

Overview

In 2006, the Legislature tasked the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) to aggressively seek out new water supplies for both instream and out-of-stream uses. The same legislation set up the Columbia River Basin Development Account and authorized \$200 million to fund it. Ecology created the Office of Columbia River (OCR) to use these funds to develop new water supplies using storage, conservation, and voluntary regional water management agreements.

The Columbia River Policy Advisory Group assists OCR with policy development. It is composed of representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal governments, business and environmental groups, and water users.

Statutory Directives

The legislature tasked OCR with four directives (Chapter 90.90 RCW):

- Find sources of water supply for pending water right applications.
- Develop water rights for instream use (fish benefit).
- Find a new uninterrupted supply of water for the holders of interruptible water rights on the Columbia river mainstem.
- Develop a surface water source to replace groundwater from declining aquifers in the Odessa Subarea.

Accomplishments

As of October 14, 2011, OCR has funded construction projects adding approximately 150,000 ac-ft of water to Eastern Washington's water supply. Another 175,000 ac-ft of water will be made available in the near term. More water is under long-term development tied to future demand projections.

In December 2011, OCR issued the first municipal and industrial (M&I) water rights from the 25,000 ac-ft of M&I water supply it developed via the Lake Roosevelt Incremental Storage Releases Project. That will be the second "bucket" of Lake Roosevelt Project water OCR has put to use. In 2010, 27,500 ac-ft of water from the project was placed into trust to benefit fish.

Permitting an additional 14,000 ac-ft from Sullivan Lake for M&I, irrigation, and instream uses will begin in 2012.



Program Vision

Preserve and enhance the standard of living for the people of Washington by strengthening the state's economy, and restoring and protecting the Columbia Basin's unique natural environment.

Program Mission

Aggressively pursue development of water supplies to benefit both instream and out-of-stream water uses.

Contact OCR

509-575-2490

On the Web

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/crwmp.html>

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DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington