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Meeting Notes

Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup

March 9, 2022
WebEx Virtual Meeting

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Overview

Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Consulting, welcomed the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project (YRBWEP) Workgroup members and other attendees. The following notes summarize the YRBWEP Workgroup presentations and public comments. For more information, please see the full presentations available on the Integrated Plan website: [Yakima Basin Integrated Plan](#).

Executive and Implementation Committee Updates

Tom Tebb, Washington Department of Ecology: The committees are preparing for the next State biennium budget cycle (2023 – 2025). The committees are also developing more detailed project lists for the seven Integrated Plan elements for potential federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding, and are determining what would be appropriate funding state matches for federal opportunities. Tom expressed appreciation to Steve Malloch, American Rivers, and Cynthia Carlstad, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants, for their help in coordinating this effort.

Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation: Reclamation staff will be returning to the office the last week in April. The agency is currently operating on funding through a continuing resolution. As a result of the BIL, several programs are being established in the Bureau and YRBWEP partners will work to identify funding opportunities.

Conservation – Water Management, Goals, and Status

Wendy Christensen recognized Walter Larrick, Yakima Basin Joint Board, and his long term work in the Yakima River basin and role in YRBWEP to and the Yakima Project to help facilitate key program objectives. Wendy also recognized Pat Monk, Reclamation, who facilitates the System Operations Advisory Committee (SOAC). Yakima Project operations have undergone refinement over the years and this presentation will touch on achievements throughout that time. Kevin Haydon, Ecology, is the new YRBWEP liaison between Reclamation and Ecology. He is continuing to coordinate with Yakima Basin irrigation districts, project funders, and other basin partners to provide accounting for on-going water conservation.

Walter Larrick: One of the first major conservation efforts occurred when Reclamation and Ecology purchased the water rights at the Wapatox powerplant of 400 cubic feet per second, which was to be left in the Naches river. This water benefited a 7.4-mile reach. A similar situation occurred with Benton Irrigation District. This important YRBWEP Phase II conservation project increases Yakima River

flows up to 60 cfs in a critical low flow river reach and moves BID's point of diversion downstream 72 miles. Walt emphasized that conservation does not create water but provides opportunities for efficiency and improved management. Conservation has always been foundational to water management plans.

In 1977, the water shortage and associated legal proceedings led to the Yakima River basin adjudication. State Referendum 38 provided funding to irrigation districts to begin significant conservation efforts. A major early project was the pressurizing of the Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District system in the 1980's. YRBWEP Phase II legislation was then passed in 1994 and included a recognition that fish and wildlife benefits were joint purposes of conservation projects. The legislation directed basin irrigators to develop a basin conservation plan and establish the Conservation Advisory Group, which activated a more significant effort. Basin partners also recognize the need for storage to maximize conservation benefits. Reaching the goals of the Integrated Plan will require the ability to store and re-time conserved water for beneficial in and out of stream uses.

Wendy Christensen described several conservation programs that have provided funding in the Yakima Basin for conservation. The Integrated Plan accounting process has added a significant quantity of water to the total volume conserved. The goals of the YRBWEP Phase II program have been achieved but Workgroup partners continue to acquire funds to conserve water per the legislation. It remains a good program and results in diversion reduction agreements with participants, which provides additional water in a good year that is managed for fish flows.

Pat Monk reiterated that a portion of diversion reductions are dedicated to instream flows. As of 2022, the total water committed for instream flow is approximately 49,000 acre-feet. During summer with storage control and when natural flows do not meet diversions and target flows, water can be stored and released throughout the water year, thereby "shaping" the hydrograph. The SOAC advises the Yakima Field Office Manager on river operations that affect aquatic resources including the management of the YRBWEP conserved water. . For example, SOAC recommends flow releases from reservoir based upon the target fish species, life stages, and annual environmental conditions.

The Little Naches River is an undammed watershed representing the natural flow regime. Reclamation can make reservoir releases for pulse flows coincide with natural runoff events. SOAC recommendations help identify when to increase flows in the lower river to aid salmon and steelhead smolt migration to the ocean. Evidence shows that increases in flows are positively correlated to increases in smolt numbers passing a fish trap at Prosser Dam. Monitoring programs are in place to evaluate results and improve pulse flow releases over time. Pulse flow events have used 5,000- to 22,000-acre feet each depending upon conditions and objectives. Water dedicated for pulse flows comes from several sources including YRBWEP Phase II conservation, 2015 Yakima Project Biological Assessment flows, and the future Cle Elum Pool Raise project.

