



BUILDING A FUTURE FOR WATER, WILDLIFE AND WORKING LANDS

YAKIMA RIVER BASIN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Yakima Basin Integrated Plan Status and Updates

The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is a 30-year project to address variable water supplies and economic uncertainty for communities, agriculture, and fish in Washington's Yakima River Basin. Built around the Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima Project, YBIP is a result of many stakeholders moving beyond decades of litigation and political fights towards solutions.

The Integrated Plan lays out three phases, each about a decade long, and each phase balanced to move all interests forward. As a whole, the plan includes making better use of existing water supplies and water infrastructure, increasing water storage, creating fish passage at Bureau of Reclamation reservoirs, and restoring and enhancing habitat. Parts of the Initial Development Phase (IDP) are now underway using existing authority. Federal authorizing legislation and appropriations are needed for critical elements of this first phase, including the first water supply project.

Shared Responsibility

Federal responsibilities in the Yakima River basin are diverse and interconnected. A major responsibility arises from the 1855 treaty with the Yakama Nation, which reserves to the Yakama Nation the rights to hunt and fish, especially for salmon, in usual and accustomed places. On the Yakama reservation is a large federal Indian irrigation project in need of repair and updating. Construction of Reclamation's Yakima Project without fish passage at the major reservoirs and subsequent operation of the project contributed to extirpation of some salmon runs in the basin and ESA listing of steelhead and bull trout. Much of the basin is in federal land ownership, with attendant responsibilities.

The State of Washington has committed to funding up to half of the costs of Integrated Plan's IDP. To date, the State has contributed \$204 million.

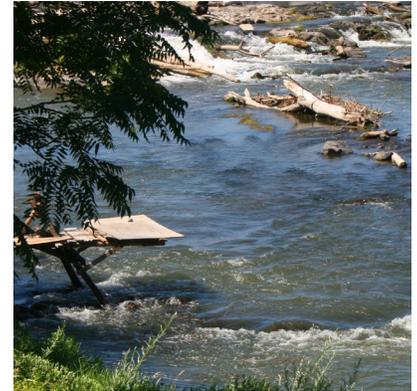
Recognizing the new environment for funding water projects, irrigation districts that would benefit from more reliable water supplies are stepping forward on funding. For the first major water supply project, the Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant (KDRPP), anticipated to cost up to \$200 million, the irrigation districts are committed to financing, constructing and operating this project, while ownership remains with Reclamation. In addition, the irrigation districts are deeply investing in water conservation.

The Yakima Basin produces about \$4.5 billion in annual farm and food processing productivity and 44,300 jobs, with \$1.8 billion in annual exports of wine, hops, fruit and other agricultural products. Shared investment will support continuing this strong agricultural economy. Recreation adds \$1.2 billion and 14,200 jobs.

Initial Development Phase

The Initial Development Phase is a set of projects and activities that will quickly achieve tangible improvements in stream flow, habitat and fish passage, and provide increased security for out-of-stream water users. Major projects currently underway that will require significant federal participation include:

- Fish Passage at Cle Elum Reservoir. Currently in construction, continuing appropriations are needed.
- Pool raise at Cle Elum Reservoir. Reclamation completed raising the pool level at Cle Elum by 3 feet in 2017. Appropriations are needed to complete the shoreline mitigation that allows additional water to be stored.
- Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant. A draft supplemental EIS was released for comment in April 2018. Federal authorization for this project is needed.
- Keechelus to Kachess Conveyance. This supplement to KDRPP is included in the EIS. Federal authorization is needed.
- Studies, feasibility analyses and environmental reviews of fish passage, water supply, conservation, habitat



Traditional Yakama Nation fishing platform on the Yakima River near Prosser, WA.

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restoration projects. These activities are needed to move forward on a suite of critical projects, including the next storage project, Bumping Reservoir expansion or a new reservoir at Wymer.

- Water conservation projects are limited under current authority; authorization is needed for upper basin and tributary conservation.

Request

Irrigation districts, the Yakama Nation, local governments, NGO's, many federal and state agencies, and others have worked to bring an end to water conflicts in a complex, contentious, economically important basin. For the innovative Yakima Basin Integrated Plan approach to go forward, federal help is needed:

- Enact legislation authorizing the Initial Development Phase.
- For FY 20, Yakima requests \$30,000,000 in Reclamation's Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Program (YRBWEP).
- In appropriations report language, Yakima requests the following: *Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project.*—*The Committee is aware of the Integrated Plan that has been developed by the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project Working Group, including the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, to address water storage and water supply needs for agriculture, fish, and municipalities within the Yakima River Basin in Central Washington. The Committee is supportive of the Plan and encourages Reclamation to move forward on implementing authorized components of the Plan.*



Drip Irrigation at a vineyard in the Yakima Basin is an example of on-farm enhanced conservation pursued under the Integrated Plan.



Questions?

Please give us a call.

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