Yakima Basin Water Budget
Neutral Project Policy

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What does the policy do?

- Expedite processing of new applications for permit when they are matched with existing trust water rights.
- Clarify water budget neutrality in the context of Yakima River basin.
- “Bank” credit for substantial enhancement to the natural environmental...
Expedited Processing

• Applications must be non-consumptive and substantially enhance the natural environment -- WAC 173-152-050(2)(b)
  - Application matched with a trust water right must be water budget neutral
  - Substantial enhancement to the natural environment is determined with consideration of the trust water right
Water Budget Neutrality

• The “gold standard” in Yakima is consumptive use measured at Parker

• Further defined by CAG Guidelines
  - Equivalent reductions in consumptive use
  - Water that would have been used if not for transfer
  - Transfer must adhere to specific delivery schedule
  - Must be no adverse change in instream flow
  - Yakima Project operational impacts must be identified
Mitigation bank

• Applications can be expedited as long as the trust water program holds rights that obtain the substantial benefit to the natural environment
  – Tributary flow and habitat improvement
  – Consumptive use surplus provides lower Yakima River flow improvement
Summary

- The draft policy relies on mitigation concepts tested in 2001 and 2005 droughts.
- In areas where ground water is present, but is far removed from the Yakima River, a new permit is required to authorize a mitigated use.
- Expedited processing is the only available means to permit non-exempt uses in cases where the source is far removed from the river.
- Policy would not be used without Reclamation and Yakama Nation concurrence.