Kevin Haydon updated the Workgroup on the status of the Enhanced Water Conservation element. The Integrated Plan 170,000 acre-feet conservation goal was identified in a 2011 memorandum prepared for the Yakima Basin Study. The requirements of Integrated Plan conservation actions are different than YRBWEP Phase II. As of 2022, accomplishments in the Integrated Plan enhanced water conservation element include:

- 123 projects completed or in progress
- 56,368 acre-feet saved (66% of 2029 goal)
- 23,540 for drought resiliency
- 11,315 conserved on the Wapato Irrigation Project
- 21,513 conserved for instream flow

- \$119 million invested
- Average cost of \$2,100 per acre-foot conserved

Wendy reiterated key takeaways from the presentation and noted that several districts have conservation plans the Integrated Plan can leverage for reach benefits. Walter stated we've learned so much about what conservation can do and what it cannot do; we must store and retime the water for its most effective use.

Questions and comments for Working Drafts of 10- and 3-Year Plans:

Sean Gross, NOAA Fisheries: Sean participates on the SOAC. Sean noted a key difference between YRBWEP Phase II and the Integrated Plan is that conservation is implemented differently. Fish managers have noted the preeminent instream need is water in the lower river (i.e., Roza dam down to the river mouth) during the spring for fish outmigration. YRBWEP Phase II focuses on water in this key area which is why the Workgroup continues to conserve under Phase II. Integrated Plan conservation savings benefit upper basin tributaries, which is why it'll be critical to have storage projects to retime water to more effectively help with fish flows needed in the lower river.

Jeff Tayer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife: Jeff emphasized that conservation provides flexibility to do more things, which requires coordination to accomplish. Tributary supplementation, for example, is a result of flexibility achieved through conservation and our collaborative atmosphere.

Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District: Jim appreciated Walt's comments about YTID's leadership in conservation. Jim recognized major changes in the new system and is excited about the canal replacement project which has opportunity to enhance lower Tieton flows and enhance storage.

General Public Comments

David Ortman: The 1986 Wenatchee National Forest land and resource management plan draft EIS estimated that the preferred alternative would increase water yield in the decades following implementation. David asked the forest service to provide the estimated amount of water yield because of the plan and separately for the Yakima River basin in the forest in 10-year intervals. This would help us understand what's going on in the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest and timing of runoff of increased water yield.

David provided a copy of an article from the Wild Cascades magazine regarding forestry and irrigation. There is a fascinating history of how irrigation districts pioneered the theory that forest vegetation affected their water supply and that retarding rainfall runoff and snowmelt improved conditions for water supply and reduced spring floods. These same irrigators played a major role in establishing national forests and protecting forests from uses such as commercial, timber, and grazing. Fascinating history of how the irrigation community helped protect our lands and a good read for anyone interested in how the forests contribute to the work of the Integrated Plan.

Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake: Chris thanked the Workgroup for responding to questions posed at the June 2, 2021, meeting. Chris submitted additional questions in writing and requested they be included in the meeting summary with responses.

Chris stated Wendy Christensen's comment in a King 5 news story about YRBWEP regarding Bumping Reservoir and opposition to the expansion were inaccurate. Those concerned about the project have concerns beyond recreation including the removal of cabins, inundation of old growth forest and the associated habitats, and no plan to reestablish the Bumping Lake Campground, which is visited by approximately 20,000 visitors a year. Chris asked that project partners not diminish and misrepresent the impacts of the project.

Conservation – Recent Projects

Melissa Downes (Washington Department of Ecology): We just heard about the framework, and this presentation will display specific projects resulting from the initiatives described. These include agricultural and municipal projects.

Urban Eberhart: The conservation KRD does is important on its own and because of its relationship to the other six elements. Conserved water is available for fish, habitats, aquifer recharge, water marketing, and storage. The first Integrated Plan construction project completed was the Manastash Tributary Supplementation piping project, which uses water conserved from KRD's system. Urban showed lined or piped canals and associated savings. Coho have now reached Tucker Creek beyond the canal obstruction for the first time in 100 years. KRD's conservation efforts protect the economy and certainty of water supply for the future of farms and ecosystem of the basin.

Scott Revell (Roza Irrigation District) described projects completed from Roza's conservation plan since 1983. The district pipes 8 – 10 miles of open canal each year. Major conservation savings come from reregulation reservoirs which eliminate operational spills at the distal end of an open canal. Scott anticipated 15 years of projects remain in the plan with \$2.4 million of funding annually. Projects have been broken into smaller phases due to increasing pipe costs, but Roza will continue to pursue the program. Scott noted that projects are not without controversy and disagreements, as illustrated by a recent legal challenge to a Roza conservation project SEPA review.

Dave Brown, City of Yakima, described the municipal component of conservation. The primary purpose in the City has been to change the ethic from large lawns to smaller gardens and wise water use for landscaping. The City has removed grass strips on streets and medians and transitioned to low water or no water landscapes. These new public spaces also require less maintenance. The City received Ecology and WaterSMART grants to install low water use demonstration gardens to display examples of attractive landscaping with low water use. The Municipal Subgroup has helped acquire funding for the Yakima County Heritage Gardens Program where grass yards are replaced with low-water-use gardens through education about low water use plants native to the Yakima valley.

Municipal conservation has a small footprint compared to irrigation districts, but it is the right thing to do. Water rights don't grow with population, so conservation will become more critical as populations increase.

Richard Dills, Yakama Nation, noted that the Wapato Irrigation Project conservation work is planned in the comprehensive water conservation plan and modernization plan. There was very little maintenance on the project over the past 100 years and it now requires a significant effort to modernize the system. Full implementation of the modernization plan is estimated to save 165,000 acre feet of water, which the Tribe will primarily use to meet in-system water needs. Richard displayed a map of high priority project and recognized the several organizations that have provided funding.

Ron Cowin, Sunnyside Division Board of Control (SDBOC), provided an overview of conservation at SDBOC. SDBOC has been enclosing laterals since 2009 and are currently in phase 2D of the process,

which includes a lateral headgate installation and piping 12 miles of a lateral which feeds 1,947 acres. This effort is estimated to save 614 acre feet. The district is just past halfway done with its conservation plan and will move on to the next project as soon as the current phase is complete. Service lines that serve approximately 24,000 acres of land are now enclosed.

Jason McShane, Kennewick Irrigation District, explained that KID is unique in that it serves both urban areas and agricultural production. The district has undertaken significant canal lining and pipeline replacement. KID has also built storage reservoirs and is piloting a recapture well program. Significant conservation efforts gained momentum in the mid-2000s. High Density Polyethylene lining in an unburied state allows for rapid increases and drawdown of stage, allowing for in-line reservoirs. KID anticipates system will be fully lined within 5 or 6 years.

Ben Floyd commented that the projects shown here are just part of the conservation story and that many other districts and municipalities are participating in conservation as well.

2022 Water Supply Forecast

Jeff Marti, Washington Department of Ecology, introduced the water supply update and described the drought declaration established in July 2021. Precipitation has been higher than average in the mountains and lower than average in the eastern Washington plains over winter 2022. Temperatures have been generally slightly above normal statewide, with an amplified effect in the City of Yakima area. Snowpack was at approximately 86% of normal at the time of presentation. In a typical year, approximately 85% of snow-water equivalent accumulation is complete by end of February. The median forecast suggests the mountains will get approximately 92% of normal snow water equivalent by the end of the accumulation season. The forecast for the coming three weeks suggests normal temperatures and above normal precipitation.

Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation, displayed climate and hydrological data for the Yakima River basin and described the trends. Detailed information can be viewed in the associated PowerPoint presentation on the Reclamation website. Key summary points include:

- Precipitation has been fickle
- Snow is below average
- System storage, Mar 1, 786 KAF, 124% of average
- All refill ratios are very good
- Winter flows are set to the high BA range
- Runoff forecasts are mostly in the 95% to 105% range
- March runoff will be high, reducing snowpack
- The low, adopted, and high total water supply available forecasts are 70%, 96%, and 100%, respectively

Questions and comments for the Water Supply Forecast:

What is the period for climate normal?

Jeff Marti: The climate normal period is 1991 – 2020.

Jaclyn Hancock, Washington Department of Agriculture: Is the climate forecast accounted for? Or does this only focus on rivers, reservoirs, and snowpack?

