

Nov. 30, 2009

Yakima River Basin Study Plan of Study Summary

Benton County comments on the draft scope plan study summary of 11/23/09.

For consideration on the December 7, 2009, meeting.

Final Integrated Management Plan

Task 1 – Characterize and quantify the water resources of the basin.

Task 2 – Determine the volume of water required for current and future needs for out of stream uses in the Yakima River basin to provide for (1) not-less-than a 70% irrigation water supply for irrigation districts during drought years relying on diversions subject to proration, taking into account the potential for consecutive drought years, (2) a water supply of not less than 82,000 acre-feet for population growth to the year 2050, and (3) a municipal supply to mitigate any adverse impacts on the basin's surface water supply that may result from current and future groundwater withdrawals associated with domestic (exempt) wells.

Task 3 – Quantify instream resources needs by major reach by season based on the objective of improving anadromous fish habitat by restoring the flow regimes of the Yakima and Naches Rivers to more closely resemble the natural (unregulated) hydrograph.

Task 4 – Develop detailed descriptions for elements and projects identified in the preliminary Integrated Management Plan.

Task 5 – For each element and project, conduct an analysis of potential environmental engineering and/or legal barriers to implementation and estimated costs.

Task 6 – Using models such as Yakima RiverWare and other analytical tools, evaluate the efficacy of various strategies for meeting out-of-stream and instream needs, including both storage (above ground and aquifer storage) and non-storage options (demand reduction, agricultural and municipal conservation measures, and water banking/marketing). Evaluations will consider the cumulative effect of multiple water supply options implemented in combination, and will do so under different operation scenarios to optimize the Integrated Management Plan – a structured plan. A scorecard will determine the projects to move forward - a decision point. At the completion of this task, the YRBWEP work group may decide to modify the preliminary Integrated Management Plan before proceeding to subsequent task. This would give the YRBWEP Work Group the opportunity to check with the State legislative and congressional representatives. This would result in the most effective structural package.

Task 7 – Using models and other analytical tools, evaluate the total ecosystem benefits of implementing instream water supply strategies in conjunction with efforts to achieve other aquatic resources objectives, including fish passage at major Reclamation reservoirs in the Basin and habitat restoration.

Task 8 – Using models and other analytical tools, evaluate the manner in which potential climate impacts might affect the selection and timing of elements and projects that may be included in the final Integrated Management Plan. Such evaluations will also address means by which flexible approaches and adaptation to climate change and other uncertainties could be built into the Integrated Management Plan.

Task 9 - Assist the YRBWEP Work Group in developing final recommendations for the Integrated Management Plan. The Integrated Management Plan elements and projects may be adjusted by the YRBWEP Work Group based on analytical outputs related to the sensitivity of the elements and projects to environmental and socioeconomic concerns and uncertainties. For the final recommended

Integrated Water Management Plan address potential non-federal cost sharing, and provide an allocation of project costs and analysis of the repayment of reimbursable project costs.

Task 10 – Prepare Basin Study Report and Final Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan.