Contact: Wendy Christensen, 509-573-8050 **Tom Tebb, 509-575-3989**

Agenda
Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup Meeting

Yakima Valley College Conference Center, 1704 W Nob Hill Blvd., Yakima
March 8, 2023; 9:30 to 12:30 PM

Join meeting

To join from a mobile device +1-408-418-9388,,24992042063##

9:30 – 9:40	Welcome/Introductions and Agenda Overview/Public Comment[1] *Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Consulting*
9:40 – 10:00	YBIP Executive and Implementation Committee Updates *Wendy Christensen, Reclamation and Tom Tebb, Ecology*
10:00 – 11:15	Lower Yakima River Focus, Part 2 – Flow and Supply *Jason McShane, Kennewick Irrigation District; Tom Tebb, Ecology; Kevin Haydon, Ecology; Danielle Squeochs, Yakama Nation and Wendy Christensen, Reclamation*
11:15 – 11:25	***Break***
11:25 – 11:35	Public Comment
11:35 – 12:00	2023 Water Supply Forecast *Jeff Marti, Ecology and Chris Lynch, Reclamation*
12:00 – 12:10	Past Reflection – 1984 Fish Screen Celebration *Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District*
12:10 – 12:30	Roundtable Discussion – Workgroup Members *Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Consulting*

12:30 – Adjourn

2023 YRBWEP Workgroup Meetings –June 14, September 11, December 13

For additional information, see the reports and documents available at this link:
http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/index.html

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[1] [1] Public comment opportunities will be provided for each agenda item except for Welcome/Introductions, Workgroup Roundtable Discussion and the Public Comment agenda items. Those wanting to provide public comment during the designated agenda item need to message HDR meeting host using the meeting chat function. Each commenter will be limited to 2 – 3 minutes for comments (depending upon number of commenters) to maintain meeting schedule. Additional written material can be submitted with comments for inclusion in the meeting notes. Previously provided comments are noted and not necessary to repeat.

Contact: **Wendy Christensen, Columbia-Cascades Area Office, (509) 573-8050**
Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology, (509) 574-3989

Meeting Notes
Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Workgroup
March 8, 2023

In-person and 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 both virtually and in person.

- Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), introduced Richard Visser (Reclamation) as the acting Assistant YRBWEP Manager for the next 120 days. She also welcomed a team of engineers from Reclamation's Technical Services Center (TSC) in Denver. The engineers are in Yakima to conduct site visits for additional storage options in the mid-to-lower Yakima River Basin. Chad Stuart (Reclamation) introduced Chris Duke as the new Columbia-Cascades Area Office Manager. Chris starts March 27, 2023, in Yakima and will attend the June Workgroup meeting. Dave Blodgett (The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation)) introduced himself as the interim program manager for Yakama Nation Fisheries. Ben acknowledged Commissioner Amanda McKinney (District 1, Yakima County), who replaced Commissioner Ron Anderson on the workgroup and Mike Shane who replaced Dave Brown for City of Yakima on the workgroup.

The following notes summarize the YRBWEP Workgroup presentations and public comments. For more information, please see the full presentations available on the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (YBIP) website: Yakima Basin Integrated Plan.

Executive and Implementation Committee Updates

Wendy Christensen, Reclamation: Wendy reported on the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) federal budget. She noted that the budget currently exceeds $50 million for all the projects they work on. Reclamation received another $10.5 million for additional capability, so the FY23 budget is estimated at $61 million. Notable project funds include:

- $5 million – Cle Elum Fish Passage
- $2.25 million – Toppenish Creek Corridor Enhancement Project
- $1 million – Wapato Irrigation Project
- $2.5 million – Kittitas Reclamation District Conservation

Note: Reclamation also received $5 million for Cle Elum Pool Raise via the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), equaling approximately $66 million for the overall Fiscal Year 23 YRBWEP Budget.

Wendy and other Workgroup members participated in outreach to leadership at Kittitas County by giving a presentation to the group last month.

Tom Tebb, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology): Tom and others on the Workgroup gave a presentation to the Whatcom County business and commerce community. The Nooksack Tribe is contemplating undergoing a surface water right adjudication with the State, so there is interest in how that will impact the environment, agriculture, and the community. The Nooksack Tribe references Yakama Nation's efforts with Ecology to understand lessons learned from that process.

Ecology is working to support the governor's budget for the YBIP. Ecology has identified $42 million in YBIP funds for the next biennium cycle (FY2023–FY2025) in the governor's budget, comparable to the last biennium cycle (FY2021–FY2023). Ecology continues to work with federal partners on FY2024 funding and looks forward to seeing the president's budget later this month. Tom noted that they are making good progress working with partners on the BIL. YBIP funding partners are looking for grant opportunities to provide match funding from current funding from the state and other agencies to leverage federal funds for various integrated plan projects. Over the last year, Ecology has been participating in the updated water storage management strategy based on Reclamation's RiverWare flow modeling process. This effort will help inform Ecology's water storage strategy for the next 10 years.

