

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON
SCOPE OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE KEECHELUS
RESERVOIR-TO-KACHESS RESERVOIR CONVEYANCE AND KACHESS
INACTIVE STORAGE PROJECTS**

The Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Office of Columbia River are beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance and Kachess Inactive Storage Project. The EIS will be a joint National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) EIS. Reclamation and Ecology are requesting comments regarding the scope.

Lead Agency: Reclamation and Ecology are joint lead agencies for the combined NEPA and SEPA process

SEPA Responsible Official: Derek I. Sandison, Director Office of Columbia River, Washington State Department of Ecology

EIS Required: Pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, Reclamation proposes to prepare an EIS for the Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance and Kachess Inactive Storage, Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project, Integrated Water Resource Management Plan. Ecology has determined that an EIS is required under SEPA (Chapter 43.21C RCW).

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

Description of Proposal:

The Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance and Kachess Inactive Storage Projects are proposed as part of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project, Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (Integrated Plan). The Integrated Plan is comprised of seven elements which were evaluated in a Programmatic EIS issued March 2, 2012:

1. Reservoir Fish Passage;
2. Structural and Operational Changes;
3. Surface Water Storage;
4. Groundwater Storage;
5. Habitat/Watershed Protection and Enhancement;
6. Enhanced Water Conservation; and
7. Water Market Reallocation of Water Resources.

As described in the Programmatic EIS, Reclamation and the Ecology will complete project-level, site-specific environmental review for individual actions and projects within the Integrated Plan

once the agencies are ready to move forward each action or groups of actions. Reclamation and Ecology have determined that it is appropriate to initiate the environmental review process with regard to the Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance and Kachess Inactive Storage Projects.

The proposed, site specific actions to be evaluated in the Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance and Kachess Reservoir Inactive Storage EIS are:

1. Transfer water through a tunnel from the Keechelus watershed to Kachess Reservoir. Two alternatives have been identified for a tunnel to convey water from Keechelus watershed to Kachess Reservoir. One would include construction of a new outlet works at the north end of Keechelus Dam connecting to a 10-12 foot-diameter, 3.7 mile-long, gravity flow tunnel. The other would include construction of a diversion structure on the Yakima River about 8,000 feet downstream of Keechelus Dam, connecting to a 10-12 foot-diameter, 3.2-mile-long, gravity flow tunnel. Both tunnel alternatives would discharge into Kachess Reservoir through a new structure located on the west shore; and
2. Release an additional 200,000 acre-feet of water from Kachess Reservoir during severe droughts by accessing inactive storage through additional outlet facilities. A substantial volume of water stored in Kachess Reservoir is currently inaccessible because it is below the elevation of the outlet works. This is referred to as inactive storage. An alternative being considered to access the inactive storage in Kachess Reservoir includes a new outlet works at a lower elevation in the reservoir connected by a tunnel to a pump station that would discharge to the Kachess River.

The objectives of these proposed actions are to increase the total water supply available from the Keechelus watershed for irrigation and instream flow, provide additional water for proratable irrigation districts during severe drought conditions, and create more normal flows in the upper Yakima River between Keechelus Dam and Lake Easton to improve fish habitat.

Scoping Meeting Dates: Two scoping meetings, combined with open houses each day, will be held on the following dates and times:

- November 20, 2013, 1:30pm to 3:30pm, and 5:00pm to 7:00pm, Yakima Area Arboretum, 1401 Arboretum Way, Yakima, WA.
- November 21, 2013, 1:30pm to 3:30pm, and 5:00pm to 7:00pm, U.S. Forest Service (Cle Elum Ranger District Conference Room), 803 W 2nd Street, Cle Elum, WA.

Comments: Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. Comments on the scope of the EIS must be received by December 16, 2013, at the address listed below.

You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

Email: yrbwep@usbr.gov

Mail: Ms. Candace McKinley, Environmental Program Manager, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office, 1917 Marsh Road, Yakima, WA 98901

For further information contact: Ms. Candace McKinley, Bureau of Reclamation, Columbia-Cascades Area Office, 1917 Marsh Road, Yakima, WA 98901; telephone (509) 575-5848, ext. 232; facsimile (509) 454-5650; email yrbwep@usbr.gov.