Chris Lynch: They are included. A 10-day forecast is used for a short-term model which then converts to the hydrologic record after that. The El Nino South Oscillation parameters may be used in early forecasts, but not the long-term forecasts.

David Ortman: RCW 90.990.040(3) requires Ecology to submit to the Legislature a Columbia Basin Supply and Demand Forecast every five years. The due date was November 15th and it is now nearly four months overdue. When will the 2021 final Forecast be released for public review? Refill ratio, above two indicates good fill forecast.

Workgroup Roundtable

Sean Gross, NOAA Fisheries (alternate for Justin Yeager, National Marine Fisheries Service): NOAA appreciates these presentations and the huge amount of work over decades from numerous parties.

Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District: This year's water supply so far looks to be ok. Storms are in the short-term forecast and the long-term forecast is reasonably good. There's always concerns about rain that will reduce snowpack early. However, we're in very good shape compared to other places where there are significant issues. Roza turns water on next week.

Ron Cowin, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District: The Sunnyside Boom and Sluice Gate project was finished last fall. Ron is looking forward to the smolt outmigration study that will take place this spring.

Jeff Tayer, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife: The West is under a dramatic long-term drought and climate change is exacerbating that drought. We're lucky for our abundant precipitation in the Cascades and the facilities to put the water to good use. In the runoff graphs displayed, there were several periods during the winter above 10,000 cubic feet per second when neither fish nor irrigators can put that water to as good a use as, for example, in the spring. Jeff is hopeful infrastructure will be constructed to capture these winter flows that would be better put to use in spring and summer.

Peter Dykstra, Chair of Watershed Lands Subcommittee: Peter looks forward to seeing everyone in person in June.

Bill Gale, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: The presentations were great today. It's good to see a large volume of hard work on the ground. USFWS is gearing up for field season but would be happy with more snow and precipitation to delay that. **Jason Romine, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,** thanked the presenters and the effort going into conservation.

Seth Defoe, Kennewick Irrigation District: Seth was disappointed to hear comments from Mr. Revell that distorted the record of the lawsuit between KID and Roza. It was not about conserved water; it was about refusing to disclose the impacts of projects and SEPA. That was clear and upfront, those questions were not answered, and so a lawsuit was pursued. Seth is not sure why this is being brought up, we talk a lot about collaborative governance and it's not productive to distort the record.

Mike Livingston, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife: Mike appreciated the presenters catching the Workgroup up on work happening in the irrigation delivery systems. This is an important component of the Integrated Plan. Mike appreciated seeing snow on the mountains this morning west of town. Mike is looking forward to seeing everyone in person soon.

Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation: The Tribe continues to work towards the goals of the Integrated Plan. We understand the complexities of the issues and it's good to see how much effort goes into these projects. Phil appreciates all the people who dedicate the time and effort to these projects.

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board: It's amazing to see the web of knowledge and records we have built in the Yakima River basin. This history is amazing, both during the Integrated Plan era and before. Alex has been thinking lately about how to build on and maintain that body of knowledge and institutional structures that will last longer than individuals. It's great to see this happening and the progress along the way.

Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District: This has been a good meeting. Thanks all.

Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District: We have a lot of momentum currently. We're setting this system up for a changing hydrograph and no snowpack; let's keep our foot on the gas and allow our success to continue.

Jaclyn Hancock, Washington Department of Agriculture: Jaclyn commended the planning on the agenda and appreciated a deep dive into a single topic.

Dave Brown, City of Yakima: Dave is pleased with conservation progress in the valley. Nelson Dam remains on schedule and on budget.

Tom Tebb, Washington Department of Ecology: Thanks everyone for a full meeting. It's great to review all the projects related to conservation work in the basin. We are hitting some of our strides here and must continue this momentum. Tom is excited about what the year holds for us and hopeful for an in-person meeting in June. He thanked presenters and participants.

Talmadge Oxford, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation: Thanked everyone for the time and effort put into these meetings and the good discussions. Talmadge sees the momentum too and wants to keep it up. Very good to hear about Nelson Dam. Talmadge looks forward to his first in-person workgroup meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

David Ortman noted that public comment opportunities were not provided for each agenda item (i.e., 2022 Water Supply Forecast) as promised in footnote one on the Agenda.

The next Workgroup meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 1, 2022. Meeting format we hope will be in person at the Yakima County Fairgrounds, depending upon in-person meeting restrictions. The deep dive will be into all things lower river.

Attendance

Workgroup Members:

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board

Arden Thomas, Kittitas County (Alternate for Cory Wright)

Bill Gale, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Dave Brown, City of Yakima

Jaclyn Hancock, Washington Department of Agriculture

Jason McShane, Kennewick Irrigation District

Jeff Tayer, WDFW and Chair of Habitat Subcommittee

Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County (alternate for Ron Anderson)
Justin Yeager, National Marine Fisheries Service
Kathryn Furr, U.S. Forest Service
Larry Leach, Washington Department of Natural Resources
Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
Mike Livingston, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Peter Dykstra, Chair of Watershed Lands Conservation Subcommittee
Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
Ron Cowin, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District
Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District and Chair of Water Use Subcommittee
Sid Morrison, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Talmadge Oxford, Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Tom Tebb, Washington Department of Ecology
Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District
Wendy Christensen, Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Wendy McDermott, American Rivers
Will McKay, Benton County

Other Attendees:

Adam Fyall, Benton County
Alan Chapman
Andrew Hart, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Ann Lewis
Anna Lael, Kittitas County Conservation District
Becca Wassell, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group
Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Consulting
Bob Mecklenburg
Bob Montgomery, Anchor QEA
Brady Kent, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Brandon Parsons, American Rivers
Bret Walters
Bruce Sully, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Bryan Myre
Carolyn Chad, Bureau of Reclamation
Casey Ryan
Charlie de la Chappelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance
Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation
Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake
Chris Perra
Chuck Freeman, Kennewick Irrigation District
Chuck Garner, Bureau of Reclamation

Cory Wright
Craig Haskell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Cynthia Carlstad, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
Dan Graves, HDR, Inc.
Danielle Squeochs, Confederated Tribes and Band of the Yakama Nation
Dave Blodgett, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Dave Fisher
David Empel, Bureau of Reclamation
David McKenzie, Kennewick Irrigation District
David Ortman
Debbie Carlson, BPA
Dennis Sandstrom, HDR, Inc.
Devin Stoker, Jacobs Engineering
Doug White
Ed Lisowski
Elaine Packard
Erin Eaton, Trout Unlimited
Ethan Lockwood, WWT
Georgine Yorgey, Washington State University
Glenn Grette, Grette Associates
James Kraft, Washington Water Trust
Janine Empel, Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Jason Romine, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Jean Mendoza
Jeanne Demorest, Bureau of Reclamation
Jeanne Sheldon
Jeff Marti, Ecology
Jenna Scholz, HDR, Inc.
Jim Carroll, Washington Department of Ecology
Jim Milton, Yakima Tieton Irrigation District
Joe Rausch, U.S. Forest Service
Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County
Joel Hubble, Kittitas Reclamation District
John Marvin, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
John Reeves
Joye Redfield-Wilder, Washington State Department of Ecology
Justin Bezold, Trout Unlimited
Kelli Scott, Office of Representative Kim Schrier
Kerri Matthews, Bureau of Reclamation
Kevin Eslinger
Kevin Haydon, Washington Department of Ecology

Laine Young, Washington Department of Ecology
Larry Martin, Velikanje Halvorson
Larry Mattson
Leah Meeks, Bureau of Reclamation
Lori Brady, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District
Mark Peterschmidt, Washington Department of Ecology
Matt Young, American Rivers
Melissa Downes, Washington State Department of Ecology
Michael Callahan, Washington State Department of Ecology
Michael Humling, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mike Schwisow
Mitch Long, Kittitas Conservation Trust
Pam Druliner, Bureau of Reclamation
Pat Monk, Bureau of Reclamation
Paul Jewell
Perry Harvester
Raelene Gold
Richard Dills, Yakama Nation
Richard Visser, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office
Rick Evans, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell
Robert Montgomery
Ron Anderson
Ron Fehringer, Jacobs Engineering
Russ Byington, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Ryan Roberts, Bureau of Reclamation
Sage Park, Washington Department of Ecology
Samantha Cox, Kittitas County
Sara Vickers, Kittitas Reclamation District
Sean Gross, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries
Seth Defoe, Kennewick Irrigation District
Sonja Kokos, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Steve Malloch, Western Water Futures LLC (alternate for American Rivers)
Stuart Crane
Tabitha Espinoza
Taryn Bushey
Tim Poppleton, Washington State Department of Ecology
Todd Hunziker, Jacobs Engineering
Tom Elliott, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Tom McDowell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Tom Ring
Walt Larrick, Yakima Basin Joint Board

Where to Find Workgroup Information

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

If you need help finding an information source, contact those listed at the top of page 1 of these notes or Ben Floyd at White Bluffs Consulting, (509) 539-3366 or ben@whitebluffsconsulting.com.