The Wymer property purchase is on hold because the landowner is unwilling to sell. Ecology hopes to reengage at a later time.

Yakima Basin Integrated Plan – Lower Yakima River Focus (Water Supply and Flow)

Tom Tebb introduced the speakers for the second half of the Lower Yakima River presentations, a continuation of presentations given in December 2022 about the Lower Yakima River. The speakers included:

- Tom Tebb, Ecology
- Danielle Squeochs, Yakama Nation
- Jason McShane, Kennewick Irrigation District
- Kevin Haydon, Ecology
- Wendy Christensen, Reclamation

Tom Tebb started the presentation with some background history about the YBIP. In 1979, Congress directed the Bureau of Reclamation to conduct a feasibility study of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project. In the 1980s, YRBWEP Phase I was passed by Congress (1984 Hoover Power Plant Act). This authorized preliminary improvements to the Yakima River for fish passage and created a partnership between the state and federal governments.

Congress passed YRBWEP Phase II legislation in 1994, providing additional flows through water conservation measures. This would be achieved through partnerships with irrigation districts to improve water supply and delivery options and, in exchange, a diversion reduction at the Yakima River.

In 1998, Ecology’s efforts included water quality improvements and total maximum daily load at Sunnyside Valley and Roza irrigation districts. Both districts took significant steps toward improving sediment transport. Partners with the Benton County Conservation District have been working on a lower Yakima River assessment to understand the main actions for salmon recovery.

In 2015, the Lower River Subgroup was formed to develop a comprehensive Lower Yakima River strategy. From 2017 to 2022, the subgroup focused on action plans and strategies to address water supply options, flow enhancement, and cold water refugia.

Some of the supply objectives included:

- Surface water and groundwater projects to support water supply and flow needs and increase drought resiliency.
- Managing conserved water for water supply and flow needs to help irrigation partners have a more resilient system that they can manage during drought seasons.

Danielle noted that several issues in the Yakima River have been studied over the last 40 years. She spoke about the flow objectives for the Yakima Basin:

- Every year there is a low-flow or high-temperature condition in the Lower Yakima River.
- At critical times of the year, the river needs improved instream flows beyond the established minimum flow requirements. Higher flows are needed from March through June to improve juvenile fish survival. Flow pulses could augment adult Sockeye Salmon and summer Chinook Salmon return conditions.
- Improve instream flow conditions/reduce predation opportunities and conditions to improve juvenile survival.
- Cottonwood regeneration.
- Support channel-forming conditions.

Danielle and Jason discussed the lower basin's hydrology. A graph was shown that illustrated the hydrology of the Lower Yakima River at Parker Dam over 1 year. Spring smolt outmigration occurs between April and June. Water storage from Reclamation adds to those pulse flows to help fish move through the system. Jason McShane noted that the April to June window is also the peak storage window for the river.

The lower river mainstem has a much different corridor structure than the upper tributaries. The lower river has a wide variation of flows throughout the year. Spring flows are high, and summer flows are low during drought conditions. The magnitude of and change in river flow events provide some opportunities for collecting large amounts of water for storage. When winter events occur, there could be more ways to store this water, given that the available volume of water each year could vary.

Kevin Haydon went over key takeaways regarding water conservation at the lower river. Conservation and modernization provide additional flexibility by allowing us to retime our existing water portfolio. However, these tools do not create additional water. These tools are the foundation for the Yakima Basin's drought strategy and are achieved through increasing efficiencies within the existing irrigation systems. Conservation projects can reduce flows and associated water supplies in the lower river. However, storing this conserved water provides opportunities for flows at crucial times to assist with fish survival.

Kevin went over key water conservation goals for the program. In 1994, Congress passed significant legislation related to YRBWEP, specifically Section 1203, which authorized establishment of the basin conservation program (BCP) and development of a basin conservation plan:

- Goal: 165,000 acre-feet of conserved water.
- Cost Share: Reclamation: 65%; State: 17.5%; Participating districts:17.5%.
    - Participating districts would retain one-third of the conserved water (in years of 70% supply or worse) and two-thirds of the conserved water is available for instream flows (in years of 70% or better supply).
- Conserved Water Total: 70,000 acre-feet (shapeable water).

In 2022, there were approximately 49,000 acre-feet of water for instream flows from the BCP. The shapable conservation water varies from year to year. In the 2022 water year, over 19,000 acre-feet of conserved water was available for pulse flows or other purposes (storable water).

The Systems Operations Advisory Committee (SOAC) advises on the best use of conserved water. SOAC includes representatives from the Yakama Nation, the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, irrigation districts, and the Federal Fisheries Service. The committee meets at least once per month during the irrigation season to recommend to the Yakima Field Office Manager when to best use the water instream.

