Methow River Basin Improvement Package Projects & Policies

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
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Presented by
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Office of Columbia River
Methow River Basin
WRIA 48
Methow River Basin Project Locations
Confluence of Methow River & Twisp River
Methow Valley Irrigation District
West Canal – Diversion & Canal Improvements

- Project Partners
  - MVID
  - Trout Unlimited
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - National Oceanic Atmospheric Admin.
  - Office of Columbia River

- Cost $6.2M – $8M
  - OCR contribution $6 – 7M
- Move MVID West Canal diversion off the Twisp River to a diversion on Methow River (or combination of diversion and well field or a combination of wells) and pipe a majority of the West Canal

- Improves Twisp River instream flows by 11cfs in the lower 3.5 river miles & eliminates historic pushup dam

- Policy consideration – large instream flow project to offset large out-of-stream project
Barkley Irrigation Company
Diversion Replacement
Barkley Irrigation Company
Diversion Replacement

- Project Partners
  - Barkley Irrigation Co.
  - Trout Unlimited
  - Bureau of Reclamation
  - Methow Conservancy
  - National Marine Fisheries Services
  - Bonneville Power Administration
  - Office of Columbia River

- Cost $1.5M
  - OCR budget request $750,000

Photo: Courtesy of Trout Unlimited

Reconnects Bear Creek to the Methow River, eliminates wing dam, provides approx 20 cfs of instream flow benefit in a section of Methow River, improves water quality, lowers fish mortality.

Policy consideration – One option up for consideration is to move the point of diversion upstream.
Town of Twisp
New Water Right
Town of Twisp
New Water Right

- Project Partners
  - Town of Twisp
  - Office of Columbia River
  - Dept of Fish and Wildlife

- Cost $50,000 – $100,000 which will be repaid by the Town
Town of Twisp
New Water Right

- Issue a new water right (50–300 ac–ft) to Town of Twisp that is offset by consumptive use from an irrigation water right
- Meets two OCR directives – hydrate existing applications, & solve municipal needs within the Columbia River Basin
- Provides public reliability and conservation-minded development within town boundaries and eliminates exempt well promulgation
- Policy Considerations – Does summer benefits out weigh winter impacts, is out-of-kind mitigation an option, OCPI determination to waive interruptibility (WAC 173–548)
Chewuch Canal Company
Project Improvements

Map: Courtesy of Trout Unlimited
Chewuch Canal Company
Project Improvements

- **Project Partners**
  - Trout Unlimited
  - BPA/NFWF
  - National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration
  - Yakama Nation
  - US Fish and Wildlife Service
  - Methow Salmon Recovery Foundation
  - Office of Columbia River

- **Cost – $2.1M**
  - OCR budget request – up to $200,000
Additional canal piping, eliminates diversion during low flow periods to fill Pearrygin Lake (reservoir)

Improves:
- Instream flows by 9.5 cfs on Chewuch River in lower 7 miles of river
- Irrigation reliability
- Recreation opportunities

Policy Consideration – OCPI determination to waive instream flows in WAC 173–548 to allow river diversion during high flow periods in exchange for diversion reduction during low flow periods
Water Acquisitions

- Existing Acquisition
  - 79 ac–ft (52 ac–ft CU) in the Lower Methow Reach

- 13–15 Opportunistic Acquisitions and Leases for Eastern Washington

- Project Proponent – Ecology OCR

- Legislative Budget request for approx $4M
Project Proponent – Conservation Commission
Legislative Budget request for approx $7.2M
Monies would provide for approx 15 conservation and habitat projects
Project areas in general are all Columbia River Tributaries
Methow Watershed Council
Davis Lake Storage Project

- Improve storage capabilities in Methow Basin
- Davis Lake was the most feasible storage project out of 3 proposed
- Davis Lake and Bear Creek are an adjudicated basin
Methow Watershed Council
WAC 173–548 Instream Flow Reserve Accounting

- 7 reaches defined in Rule

- Each reach has a 2 cfs reserve quantity, totaling 14 cfs

- Council is undergoing reserve accounting to understand remaining reserve quantities

- Policy Consideration – Can these reach reserve quantities move up/down stream?
  - Likely will require an update to the rule
Interruptible Water Rights
WAC 173–548

- Currently 67 interruptible water rights on the Methow River
- Cannot store enough water in the basin to fix all interruptible water rights
- Policy Consideration – Is there an opportunity to make some/all of these water rights whole in this Greater Methow Improvement Package?
Climate Change – Do we need to consider the hydrograph change for fish habitat and instream flow benefits?

Irrigation Canals Improvement – Can we move a block of water savings upstream?

Is out-of-kind mitigation an option in the Basin?
Questions?