March 9, 2022

RE: Follow-up Water Conservation Comments and questions from the June 2, 2021, Yakima Workgroup meeting

Thank you for providing responses to our questions submitted as part of the June 2, 2021, Yakima Workgroup meeting on Yakima River Basin water conservation.

Please include these follow-up comments in the Yakima Workgroup meeting minutes for March 9, 2022, and provide a response to the following questions. Thank you.

1. In reply to question one, submitted June 2, 2021, concerning the total current acre-feet of water savings that has been achieved as a result of the 1994 Basin Conservation Program over the past 26 years, the response was “343,194 acre-feet (AF) of water savings has been achieved as a result of the 1994 Basin Conservation Program.”

This response failed to disclose that this amount includes 260,000 acre-feet of purchased Wapatox Power Plant water rights. *Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Phase III Enhanced Water Conservation Element Framework Technical Memorandum*, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (April 2021, page 2).

Question A: The 1994 YRBWEP Phase II set water conservation targets to realize sufficient water savings from the Yakima River Basin Water Conservation Program. This was understood to be water savings from irrigation districts. Which Yakima River Basin water conservation plan included the purchase of Wapatox Power Plant water rights?

Question B: To what use have the Wapatox Power Plant water rights been put?

Question C: How has the Yakima Workgroup accounted for the fact that 260,000 acre-feet of purchased Wapatox Power Plant water rights exceeds the acre-feet sought from a new Bumping Dam, a Wymer Dam, or a Lake Kachess pumping plant project?

2. The YBIP Project Activity Update – February 2022 states:

Upon passage of the Dingell Act in March 2019, the Reclamation, Ecology, Yakama Nation and YRBWEP Workgroup Partners have a goal to conserve 85,000 acre-feet of water by 2029. The overall conservation savings goal upon full Integrated Plan implementation is 170,000 acre-feet. Reclamation and Ecology are conducting an inventory of water conservation accomplishments

associated with the Integrated Plan. Projects that count towards this goal must adhere to three parameters:

- Begin in 2013 or later¹
- Be an agricultural or municipal improvement project resulting in conserved water, and
- Not be part of the Title XII, Section 1203 Basin Conservation Plan

To date, there have been 123 conservation projects implemented. Approximately \$119 million invested has resulted in approximately 56,000 acre-feet conserved (\$2,100 per acre-foot).

Question D: Why does the Workgroup count 56,000 acre-feet of water conservation since 2013, when the Dingell Act clearly required 85,000 acre feet of water savings to be implemented during the initial development phase of the Plan, which is defined in Sec. 8201(b)(1) as “projects under the Yakima Plan that are prepared to be commenced during the 10-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act” (i.e., March 12, 2019). Why is the Workgroup back counting projects prior to 2019?

3. As shown above, the Workgroup has a total Yakima Plan Water Conservation goal of 170,00 acre-feet. However, in December 2007, Ecology issued a *Technical Report on the Enhanced Water Conservation Alternative for the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study*, No. 07-11-044. While the report did not identify any past irrigation district water conservation measures that have been implement, the report estimated the total water savings in the Yakima River basin for all water conservation projects listed in the report to be **229,199 acre-feet** per year.

Question E: Why did the Workgroup drastically reduce its water conservation goal from the 229,199 acre-feet it estimated in 2007?

Chris Maykut, President
Friends of Bumping Lake
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(206)818-9778

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” --Margaret Mead

www.friendsofbumpinglake.org

¹ 2013 was the year that Washington State authorized the Integrated Plan.

Responses to questions from Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake, provide on March 9, 2022.