The 2022 Yakima Basin Conservation Water Numbers are as follows:

- A total of 19,154 acre-feet of storable water was collected from July 8 to September 30.
- There was 3,831 acre-feet of storable water from October 1 to 17.
- Total balance: 22,984 acre-feet of conservation water.
- A total of 9,415 acre-feet of storable water was used July 8–14 to support a lower river temperature study.
- Water Year 2022: Left with a remaining balance of 13,569 acre-feet of storable water.
- Due to shallow flows in the upper tributaries last year, 4,812 acre-feet of conserved water was used after October 17.
- The carryover balance was 8,757 acre-feet of water that can be used in 2023.

Kevin went over a static snapshot of the Yakima Basin minimum flow targets from September for the 2022 water year. These flows were established from the 1994 Title XII legislation. These numbers are base minimum regulatory flows. Kevin asked the group to focus on the target flows for the Yakima River at Parker Prosser Creek dams. These figures include the Title XII minimum flow targets and added waters that Ecology manages, the Trust Water Right Program, and unallocated water bank balances.

The target flow for the Yakima River at Parker Dam is 455 cubic feet per second. The target flow for the Yakima River at Prosser Creek Dam is 501 cubic feet per second. Other locations (Keechelus, Easton, Cle Elum, Tieton River, Rimrock, and Bumping) include wintertime minimum target flows. Other figures on the slide pertain to power subordination flows at Roza and Prosser dams. Although 2022 was a relatively healthy water year, more flows are needed to meet the fishery resource needs.

> C: Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District, mentioned that these flows are much better than what occurred before the YRBWEP legislation was passed; there have been improvements over the last 40 years.
>
> C: Danielle explained that at one point, Parker Dam had no water. We are now in a better place with flows coming through that area, but we still have more work.

Kevin reviewed the Enhanced Water Conservation Element of the YBIP, which was supported by state legislation in 2013 (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 90.38) and federal legislation in 2019 (Dingel Act). Under this element, the plan set a goal of conserving a total of 170,000 acre-feet of water throughout its implementation. The initial development phase (IDP) goal for 2013–2029 is 85,000 acre-feet of conserved water. To date, the plan has reached 70% of the IDP goal.

While some of these conservation projects reduce flows in the lower river, they also provide opportunities for additional operational flexibility with storage and water management to address in-stream and out-of-stream needs in the future.

Wendy Christensen discussed opportunities to further improve the Lower Yakima River flows, including the potential for additional storage and conservation efforts. Reclamation's Technical Service Center engineers from Denver will be conducting a Value Planning study later this month and are here to look at potential storage sites in the mid- to lower-basin. It is possible that some projects would be managed for instream flows for fish. Opportunistically, we would take water from the river when the river flows are high enough, particularly in winter.

Water supply reliability is based on many elements from the YBIP (conservation, surface water storage, groundwater storage, water marketing). Wendy highlighted several projects to address this issue and other innovative ways to store water:

- Conservation: System level conservation - 70% of Initial Development Phase goal of 85,000 acre-feet.
- Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant - Existing Reservoir: Access up to 200,000 acre-feet from inactive storage pool in dry years.
- Springwood: New off-channel reservoir, 68,000–20,000 acre-feet.
- Bumping Dam and Reservoir Enlargement: Replace existing dam to add 165,000 acre-feet.
- Wymer Dam and Reservoir: New off-channel reservoir, 163,000 acre-feet (on hold).
- North Fork Cowiche Creek Reservoir: New off-channel reservoir 30,000 to 35,000 acre-feet.
- Groundwater storage/aquifer replenishment.
- Water marketing.

Wendy noted several projects that aim to support instream flows:

- Cle Elum Pool Raise
- Upper Yakima River Storage
- Water Marketing/Acquisition
- North Flow Cowiche - Yakima Tieton Irrigation District
- Water Conservation
- Middle/Lower Yakima System Storage

Danielle then shared some solutions the Groundwater Storage Subcommittee identified for groundwater replenishment in the Yakima Basin. These projects provide opportunities to retime water and use it more efficiently for instream flow. Two actively managed aquifer recharge projects include the City of Yakima Aquifer Storage and Recovery Program and the Toppenish Fan Shallow Aquifer Recharge Project. Future projects in the mid- to lower basin include work at the City of Prosser, Badger Canyon, Rattlesnake Ridge, and with the Yakama Nation's Groundwater Replenishment Program.

Jason discussed some of the storage element considerations:

- Watershed production above diversion points in the river.
- Type and frequency of weather events (e.g., precipitation, drought).

- Diversion sizes within irrigation districts.
- Size of available storage opportunities and where they're located.
- Water supply and flow needs that can be served by storage.
- Other contributing factors.

