



BUILDING A FUTURE FOR WATER, WILDLIFE AND WORKING LANDS

YAKIMA RIVER BASIN INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Integrated Plan in the Legislature

What is the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan?

The Yakima Basin faces economic and environmental uncertainty: the current water supply is unable to meet existing human and environmental needs. Repeated droughts and a shrinking snow pack exacerbate an already acute problem. The basin and its citizens must work together if they are to improve the reliability of water supply for irrigation and other out-of-stream uses, while simultaneously rebuilding fish runs, improving stream flows and protecting headwater areas.



The Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan brings together a diverse group of farmers and ranchers, irrigation districts, county and city governments, the Yakama Nation, conservation organizations and state and federal agencies. All Integrated Plan parties recognize the need to collaborate to develop water supply solutions that will increase water supply in the basin for out-of-stream and in-stream uses. The Integrated Plan will put people to work, enhance the competitiveness of Yakima basin farmers and strengthen the Yakima Basin economy while it simultaneously rebuilds salmon runs, increases recreational opportunities, and protects critical resource lands for generations to come.

Proposed Legislative Action

1. A policy bill ratifying and adopting the Integrated Plan;
2. A bond authorization Provision in the Capital Budget to demonstrate future financial support for the Integrated Plan; and
3. A capital budget appropriation of \$45 million to provide the state's share for funding the first two years of the Integrated Plan.

Policy Bill: HB 1414; SB 5367

What it does: The policy bill, already introduced as Governor request legislation, is moving through both houses of the legislature. The bill will essentially ratify the Integrated Plan by expressing the legislature's intent to implement and fund the Integrated Plan and by maintaining equal progress for each of the plan's major components. The bill also makes several technical changes and creates a special account for plan implementation.

Bond Authorization in the Capital Budget

What it does: The Integrated Plan depends on various funding sources—including the federal and state government, Yakama Nation, and local irrigation districts—to fund the estimated total of \$3.8 billion (to be paid over 30 years). This figure includes a bond authorization provision in the capital budget that will demonstrate the state's ongoing support and intent to fund the state's share of the Integrated Plan over its 30-year lifespan, but does not commit future legislatures to certain funding levels. A similar bond authorization was passed for the Columbia River Basin Management Program. It has been important to leverage funding from the federal government and other sources.



Bond Authorization Components:

1. Authorizes the state finance committee to immediately issue \$45 million in general obligation bonds to fund the state’s portion of the Integrated Plan’s implementation costs for the 2013-2015 biennium and describes the legislature’s understanding of and commitment to long-term financial support for the plan.
2. Describes the “three bucket” approach to funding – 1) water supply/ storage; 2) fish passage and habitat enhancement; and 3) land acquisition and other environmental enhancements;
3. Recognizes the need for future legislatures to continue to issue bonds or otherwise finance the state’s share of the Integrated Plan implementation costs.

Capital Budget Appropriation

The current capital budget proposal would allocate \$23.6 million for plan implementation. The Yakima Basin stakeholders are proposing an additional \$21.4 million for a total 2013-2015 appropriation of \$45 million. The increase would allow for accelerated implementation of the Integrated Plan, with immediate water supply, instream flow, fish passage and land acquisition benefits, including water infrastructure improvements that will deliver water for irrigation, provide immediate fish passage improvements, and fund the acquisition of the highest priority 50,000 acre Teanaway property.

\$22.55 million	→	Water Storage and Water Supply Infrastructure Improvements
\$12.45 million	→	Fish Passage and Habitat Restoration
\$10.5 million	→	Watershed Lands Acquisition
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\$45 million	→	State funds allocated to address the Integrated Plan initial priorities

The Teanaway: An Emerging Opportunity

The 50,000 acre Teanaway Valley property owned by American Forest Holdings LLC has been the highest priority conservation acquisition target in Washington for over ten years. The property is a huge contiguous tract in a single watershed with tremendous environmental, habitat, wildlife, and fish recovery potential. The property also has great recreational value. Acquisition of the Teanaway property is an important element of the Integrated Plan. Years earlier than anticipated, an agreement has been reached for acquisition of the property. The \$45 million capital budget appropriation requested by the Yakima Basin stakeholders will provide the necessary down payment (\$10.5 million) necessary to support the acquisition. The remainder will be financed by private capital with the state acquiring full ownership over 10 to 20 years through capital budget appropriations.

Among the many benefits of the Integrated Plan, the acquisition of the Teanaway is one that will benefit Washington resident for generations to come.



Questions?

Please give us a call.

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