

Contact: Dave Kaumheimer, Upper Columbia Area Office, (509) 575-5848, ext. 232

AGENDA - Scoping Meetings, Yakima Washington

Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study

January 23, 2007

Afternoon Session

1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Open House

2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Scoping Meeting

Presentations by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Washington State
Department of Ecology

Identification of Issues

Review and Wrap-Up

Evening Session

6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Open House

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. Scoping Meeting

Presentations by the Bureau of Reclamation and the Washington State
Department of Ecology

Identification of Issues

Review and Wrap-Up



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WHERE WE ARE NOW

Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study

January 23, 2007

Environmental Compliance Phase

The Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study has entered its final phase—the Feasibility Analysis and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Phase (Phase 4). In this Phase, the Bureau of Reclamation will evaluate the feasibility of proposed alternatives and develop an EIS in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Because the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is a full partner with Reclamation in the Storage Study, compliance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) will be done jointly with the NEPA compliance process. A jointly prepared EIS will be used to comply with requirements of both NEPA and SEPA. Both NEPA and SEPA require that a range of reasonable alternatives be considered to meet the purpose and need of the project. Congress directed Reclamation to focus on alternatives that would create additional water storage in the Yakima River Basin. Ecology has defined a broader purpose and need and will consider a broader range of alternatives including both storage and nonstorage alternatives. Therefore, the joint EIS will contain alternatives in common to both Ecology and Reclamation, as well as alternatives that only Ecology is considering. Because the EIS is being prepared for a feasibility study which requires a planning report, the planning report is being integrated with the EIS to produce a combined Planning Report/Environmental Impact Statement (PR/EIS).

During the scoping period (which closes January 31, 2007), input from the public, agencies, and organizations is being sought on the alternatives currently identified, impacts associated with those alternatives, and other alternatives which can reasonably address the purpose and need of the Storage Study. Following the scoping period, a range of alternatives to be evaluated in the draft PR/EIS will be identified. Alternatives will be included for evaluation based on their technical merit, public scoping issues, and expected environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives.

Plan Formulation Phase

The Plan Formulation Phase (Phase 3) of the Storage Study produced a *Technical Information and Hydrologic Analysis for Plan Formulation* (November 2006) document. Through two prior appraisal assessments (described below), Reclamation identified two alternatives—the Black Rock Alternative and the Wymer Dam and Reservoir Alternative—that warranted further analyses. Ecology asked that Reclamation add a pump exchange option to the Wymer Dam and Reservoir Alternative to increase the flexibility of the water supply from a Wymer dam and reservoir.



This alternative was called the Wymer Dam Plus Yakima River Pump Exchange Alternative. As required under NEPA, Reclamation also identified a “No Action” Alternative, which assumes continuation of water conservation and habitat enhancement measures authorized by separate legislation.

The two action alternatives meet the goals of the Storage Study in varying degrees. However, both alternatives have high construction and annual operating costs and benefit/cost ratios considerably below 1:1. The benefit/cost ratio is one of the main factors used to determine the best alternative in a Federal feasibility analysis.

Pre-Plan Formulation Phase

As part of Phase 2, the Pre-Plan Formulation Phase, the *Yakima River Basin Storage Alternatives Appraisal Assessment* was completed and released to the public in June 2006. This report included analyses of the Bumping Lake Enlargement, Keechelus-to-Kachess Pipeline, and Wymer Dam and Reservoir Alternatives. The conclusion of the report was that, after consultation with stakeholders, the Wymer Dam and Reservoir Alternative would be analyzed further due to its potential to provide fish benefits, but that the other two alternatives would be dropped from further study.

Also, an *Appraisal Assessment of the Black Rock Alternative* was completed and released to the public in February 2005. Reclamation, after consultation with stakeholders, concluded the Black Rock Alternative was technically viable and would be analyzed further.

Plan of Study Phase

The Plan of Study Phase was the startup activity (Phase 1) for the overall study. It contained two priority components. Simultaneous activities were undertaken to (1) identify priority activities that were fundamental to the Storage Study that could be immediately initiated in fiscal year 2003, and (2) define the scope of work, schedule, and budget for accomplishment of the Storage Study.