Jason then shared a case study related to lower basin storage opportunities. The site is located at Canterbury Plain on the South Island of New Zealand. The area gets fairly good rainfall (approximately 25+ inches per year) and is supplemented with augmented irrigation facilities. The rainfall is inconsistent, so irrigation is critical during summer months as they grow higher-value crops. Rain events are heavy and happen in the upper watershed but quickly flow out to the ocean. The terrain is a fairly steep plain from the mountains to the ocean.

On the Rangitata River, the river channels have a large carrying capacity. Along the river, there are several storage facilities. Jason pointed out Carew Ponds (400 acres), a storage facility that was constructed with the intent to capture enough water to meet irrigation needs during low river flows.

At the end of the presentation, Jason summarized some of the key takeaways:

- Flow and water supply challenges exist in the Lower Yakima River.
- We need to figure out how conservation and storage can help solve these problems.
- The upper and lower basins are connected and require an "integrated approach" to achieve management goals.
- Solutions can be developed through partnerships and collaboration.

  Q: Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board, thanked the presenters for the information. He noted that we must be careful to scale our expectations appropriately as we talk about storage; we need to be sure that when we're taking water for storage, there's a clear benefit for fish and we balance those tradeoffs. What are we doing to identify those tradeoffs for flow availability?

  A: Danielle said that the volumes of storable water shown in the presentation were based on existing skimming flows used in the modeling process. Science is evolving, and we must recognize the complexities involved as we conduct more studies. As we move forward, we must be aware that we're still developing the science to combine those modeling numbers. Jason said there will be times when we can't catch the water and when we need more water than we already have. These flows must be looked at year-to-year, especially as science progresses. Storage opportunities down the river allow for additional flexibility.

  Q: Charlie de la Chapelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance, noted that without restoring biological functionality within the riparian zone, we can't expect salmon to recover. He asked if we expect the storage to occur within the water year or between water years.

  A: Jason said that we're going to try to store water all the time, whenever it's available.

  Q: Rick Dieker said there are limitations to taking water. We must look at everything and understand the priorities, including when we can reallocate water from one storage area to another during certain times of the year. How do we balance that?

  A: Danielle said that our information must be based on the best available science. We continue having complex conversations with key experts to understand the best water use. Climate change is also a significant factor in these conversations. Jason said that one challenge is understanding

who uses the water. Storage farther down the river can be a benefit to the entire basin. We have to look everywhere for water storage.

Q: Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake, asked, "Why is the group pursuing these projects if they are spending billions of dollars and not seeing a financial return?"

A: Wendy said that we are still trying to figure out how storage projects can be added to other elements in the Integrated Plan. The Framework for Implementation and Four Account Analysis performed the same time as the programmatic EIS for the integrated plan showed positive results. Jason said that irrigation entities need storage for communities. Danielle said storage will continue to be needed for fish. Jason said we must look at the entire river as a whole.

Q: Chris Maykut asked if the cost-benefit ratio was based on fish returns. Does Reclamation still stand by those numbers and believe that those amounts of salmon will return to the river?

A: Wendy said that that study was from 2013. Reclamation is looking at updating that economic analysis. She anticipates significant fish returns with projects like Cle Elum Fish Passage. Danielle added that failure is not an option. The Yakama Nation has never given up. Joe Blodgett, Yakama Nation, noted that there are some things you can't put a price on, especially concerning culture, first foods, and religion. We've made progress but have a long way to go. Jeff Tayer, Ecology, mentioned that the lower river challenges are a big problem, but that a lot of work, in the long run, will help with fish production. Jason says that this is one example in the upper watershed. We have to look at the basin comprehensively.

Q: Ilene Le Vee asked, how is Israel's humidity/rain-snow water percentage compared to the Yakima Basin's?

A: Jason responded that Israel has some drier places that are hotter than any part of the Pacific Northwest. The team is looking at other opportunities like groundwater storage and isn't limited to just surface water storage.

Q: Jay Schwartz asked for the study that shows that the 'Programmatic' return was positive.

A: Please see response to Chris Maykut above.

General Public Comments

John Reeves (Lake Kachess property owner): John noted that Lake Kachess gets 213,000 acre-feet on average per year and has stored 239,000 acre-feet, making it the only storage in the basin that can capture more than what they get each year. He supports most of the working being done on the YBIP. There are three bull trout populations in Kittitas County, and two of those populations are in Lake Kachess.

Ann Lewis: Ann appreciated today's presentations, especially noting that the group is looking at multiple options. She is interested in the current status of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) Consultation for the Yakima Basin. Can the public provide comments once it's published?

A: Chad Stuart, Reclamation, noted that the ESA consultation is still in progress with the appropriate agencies. He's not aware of the public comment process for the consultation.

