



BUILDING A FUTURE FOR WATER, WILDLIFE AND WORKING LANDS

YAKIMA RIVER BASIN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance

The Projects

For over a century, working reservoirs at Kachess and Keechelus have supplied irrigation water to farmers in the Yakima Basin. During drought, demand for irrigation water in the Yakima Basin exceeds supply, endangering the \$3.2 billion in annual agricultural income the region injects into the economy. The Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance Projects “drought proof” the basin’s irrigation needs by providing at least 70% of proratable water rights--that’s the minimum amount of water needed by agriculture for perennial crops to survive.

Specifically, the projects will:

- Deliver up to an additional 200,000 acre-feet of water from Kachess Reservoir during drought years by tapping into water that is stored below the outlet.
- Refill Kachess Reservoir after droughts with water from Keechelus Reservoir that would otherwise not be captured due the storage limitations.
- Normalize flows in the Yakima River for fish and open up habitat for threatened bull trout.



Area where the Kachess River enters the reservoir at end of summer

Groundwater Impacts

As a working reservoir, water levels at Kachess currently undergo a tremendous amount of fluxuation without impacting wells or aquifers. During drought years, the Drought Relief Pumping Plant will draw the reservoir down further, and there may be localized effects on groundwater levels and marginal wetlands. However, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) will employ an adaptive management program to observe these effects and to implement mitigation measures where needed.

Fish Impacts

Reclamation and Ecology identified bull trout enhancement projects to address a need for improving the resiliency of bull trout populations in Keechelus and Kachess watersheds. Individual projects were identified in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Yakama Nation. The projects include both habitat enhancements to improve the function and productivity of reservoir and tributary habitats as well as population enhancement efforts, such as translocation/and or supplementation of bull trout populations in the Yakima Basin



Recreation Impacts

As is currently the case, boat launches and some shore fishing sites will be inaccessible during drought years. Regardless of whether the projects are implemented, climate change will increase the time such sites are inaccessible.

Cost and Benefits

The Projects are elements of the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Management Plan (Integrated Plan). The Integrated Plan has undergone a number of different economic analyses. Some of these analyses were flawed, because they failed to look at the project as an integrated system, in which all the pieces of the plan are needed in order for the plan to succeed. The Integrated Plan meets and surpasses all federal benefit cost criteria when it is evaluated as a whole.

More Information

- Kachess Drought Relief Pumping Plant and Keechelus Reservoir-to-Kachess Reservoir Conveyance Draft Environmental Impact Statement. <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/eis/kkc/kkcdeis.pdf>
- Cost Benefit Information <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/images/pdf/YBIP-Cost-Benefit.pdf>
- Department of Ecology Yakima Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/cwp/YBIP.html>
- US Bureau of Reclamation Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project <http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/index.html>



Questions?

Please give us a call.

Michael Garrity, American Rivers
206-852-5583
mgarrity@americanrivers.org

Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner
509-574-1500
mike.leita@co.yakima.wa.us

Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation
509-865-5121 ext 4655
prigdon@yakama.com

Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District
509-840-2911
ronvan@clearwire.net

Michael Livingston, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
509-424-1757
Michael.Livingston@dfw.wa.gov

Urban Eberhart, Yakima Basin Joint Board & Kittitas Reclamation District
509-929-5859
urbaneberhart@gmail.com

Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited
509-888-0970
Lisa.Pelly@tu.org

Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner
509-962-7508
paul.jewell@co.kittitas.wa.us

Tom Tebb, Washington Department of Ecology
509-574-3989
Thomas.Tebb@ecy.wa.gov