For more information regarding the Storage Study or alternatives, please contact:

- Kim McCartney, Storage Study Manager, 509-575-5848, ext. 370
- Or, visit our website at http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/storage_study/index.html.
- Or, sign up with the Washington State list serve at <http://listserv.wa.gov/archives/yakima-storage-study.html>.

For more information regarding the NEPA process or to submit a comment, contact:

- David Kaumheimer, Bureau of Reclamation, 1917 Marsh Road, Yakima WA 98901-2058, 509-575-5848, ext. 232 (TTY/TDD: 711)
- Fax: 509-454-5650
- Email: storagestudy@pn.usbr.gov.

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ISSUE COMMENT BOARDS

Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study

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Air Quality

Alternatives

Climate

Operations, O&M, etc.

Cumulative Impacts

Fisheries

Other Related Actions

Wildlife



Historic Properties / Cultural Resources

Visual Resources / Aesthetics

Other Issues and Concerns

Transportation / Public Services and Utilities

Construction

Irrigation

Hydropower

Social / Economic Issues

Recreation

Water Rights

Water Quantity

Water Quality

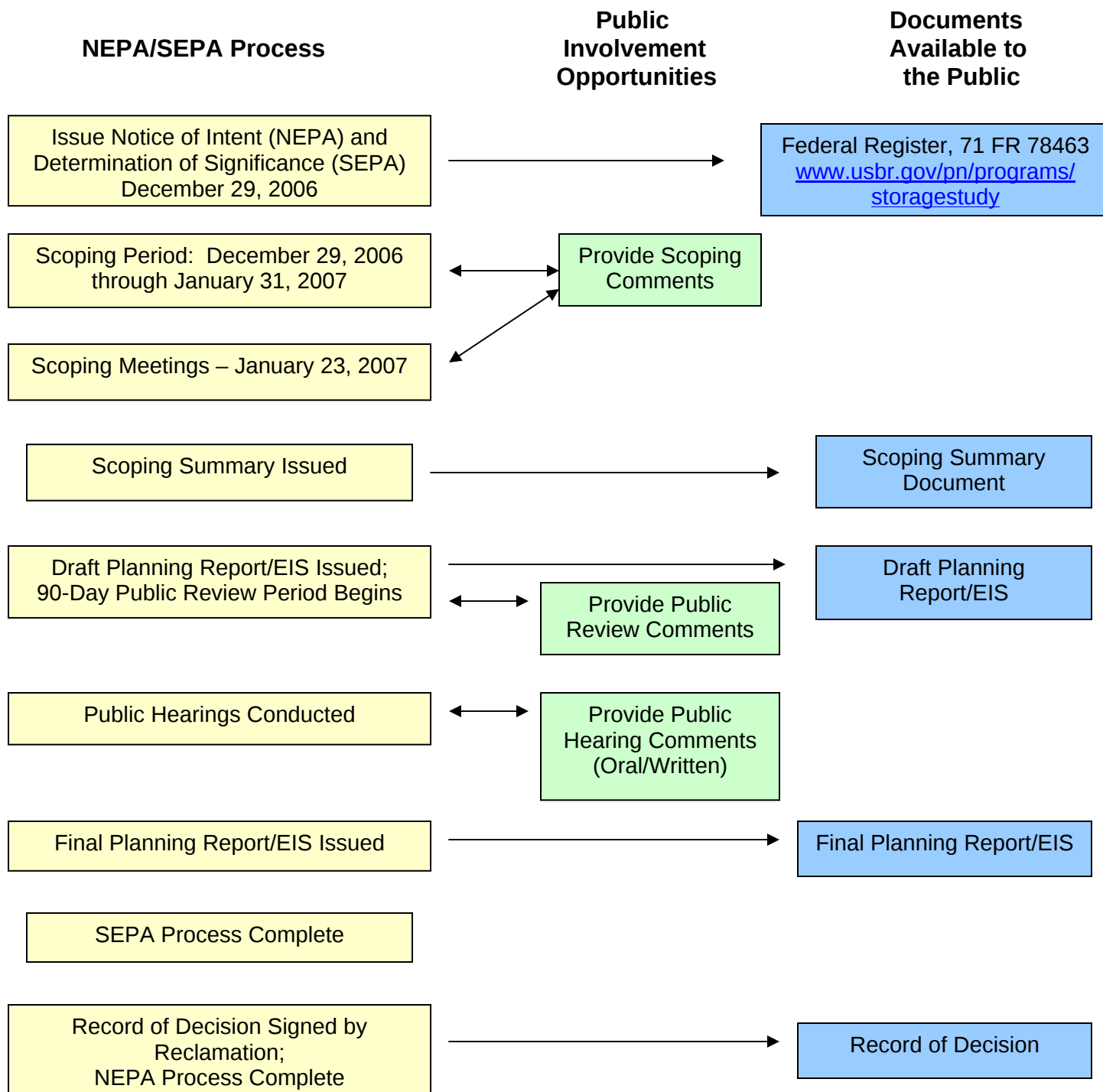
Other Water Resources

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NEPA/SEPA PROCESS

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ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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The National Environmental Policy Act

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted into law on January 1, 1970. It requires Federal agencies to evaluate and consider environmental factors during decisionmaking and to seek input to these evaluations from state and local agencies, Tribal Governments, organizations, and the public. Agencies also must consider and evaluate a range of alternatives that meet the purpose and need of the proposed action.

When a Federal action is determined likely to significantly affect the quality of the human environment, an environmental impact statement (EIS) is prepared. The EIS provides decision-makers with important information on the types of issues and concerns identified by the public, the expected environmental consequences of all alternatives, and potential mitigation measures.

Washington State Environmental Policy Act

SEPA is the acronym for the State Environmental Policy Act. Enacted in 1971, it provides the framework for agencies to consider the environmental consequences of a proposal before taking action. It also gives agencies the ability to condition or deny a proposal due to identified likely significant adverse impacts. The Act is implemented through the SEPA Rules, Chapter 197-11, Washington Administrative Code.