David Ortman (taken from his written statement, which was read during the meeting):

As of March 6, 2023, neither the Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec) Yakima website: CPN Region YRBWEP Integrated Plan | Bureau of Reclamation (usbr.gov) nor the Ecology Yakima website: Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Workgroup - Washington State Department of Ecology contains

any information on the date or agenda for the Yakima Workgroup's March 8, 2023, meeting. Ecology contains to request tens of millions of dollars for the Yakima Plan, but cannot provide even the most basic information on the Yakima Workgroup upcoming meetings on its website. What is the explanation for this?

Concerning public comment, why on past agendas is the Yakima Workgroup "break" (15 minutes) a third longer than the agenda for public comment (10 minutes)? Concerning the March 8, 2023, Yakima Workgroup agenda, why is the Workgroup meeting "break" scheduled for 11:15 to 11:30, while the public comment period is scheduled for 11:15 to 11:25?

Response: Thank you for your comment. Comment noted.

United States Department of the Interior (usbr.gov): Why do BuRec and Ecology persist in listing Peter Dykstra, an attorney with Plauché and Carr, as a Yakima Workgroup Member as shown in the September 14, 2022, Meeting Notes? Have any of the Workgroup members retained and paid Mr. Dykstra or Plauché and Carr for any Yakima Plan related work? If so, does this represent a conflict of interest? Will the September 14, 2022, Workgroup Meeting notes be corrected?

Response: Thank you for your comment. Comment noted. Please see our response in the December 2021 meeting summary.

In the past, Office of Columbia River (OCR) Director Tom Tebb made multiple requests of the OCR Policy Advisory Group and members to lobby the Washington State Legislature on behalf of Ecology's OCR budget. Fortunately, then OCR Policy Advisory Group member Mike Lieta objected, noting that the Policy Advisory Group was established to provide "advice" and not lobbying. A similar matter has arisen concerning Ecology's Chehalis Basin Board. During the January 12, 2023, WA Senate Ways and Means Committee Hearing on the Governor's 2023-2024 Capital Budget request bill, Jay Gordon, Chehalis Basin Board Member, testified in favor of funding for levies in Grays Harbor, which are proposed Chehalis Basin projects. Based on the Chehalis Board Legislative authorization, it does not appear that the Chehalis Basin Board or its members are allowed to lobby the Washington State Legislature for funding (RCW 43.21A.731). This has been a problem in the past when members of various Ecology workgroups set up to provide input to Ecology are then encouraged by the Department of Ecology to lobby the legislature for Ecology programs or projects, including those that would directly financially benefit workgroup members. In the case of the Chehalis Basin Board, the Attorney General's 2 Office prepared guidance for the Chehalis Basin Board regarding lobbying activities. Notwithstanding the fact that the Legislature never authorized the Yakima Workgroup (or the Office of Columbia River, for that matter), what policies has Ecology put in place to advise Yakima Workgroup members on allowable lobbying activities, prohibited activities, and reporting requirements?

At the last Yakima Workgroup Meeting (December 14, 2022), Steve Malloch (alternate for American Rivers) remarked on the national attention of the Yakima Plan that appeared in a September 5, 2022, front-page story in the *New York Times* and was reprinted in the *Seattle Times*, which was followed by an op-ed by Scott Revell and Phil Rigdon, also in the *Seattle Times* (September 19, 2022). This media coverage failed to disclose that the Yakima Plan was not a product of this workgroup. Rather the Department of Ecology assembled all seven elements of the current Yakima Plan before the first meeting of this Workgroup was ever held. Therefore, it would be helpful to review the following timeline, documenting Ecology's development of the Yakima Plan prior to the establishment of the Yakima Workgroup:

- January 2008 – BuRec and Department of Ecology release the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study Draft Planning Report – NEPA-SEPA DEIS.
- December 2008 – BuRec releases its Final Planning Report/Environmental Impact Statement, Volume 1, Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study, Yakima Project Washington. This report/EIS found that massive new irrigation dams proposed for the Yakima River Basin, including Black Rock and Wymer, did not have a positive benefit-cost ratio under federal water project funding principles and standards. Other projects such as the Bumping Lake Enlargement, which would flood old-growth habitat adjacent to the William O. Douglas Wilderness Area, have too many problems to even include in the BuRec's study.
- December 10, 2008 – Department of Ecology releases a Supplemental Draft EIS to include a broader range of alternatives.
- June 2009 – Department of Ecology releases a Final SEPA EIS Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Alternative (Ecology Publication #09-11-012) https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/0912009.pdf

  Derek Sandison, Ecology, Office of Columbia River: "In April 2009, Reclamation announced that it had completed the Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study and concluded that none of the action alternatives evaluated met federal criteria for an economically and environmentally sound water project [i.e. Bumping Lake, Wymer, Black Rock]. Ecology and Reclamation will use the Integrated Water Resource Management Alternative Final EIS as the framework for a comprehensive water resource management implementation plan for the Yakima River basin" (Ecology Final SEPA EIS Cover letter, June 23, 2009).

  The proposed elements of Ecology's June 2009 alternative were described in the following sections:

  - Fish passage at existing reservoirs, Section 2.3.2;
  - Structural and operational changes to existing facilities, Section 2.3.3;
  - New or expanded storage reservoirs, Section 2.3.4 [Bumping Lake, Wymer, Pine Hollow Reservoir];
  - Ground water storage, Section 2.3.5;
  - Fish habitat, passage, and flow enhancements on the mainstem Yakima River and its tributaries, Section 2.3.6;
  - Enhanced water conservation, Section 2.3.7; and
  - Market-based reallocation of water resources, Section 2.3.8. p.2-8 (Ecology Final SEPA EIS, June 23, 2009, page 2-8).
- June 30, 2009 – The Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project 2009 Work Group ("hereafter called the YRBWEP Work Group") held its initial meeting (without any members of the public present).
- March 2, 2012 – BuRec and Ecology release the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Yakima Plan.

In response to the Yakima Workgroup's efforts to promote the Yakima Plan, which they did not produce, as a national model for the Colorado River Compact and elsewhere, former State Rep. Hans Dunshee wrote in an October 5, 2022, *Seattle Times*, Letter to the Editor:

"The seven-state Colorado watershed fight mentioned [in the Revell/Rigdon op-ed] would take trillions of dollars to solve the problems the way the Yakima agreement proposed. It is also a lesson that billions for dams and concrete already spent didn't solve the problem. I hope that the cooperation in the Yakima holds, when, without the billions promised, supporters have to make hard decisions about changes to agriculture and behavior forced by a changing climate and reality."

RCW 90.38.100(1) requires a Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan Implementation Status Report to the Legislature and to the Governor and Section (2) requires, by December 1, 2021, a statement of progress in achieving the water supply facility permit and funding milestone, as defined in RCW 90.38.010. As of the beginning of March 2023, this status report has still not been provided. In response to the status of this 2021 report at the December 14, 2022, Workgroup meeting, Ecology noted that this report was still not final. As it is now 1 year and 3 months overdue, what is this status of this report?

Response: Thank you for your comment. The referenced report is currently undergoing internal review and is delayed due to some staff changes that have occurred over the course of 2022. Ecology will publish the report once it is finalized and completed.

The YBIP Project Activity Update, dated February 2023, states: "In December 2021, Reclamation, Ecology, Yakama Nation agreed to include Yakima Tieton Irrigation District's (YTID) proposal for change in the point of diversion to Wapatox and removal of the Tieton Diversion Dam as part of the Integrated Plan. In addition, Upper Yakima System Storage was also included as part of the Integrated Plan." What is the process for adding projects that were not part of the original Yakima Plan? Can this be done without the approval of the Yakima Workgroup? Please list all the projects that have added to the Yakima Plan since the issuance of the 2012 Final Programmatic EIS. Please list all the NEPA/SEPA compliance documents associated with any such added projects.

Response: Thank you for your comment. We use the Adaptive Management Process (AMP) to consider potential new projects to include in the Integrated Plan. The AMP was shared with the YRBWEP Workgroup in December 2021. New projects do not change the programmatic EIS, since the EIS includes the option to add new projects as long as the responsible agencies prepare subsequent NEPA/SEPA documents as appropriate.

2023 Water Supply Forecast

Jeff Marti, water resources planner for Ecology, updated the workgroup on the statewide water supply forecast. From October 2022 to late February 2023, the total precipitation anomaly was 87% normal. This timeframe was the 31st driest since 1895.

In February 2023, precipitation was 79% of normal conditions, or about the 38th driest since 1895. The state was about 2 degrees Fahrenheit colder than normal in February. Due to cold temperatures, the snowpack stayed in the mountain ranges. As of March 8, 2023, the statewide average for snowpack was 98% of normal conditions. The growth of Washington's snowpack for this current water year is better than in other years (e.g., 2001, 2005, 2015, 2022). The usual peak is around early April, but this peak can vary. More information is included in the meeting materials.

Jeff went over the basin projections for April based on historical climate conditions. The Lower Yakima and Naches basins are projected to be short of normal averages. The Upper Yakima Basin is projected to hit normal conditions.

The Columbia River instream flow rules require curtailment if the March 1 runoff forecast for April through September falls below 60 million acre-feet. The median March 1 forecast was roughly 82 million acre-feet. Based on the forecast, there's a high probability that the runoff will stay above 60 million acre-feet.

Jeff reviewed a graph highlighting the 2023 forecasted runoff (April–September) for the Columbia River at the Dalles Dam. This figure is measured at 63,000 acre-feet. Compared to historic runoffs from 1949 to 2022, the 2023 forecast is the 13th lowest within this data set.

Jeff referenced the Methow area, which collects decent snowpack (about 95% of normal conditions) but is forecasted at around 65% of normal conditions. The 2023 models for average soil saturation in Methow are projected to be below normal conditions.

The models show precipitation above average for the state and cooler temperatures for the next 3 weeks in March.

Jeff summarized the results:

- Drier than normal since the start of the water year.
- The cool weather has helped build snowpack, but some areas are slightly low and will likely finish the year below normal.
- The Methow Basin is an area of concern based on soil moisture and forecasted runoff.
- Near-term forecasts hold promise for positive precipitation anomalies, but they are not game-changing.
- Lack of a surplus snow cushion means no room for complacency.

Chris Lynch, hydrologist and civil engineer at Reclamation, presented some of the water supply graphs related to operations at the Yakima River. The Yakima area experienced colder temperatures between October 2022 and March 2023. Precipitation during the same timeframe was measured at 74% of the state average. The snowpack accumulations from October 2022 to February 2023 are 91% of the state average. The system unregulated flow volume at the Yakima Project is about 59% of the average from October 2022 to February 2023 due to cooler weather and preserved snowpack.

> Q: David Ortman noted that the Upper Yakima Snow Storage as of March 1 is listed as 1,045,855 acre-feet. How many of these acre-feet are located on the Okanogan/Wenatchee National Forest portion of the Yakima Basin Watershed?
>
> *A: Jeff Marti stated he didn't have the breakdown at hand on the amount in the forest boundaries. He directed David Ortman to the NOAA website.*
>
> Q: David Ortman asked what year the maximum flow/storage volume was on the charts being presented. The storage volume chart only goes back to 1991. Why is this?
>
> *A: Chris Lynch noted that it's typical to use the most recent 30-year period (full decades), so the stats reference 1991–2020.*

Past Reflection – 1984 Fish Screen Celebration

Scott Revell shared historical photos he found from Sunnyside Dam's October 1984 fish screen groundbreaking event. The event was a direct result of the YRBWEP Phase I legislation. The event included federal, state, and tribal members. Scott noted that YRBWEP has been going on for 45 years.

> C: Adam Fyall noted that former governor and senator Dan Evans is still alive and nearly 100 years old. He still visits his namesake "School of Public Policy" at the University of Washington annually.
>
> C: Alex Conley mentioned that the recovery board has an agreement with the Yakima Valley Library to create a digital archive system. He invited the workgroup to submit historical documents, photos, and other materials if they are interested.

Roundtable Discussion

Ben then invited workgroup members to share any concluding thoughts for the meeting.

Wendy Christensen: Thanked everyone for coming to the in-person meeting and acknowledged Ryan Roberts, who will be taking a new job at the end of the month. She appreciated his efforts as project manager for the Cle Elum Fish Passage project.

Tom Tebb: Enjoyed seeing everyone in person and the presentations today.

Mike Livingston: Was impressed with the Lower River presentation and noted a lot of work going on there. Work at the lower river is a lot to accomplish, especially with challenging flow issues. He pointed out that this information was good to share with the larger group.

David Blodgett: Appreciated the conversations and presentations at today's meeting and is focused on continuing the path created by those before us.

Rick Dieker: Highlighted that it's good to be reminded of the past because it lays the groundwork for the future. Rick's team is working on the next steps toward a preferred alternative for the Tieton River Restoration and Water Reliability Study. Rick will seek input on evaluating these alternatives and plans to contact individuals in late April to collect their feedback.

Jaclyn Hancock: Noted that the flow/supply focus during the presentation was balanced, representing Yakama Nation's interest in agriculture and fisheries.

Mike Shane: Appreciated being at the meeting to learn the history. He reports that Nelson is coming to a close and will deliver water in April. He's looking forward to additional funding that comes their way for the second phase of that project.

Charlie de la Chapelle: Was pleased to see progress on various items but shared concerns about the lack of progress on the storage conversation.

Bill Gale: Enjoyed seeing everyone in person and the presentations today.

Lori Brady: Enjoyed the presentations today. Lori reports that Sunnyside Valley continues to work on water conservation efforts.

Jeff Tayer (Chair of the Habitat Subcommittee): Thanked Scott for highlighting the 1984 fish screening event. Jeff shared great memories of that event. Jeff worked in the Yakima Valley when the Power Act passed in 1980 and notes that we've made much progress since then.

Brandon Parsons: Thanked the speakers for the Lower River presentation.

Jason McShane (Chair of the Lower River Subgroup): Thanked those behind the scenes who developed the Lower River presentation. He noted that we need to focus on the consequences of our actions at the river and how we can overcome these challenges.

Amanda McKinney: She noted that Yakima County is supportive of efforts in the Yakima Basin. She shared a renewed commitment to being vocal in supporting projects, especially storage solutions.

Alex Conley: Thanked everyone for a great meeting.

