

YBSA Monthly Report

August 2025

Storage: The current capacity in the five reservoirs is at 23%. Water for out of stream use (agriculture) will still be needed for at least two more months. With tributaries flow at a minimum, storage water has to be released to maintain instream flow.

Yakima River Flow: Water will continue to be released from the five reservoirs. The project called flip-flop has begun. This means there is a reduction of water released from Kachess, Keechelus, and Cle Elum Lakes. This will cause the volume of water in the Cle Elum and upper Yakima Rivers will have a minimum flow. At the same time, more water will be released from the Rimrock and Bumping reservoirs to increase the flow in the Naches and lower Yakima Rivers.

Drought Level Raised to Severe: The amount of water in the Yakima Basin reservoirs is the lowest on record at this point in the season. Drought was first declared in 2023 and is at severe status now. Irrigation water delivery in the lower Kittitas County will stop in mid-August. See the Yakima Herald Republic story, “Drought Level Raised to Severe” from Saturday, August 9, 2025.

Drought Planning: With a decrease in snowpack, it is time to review the possibilities of utilizing Columbia River water to supply the Yakima Basin.

August Storage Forecast: See Northern Kittitas County Tribune article, “Reclamation’s Yakima Basin August Water Supply Forecast” from Thursday, August 14, 2025. The forecast for the Yakima Basin water supply indicates that the water available will not meet irrigation demands. The May 20-September period supply indicates that senior water rights will receive 100% supply, but junior water right holders will receive only 40%. Junior water right holders represent over 50% of total water rights in the Yakima Basin.

Go to www.ybsa.org for additional information.