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Final Programmatic EIS for Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan Released

The Bureau of Reclamation and Washington State Department of Ecology today released the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (Integrated Plan).

The Final PEIS evaluates two alternatives to meet the water supply and ecosystem restoration needs in the Yakima River Basin: 1) the No Action Alternative; and 2) the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan Alternative. The Integrated Plan's seven elements include: reservoir fish passage; structural and operational changes to existing facilities; surface water storage; groundwater storage; habitat/watershed protection and enhancement; enhanced water conservation; and market reallocation of water.

The Integrated Plan Alternative is identified as the Preferred Alternative.

“This environmental impact statement provides a framework for addressing the basin’s water needs holistically by balancing those needs,” said Derek Sandison, Ecology director of the Office of Columbia River. “Now we have a real opportunity to achieve success where in the past water management has been historically contentious.”

A programmatic EIS evaluates the effects of broad proposals or planning-level decisions that may include a wide range of individual projects; implementation over a long timeframe; and/or implementation across a large geographic area. A PEIS does not evaluate site-specific issues such as precise project footprints or specific design details that are not yet ready for decision at the planning level; therefore, any projects selected for implementation will require subsequent project-level, or site-specific environmental reviews.

The PEIS satisfies National Environmental Policy Act and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act requirements. The Final PEIS will be formally filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on March 2, 2012. Questions regarding the Integrated Plan Final PEIS may be sent by email to yrbwep@usbr.gov or by mail to the Bureau of Reclamation, Attn: Ms. Candace McKinley, Environmental Program Manager, at 1917 Marsh Road, Yakima, Washington, 98901; (509) 575-5848, ext. 613; Fax: (509) 454-5650. Hearing impaired persons may dial 711 to obtain a toll free TTY relay.

(More)

Reclamation and Ecology offices and local libraries will have copies available for viewing; the document is also posted online at: <http://on.doi.gov/wf7aRz>. Also, interpretative maps and graphics showing the impact area of the plan can be seen here: <http://on.doi.gov/xKN3cE>

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Relevant Links:

<http://www.usbr.gov>

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/index.html>

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/meetings/scoping/110513-IP-Boards.pdf>