

## **YBSA Monthly Report January 2026**

Storage: The five reservoirs are currently at 70% of capacity. That is about average for this time of year. The irrigation season water for the Yakima Basin is provided by the Yakima, Cle Elum, and Naches Rivers carrying the runoff from the snowpack in the Cascades, and the output of the reservoirs. The January precipitation in the Cascades, which provides the water in the Yakima Basin, is at 17.62%. The snow water equivalent (SWE) for the upper Yakima Basin is at 39% of average and for the Naches Basin is at 49% of average. The snow pack is low for this time of year.

Pump Storage: Obtaining water from the Columbia River has always been an option for the Yakima Basin. Pump the water into a reservoir, and use it for irrigation and electrical generation when released. It would provide the water necessary for the Yakima Basin to avoid drought seasons. At the present time, the Yakama Nation has plans to pump water from the Columbia River to a site south-east of Goldendale and return it to the Columbia River to generate electricity.

Groundwater: Groundwater has been decreasing in the Kittitas and Yakima Basins due to the drought conditions that continue to occur. The amount of water in the alluvial aquifer is very low which creates a problem for domestic and irrigation wells. This issue needs to be addressed.

The proposal to pump surface water into the aquifer would work if enough surface water is available. Pumping water from the Columbia River to the Yakima Basin would increase our water supply for recharging the aquifer, and for storage to use for instream flow (fish) and out-of-stream use (irrigation).

Go to [www.ybsa.org](http://www.ybsa.org) for additional information.