Question A: *The 1994 YRBWEP Phase II set water conservation targets to realize sufficient water savings from the Yakima River Basin Water Conservation Program. This was understood to be water savings from irrigation districts. Which Yakima River Basin water conservation plan included the purchase of Wapatox Power Plant water rights?*

The 1994 YRBWEP Act included a broad definition of conservation measures that went beyond water savings from irrigation districts to include the purchase of water rights among other actions. The 1999 Basin Conservation Plan for the Yakima River Basin Water Conservation Program identified the 7.4-mile reach between the Wapatox Diversion Dam and the Pacific Power and Light Company power plant discharge point as an area of seasonally very low flows due to water diversion for hydropower generation. This area of unnaturally low instream flows due to water diversions for hydropower had been identified as an important reach of the Naches River for spawning and rearing of ESA listed threatened Mid-Columbia steelhead and impeded salmonid passage in the Naches River and reduced available habitat. The 1999 BCP identified water acquisition as one of the conservation measures available to improve instream flows in priority reaches.

Question B: *To what use have the Wapatox Power Plant water rights been put?*

The Wapatox Power Plant water rights have been beneficially used for the purpose of instream flow since their acquisition by the Bureau of Reclamation in March of 2003 with the exception of a small portion (~30 cfs) which are diverted and non-consumptively used to deliver irrigation water to the Wapatox Ditch Company and other irrigators. The water diverted to meet this Court ordered conveyance obligation is returned to the Naches River at the former Wapatox Powerhouse outfall point. The portion used for year-round instream flow augmentation benefits the targeted 7.4-mile reach that was identified as flow limited in the 1994 Basin Conservation Plan for the Yakima River Basin Water Conservation Program and benefits the Naches River sub-population of the Yakima Basin steelhead population. The 7.4 miles is considered a valuable flood plain reach that has significant benefits for the fishery resources of the Yakima River Basin. As other infrastructure projects are completed, such as the Nelson Dam removal project, the Wapatox Power Plant water becomes increasingly more beneficial for the fishery resources of the Yakima River Basin.

Question C: *How has the Yakima Workgroup accounted for the fact that 260,000 acre-feet of purchased Wapatox Power Plant water rights exceeds the acre-feet sought from a new Bumping Dam, a Wymer Dam, or a Lake Kachess pumping plant project?*

The Wapatox Power Plant water rights were for the purpose of hydropower generation, which is a non-consumptive use. Water was not stored or released from storage to meet Wapatox demands. Prior to acquisition by the Bureau of Reclamation, up to 350 cfs was diverted from the Naches River at the Wapatox Diversion Dam and returned to the Naches River 7.4 miles downstream at the Pacific Power and Light Company power plant. Water was diverted for hydropower production on a year-round basis. The 261,000 acre-feet of waters materially different from the stored water achieved by the proposals

being considered in the Integrated Plan. The benefits of the Wapatox Power Plant water are the 7.4 mile reach of the Naches River.

Question D: *Why does the workgroup count 56,000 acre-feet of water conservation since 2013, when the Dingell Act Clearly required 85,000 acre-feet of water savings to be implemented during the initial development phase of the Plan, which is defined in Sec. 8201(b)(1) as “projects under the Yakima Plan that are prepared to be commenced during the 10-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act” (i.e., March 12, 2019). Why is the Workgroup back counting projects prior to 2019?*

The Integrated Plan is a collaborative approach to improve water supplies and watershed health in the Yakima Basin. This effort includes state and federal agencies, Yakama Nation, farmers, irrigation districts, cities, counties, and environmental interest groups. The Washington State Department of Ecology and the Bureau of Reclamation serve as co-leads for implementation of the Integrated Plan. Legislation authorizing the development of the Integrated Plan at the state level passed in 2013 (RCW 90.38.060). While the Dingell Act authorizing the Bureau of Reclamation’s participation was not passed until March of 2019, the Workgroup is accounting for the conservation efforts of the Integrated Plan as a whole, which began after authorization on the state level.

Question E: *Why did the Workgroup drastically reduce its water conservation goal from the 229,199 acre-feet it estimated in 2007?*

The 229,199 acre-feet of potential agricultural water conservation identified in the Technical Report on the Enhanced Water Conservation Alternative for the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study (Ecology 2007) represents the total estimated water conservation if all reported projects were to occur in the basin. The Yakima River Basin Study Agricultural Water Conservation Technical Memorandum (USBR/Ecology 2011) explains that the 170,000 acre-feet of conservation included in the Enhanced Water Conservation Element reflect the recommended projects. Projects not recommended for inclusion in the Enhanced Water Conservation element were removed from the list due to high costs or instream benefits to low priority reaches.