

## **YBSA Monthly Report August 2024**

Storage: The Yakima Basin storage system's 5 reservoirs are at less than 28% of capacity. Nearing the end of the irrigation system, the reservoirs are at the same amount of storage remaining as last year, but the level is quite a bit lower than average. The August water supply will not meet irrigation demands. The total water supply available for the May 21-September 30 period indicated senior water rights will receive 100%, but junior water rights will receive 51% (Northern Kittitas County Tribune August 8, 2024). Both Lakes Keechelus and Cle Elum are at 8% of capacity. Released water from both reservoirs is more than the amount of the inflow.

New Kittitas County Storage Reservoir: New storage has been proposed near Thorp between Cle Elum and Ellensburg near the Yakima River. With less water available in the Yakima because of a lower snowpack and warmer temperatures, how will the new reservoir be filled? The water will have to be removed from the Yakima River, but the flow of the Yakima already does not provide enough water for irrigation and for instream flow for fish many years. Taking more water out of the river will reduce flow further and cause the river temperatures to be higher which is a major hinderance to fish returning to the river. Another concern is how the new reservoir would be managed along with the other Kittias County reservoirs.

River Changes: The flip-flop of the Yakima Basin rivers will be a reduction in flow from below Lake Cle Elum Dam in the upper Yakima River. The amount of water in the Tieton and Naches Rivers increases to compensate for the reduction in the flow in the upper Yakima River. This is to facilitate spawning in the rivers. The flip-flop process was beneficial decades ago when large numbers of salmonoids returned up the rivers to spawn, but low flow and warm water temperatures in the rivers has significantly decreased the number of spawning fish.

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