Environmental review is required for any proposal which involves a government “action,” as defined in the SEPA Rules and is not categorically exempt. Project actions involve an agency decision on a specific project, such as a construction project or timber harvest. Nonproject actions involve decisions on policies, plans, or programs, such as the adoption of a comprehensive plan or development regulations, or a 6-year road plan.

NEPA and SEPA Compliance for This Project

The requirements of NEPA and SEPA are very similar. Both require that a range of reasonable alternatives be considered to meet the purpose and need of the project. Congress directed Reclamation to focus on alternatives that would create additional water storage in the Yakima River Basin.



Ecology has defined a broader purpose and need and will consider a broader range of alternatives, including both storage and nonstorage alternatives. Therefore, the joint EIS will contain alternatives in common to both Ecology and Reclamation, as well as alternatives that only Ecology is considering.

Planning Report Requirement for Feasibility Studies

The feasibility study process requires preparation of a planning report which will be integrated with the EIS to produce a combined Planning Report/Environmental Impact Statement (PR/EIS).

Terms Commonly Associated with an EIS

Federal Action - This is what triggers the requirement for NEPA compliance. It can be an action that the Federal agency will take, or a decision that must be made, that may significantly impact the human environment.

Scoping - The process by which input from the public, agencies, and organizations is sought to help define the alternatives, issues, and impacts that should be addressed in the EIS.

Purpose and Need - The statement of purpose and need identifies the underlying reasons why an action is needed.

Proposed Action - This is the action initially identified to meet the identified purpose and need for action.

Alternatives - These are reasonable actions that meet the same identified purpose and need as the proposed action.

Federal Preferred Alternative - This is the alternative that the Federal agency proposes to implement. If one has been identified, it will be described in the Draft EIS. A Preferred Alternative must be identified in the Final EIS.

No Action Alternative - This is considered to be the most likely future without implementation of the proposed action or other alternative.