Joe Blodgett: Appreciated the presentations and thanked Danielle for participating on the Yakama Nation team. He mentioned that they conduct historical presentations with their staff to remind them of the history. Water supply/water flow will be difficult conversations, but we have the right people in the room working towards a common goal.

Scott Revell: Reminded the workgroup to submit their comments to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers on the Bateman Island Causeway Removal Project.

Urban Eberhart: Supported Scott's note about the Bateman Island Causeway Removal Project. It should be a high priority to remove it.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Workgroup meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, 2023. The meeting is currently scheduled to be at the Yakima Valley Community College Conference Center from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm.

Attendance

Workgroup Members:

Adam Fyall, Benton County

Alex Conley, Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board

Amanda McKinney, Yakima County Commissioner

Bill Gale, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Brandon Parsons, American Rivers

Bret Walters, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

Charlie de la Chapelle, Yakima Basin Storage Alliance

Jaclyn Hancock, Washington Department of Agriculture

Jim Milton, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District

Joe Blodgett, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Joel Freudenthal, Yakima County

Kathryn Furr, U.S. Forest Service

Kevin Eslinger, Kittitas Reclamation District

Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited

Lori Brady, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District

Mike Livingston, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Mike Shane, City of Yakima
Perry Harvester, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Rick Dieker, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District
Scott Revell, Roza Irrigation District
Tom Tebb, Washington Department of Ecology
Urban Eberhart, Kittitas Reclamation District
Wendy Christensen, Bureau of Reclamation

Other Attendees:
Alan Chapman
Andy Hart, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Ann Lewis
Antonia Belmar
Ben Floyd, White Bluffs Consulting
Ben Woodard, Kennewick Irrigation District
Bruce Sully, Bureau of Reclamation
Bryan Simpson
Chad Stuart, Bureau of Reclamation
Charles Freeman, Kennewick Irrigation District
Chris Duke, Bureau of Reclamation
Chris Lynch, Bureau of Reclamation
Chris Maykut, Friends of Bumping Lake
Chuck Garner, Bureau of Reclamation
Craig Haskell, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Curt Strifert, Columbia Irrigation District
Cynthia Carlstad, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants
Danielle Squeochs, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
David Blodgett III, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
David E. Ortman
David Mckenzie, Kennewick Irrigation District
Dennis Sandstrom, HDR, Inc.
Ed Lisowski
Elaine Packard
Emily Tasaka, Washington Department of Ecology

Erin Cox, Jacobs
Gene Huffman, Kennewick Irrigation District
Glenn Grette, Grette Associations
Hernann Ambion, HDR, Inc.
Ilene Le Vee
Jack Demorest, Bureau of Reclamation
Jason McShane, Kennewick Irrigation District
Jay Schwartz
Jean Mendoza, Friends of Toppenish Creek
Jeanne Sheldon
Jeff Marti, Washington Department of Ecology
Jeff Tayer Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife
Joel Hubble, Bureau of Reclamation
John Crotry, Kennewick Irrigation District
John Marvin, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
John Stihlmiller, Washington State Water Resources Association
Jonathan Kohr
Justin Bezold, Trout Unlimited
Justin Harter, Naches-Selah Irrigation District
Kevin Haydon, Washington Department of Ecology
Kirk A. Rathbun
Laine Young, Washington Department of Ecology
Larry Martin, Velikanje Halvorson
Lori Gibson, Kennewick Irrigation District
Madi Roy, Washington Department of Agriculture
Melissa Downes, Washington Department of Ecology
Merritt Mitchell-Wajeeh, Mid-Columbia Fisheries
Michael Coffey, Bureau of Reclamation
Michael Gobla, Bureau of Reclamation
Michael Young
Mitch Long, Kittitas Conservation Trust
Pam Druliner, Bureau of Reclamation
Patrick Wright, Bureau of Reclamation
Paul Tabayaya, Yakima Valley Community Foundation

Peter Dykstra, Chair of Watershed Lands Conservation Subcommittee

Raelene Gold, League of Women Voters of Washington

Richard Visser, Bureau of Reclamation

Rick Evans, Office of Senator Maria Cantwell

Robert Henrie, Bureau of Reclamation

Russ Byington, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

Ryan Roberts, Bureau of Reclamation

Savannah Crnick, South Yakima Conservation District

Sepideh Sadeghi, Washington Department of Ecology

Sonja Kokos, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Steve Malloch, Western Water Futures, LLC (alternate for American Rivers)

Stuart Crane, Yakama Nation Water Resources

Stuart Dezember, Kennewick Irrigation District

Terresa Hauser, Bureau of Reclamation

Tim Poppleton, Washington Department of Ecology

Todd Newsome, Yakama Nation Fisheries

Tom Appler, Bureau of Reclamation

Trevor Hutton, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Troy Maikis Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Tyler Magill, Bureau of Reclamation

Zach Petsch, Kennewick Irrigation District

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.