

YBSA Monthly Report December 2019

Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Storage Water: Water stored in all five reservoirs at this time is at 26% of average or 170,000 less than normal. Lake Cle Elum, our largest reservoir, is at 18% of average. Snow water equivalent in the upper basin is at 39% and the lower basin is at 58%. A big snow event in February like last year could prevent a drought in the summer and fall of 2020.

Lake Kachess Pumping Project: The Bureau of Reclamation has promised a record of decision on the Lake Kachess Pumping Project but is now waiting for the Roza Irrigation District to make a statement on the project. The Bureau of Reclamation is required by law to determine what needs to be addressed environmentally and what must be accomplished.

Yakama Nation: Congratulations to the Yakama Nation on the successful completion of the Coho Salmon Hatchery near Ellensburg. Additionally, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation has received \$414,000 of state grant money for habitat restoration projects to aid with recovery efforts for Steelhead Trout. The funds were awarded to the Yakama Nation for three habitat restoration projects along Ahtanum Creek and the Tieton and Klickitat Rivers to help improve conditions for the area's steelhead trout populations, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Currently and for the last few years the ability for salmonoids returning up the Yakima River has not increased to what the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan was adopted to generate. Because the instream flow in the Yakima River has been so low some salmonoids are threatened species. If all interested parties were working together with the Yakama Nation to improve the volume of water for the Yakima River Basin we could eliminate our annual question: Is there enough water?.

Columbia River Water: If Columbia River water was made available to irrigate the Sunnyside and Roza Irrigation Districts, water would be available for instream flow. Successfully transferring water from the Columbia River to the Yakima River Basin would address the annual concerns for drought which effects the economy and lifestyle in the Yakima Basin.

Future for the Integrated Plan: A draft developed by the Bureau of Reclamation includes projects extending through 2030 and beyond. The estimated cost of \$750 million includes many projects that would address the needs in the Yakima Basin. There is no plan to increase the water available for instream flow (fish) or out of stream usage (agriculture). The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan goal was to provide approximately 500,000 acre/feet of water. The draft plan does not indicate that after spending billions of dollars the goal would not be met after 20 years. Adding the use of the Columbia River water would solve the problem.

Go to www.ybsa.org for additional information.