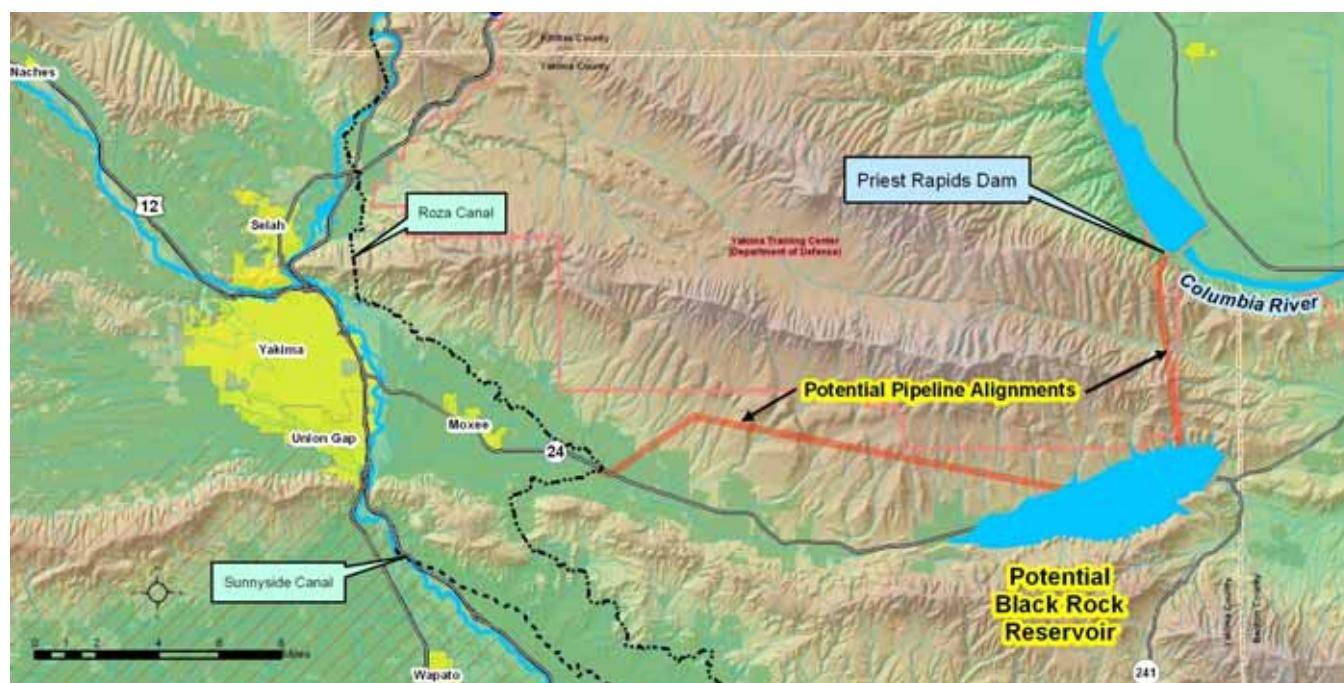
Record of Decision - This document summarizes the alternatives considered in the EIS and identifies the agency's decision along with the basis for that decision. This is a requirement of NEPA, but not SEPA.

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BLACK ROCK ALTERNATIVE

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The Black Rock Alternative concept is to pump water from the Columbia River, when it is available in excess of current fishery instream flow targets, for storage in a new offstream reservoir to be constructed in the Black Rock Valley. Stored water would be released to an outflow conveyance system running to the west and to some lower Yakima Valley irrigation entities. The Yakima River water which is currently diverted would then be available to meet water supply needs in the Yakima basin. The alternative brought forward is a large reservoir pump-only option including a fish-screened intake from Priest Rapids Lake, a 3,500-cfs pumping plant to lift water to Black Rock Valley, a 760-foot-high dam to store 1,300,000 acre-feet of active storage in a Black Rock reservoir, a 2,500-cfs reservoir outflow conveyance system, and powerplants at the points of discharge to Roza and Sunnyside Canals.

The total appraisal-level project cost for the Black Rock Alternative was estimated at \$3.5 to \$4 billion (April 2004 prices).

