

YBSA Monthly Report March 2021

Storage: The Yakima River System Storage (Keechelus, Kachees, Cle Elum, Bumping & Rimrock) is at 63% capacity which is average for this time of year. Cle Elum and Bumping Reservoirs are just over 50% of capacity.

Snowwater content in the upper Yakima Basin and Naches Basin are above 125%. Snowwater content after spring runoff will determine if enough water will be available for agriculture and instream flow. If not storage controlled water will be released to provide the needed water. During the first week in June, water will be released from the reservoirs.

Yakima Integrated Plan: The March Workgroup meeting discussed environmental, conservation and fish enhancement projects. The group continues to endorse improvements in the Yakima Basin but has not addressed the need for additional water. Additional water is needed to guarantee water for irrigation and instream flow for salmonoids. The salmonoids have a difficult time returning up the river to the improvements because insufficient water flowing in the Yakima River has created a temperature barrier in the lower Yakima River. The low river levels have almost eliminated the resident fish and curtailed the returning salmonoids. Only new water like the water from the Columbia River will provide what is needed to solve the Yakima Basin problem.

Irrigation: Water began to be diverted from the Yakima River into the irrigation canals to prime the canals prior to the start distributing water to farms. The water will be available from spring runoff.

Go to www.ybsa.org for additional information.