policy for Reclamation to participate in an October 2011 ceremony in Port Angeles to remove the two Elwha Dams, proclaim a new mission of restoration, and then the next day come to Yakima to push for at least two new days?
- Is it good policy to participate in a 20 member Workgroup with only a single environmental organization at the table?
- Would Reclamation, as a Federal agency, agree to participate in a Workgroup as the only Federal Agency present?
- Could one Federal agency represent and make commitments for all Federal Agencies?
- Do you think that the four irrigation districts or the three Counties would have agreed to participate in a Workgroup with only a single representative per group?
- Is it good public policy to establish Workgroup Subcommittees without public notice of their meetings or to close their meetings to the public?
- Is it good public policy to present an Early Action list of \$20.9 million with not a single dollar listed for water conservation?

The Federal Agencies are the only Workgroup members that are required to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

- Is it good public policy for Reclamation to issue a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DPEIS) that fails to include a range of alternatives, as required by NEPA?
- Is it good public policy under NEPA for Reclamation to have a longer comment period for scoping comments than for comments on the DPEIS and to refuse to extend the comment period as requested by: Endangered Species Coalition, Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, Kittitas Audubon Society, Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society, The Mazamas, The Mountaineers, Seattle Audubon Society, Sierra Club Washington State Chapter, Western Lands Project, Western Watersheds Project, Wild Fish Conservancy?

- Is it good policy under NEPA for Reclamation to announce that it intends to issue the Final PEIS, barely three weeks after the end of the comment period?
- Does this demonstrate to the public that Reclamation is unbiased and will respond to comments seriously on the DPEIS, as required by NEPA?
- Is it good policy under NEPA to hold “public meetings” on the DPEIS during the work day at 1:30-3:30 PM and 5:00-7:00 PM over the dinner hour?
- Is it good public policy to change the Workgroup plan at the last minute and call the Columbia River Pump Exchange with Yakima Storage a “Study” so that an “evaluation” can take place while avoiding being included in the DPEIS?
- Isn't this what NEPA calls segmenting a proposal to avoid a comprehensive analysis?
- Is it good public policy to have the Workgroup Watershed Lands Conservation Subcommittee prepare a proposal dated December 5th, after the PDEIS is released and that is not mentioned in the PDEIS, which would require the establishment of two new National Recreation Areas on the Wenatchee National Forest dedicated to motorized recreation on public land that belongs to all citizens?
- Is it good public policy for the Workgroup to decide that it must lobby for motorized recreation on National Forests as an element to solve irrigation problems in the Yakima River Basin?

Is it good public policy to sit here meeting after meeting and take “Workgroup” actions and only allow Public Comment **after** your decision-making has taken place?