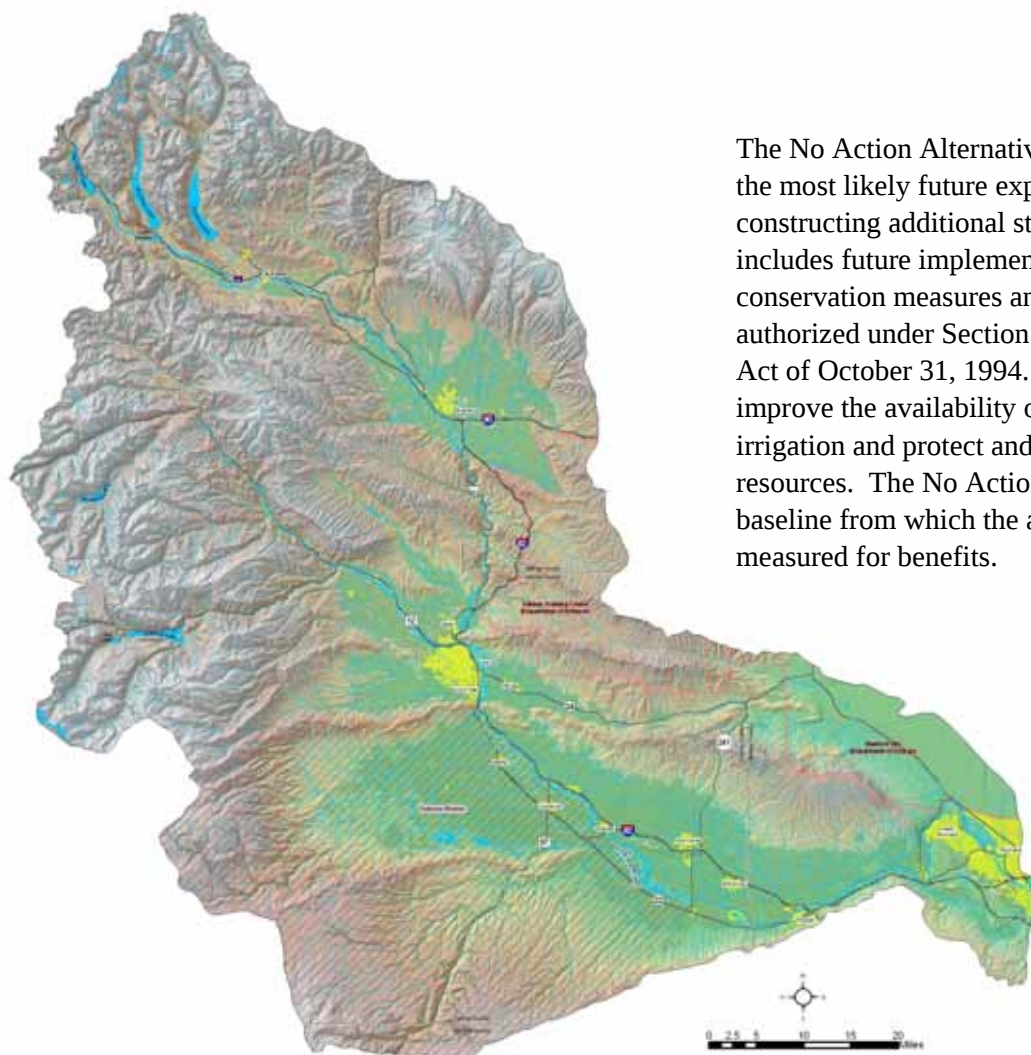


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NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

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The No Action Alternative is intended to represent the most likely future expected in the absence of constructing additional storage. This Alternative includes future implementation of water conservation measures and water acquisitions authorized under Section 1203 of Title XII of the Act of October 31, 1994. These actions would improve the availability of water supplies for irrigation and protect and enhance fish and wildlife resources. The No Action Alternative is the baseline from which the action alternatives are measured for benefits.

- Two-thirds of the conserved water resulting from a conservation measure is assigned to instream flows and is assumed to remain in the river from the implementing entity's point of diversion to the last point of operational discharge from its water system.
- One-third of the conserved water is retained by the implementing entity for irrigation use.
- Two-thirds of the implementation cost of the conservation measure(s) will be federally funded by Reclamation and one-third will be nonfederally funded equally by Washington State Department of Ecology and the implementing entity.

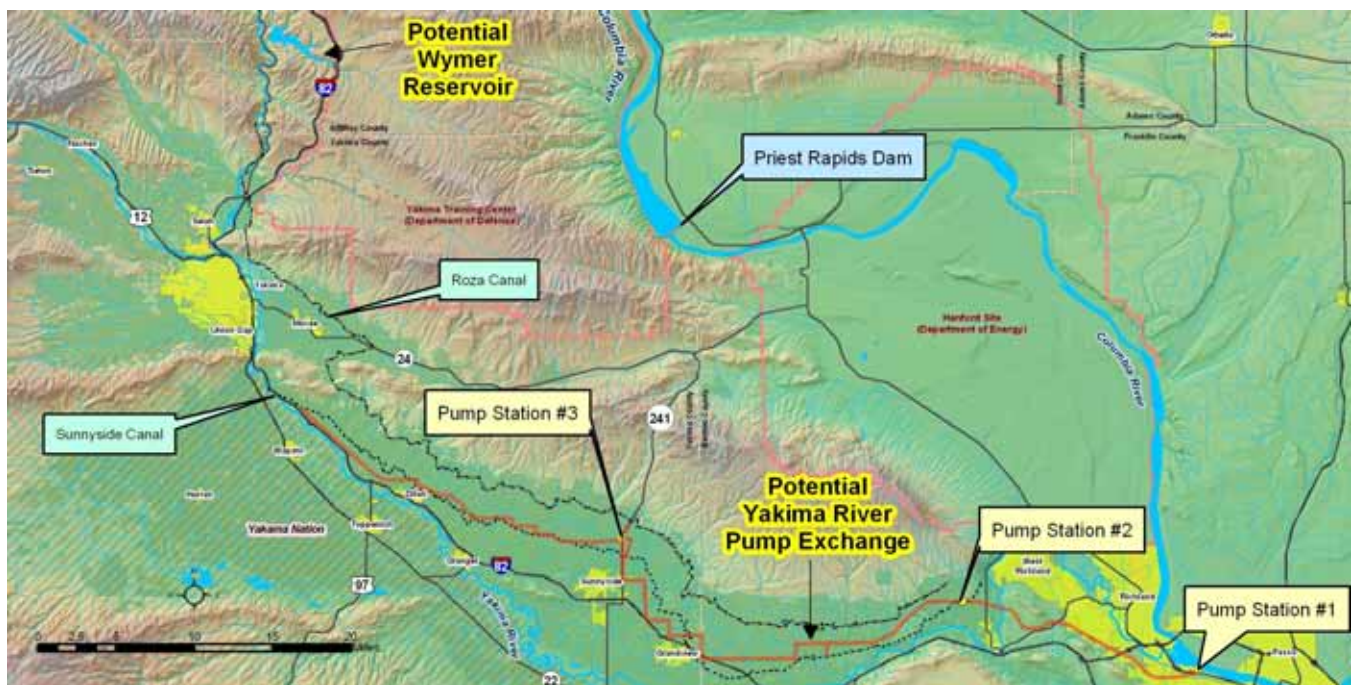


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WYMER DAM PLUS YAKIMA RIVER PUMP EXCHANGE ALTERNATIVE

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The potential Wymer dam would be located on Lmuma Creek between Ellensburg and Yakima, Washington. The reservoir would be filled by pumping from the Yakima River, with reservoir releases being supplied back to the Yakima River by gravity.

- A Wymer dam would be a concrete rockfill structure approximately 415 feet high, with a 130-foot-high concrete rockfill dike constructed in a saddle on the north side of the reservoir.
- A Wymer reservoir would have a 174,000-acre-foot-capacity reservoir extending from about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile east of the Yakima River to Interstate 82.



- A pump and pipeline system would deliver irrigation water from near the mouth of the Yakima River to various points in the Sunnyside Valley and Roza Irrigation Divisions southeast of Yakima, Washington. The irrigation water that would be delivered by this system would be exchanged for the water that would normally be diverted from the Yakima River. That water would remain in the Yakima River to improve fishery habitat and provide irrigation water to proratable irrigators during dry years.
- Previous appraisal-level cost estimates for the Wymer dam and reservoir portion of this alternative were at \$380 million (July 2004 price levels), based on a 400-cfs pumping plant intake and a 400-cfs outflow. Currently, however, a 1,000-cfs pumping plant and 1,400-cfs outflow is being considered to optimize benefits. These additional costs have not yet been computed.
- The appraisal-level cost estimate for the pump exchange portion is \$2.58 billion (April 2004 prices).