

February 5th, 2015

Governor Jay Inslee
P.O Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Patty Murray
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Ancient Forests of Bumping Lake: No to Sacrificing Our Wild Heritage

The undersigned groups are writing in support of protecting endangered species, biodiverse ancient forests, and our wild heritage at Bumping Lake in the Yakima Basin. We do not support the current Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Plan (henceforth the Yakima Plan) which includes two costly new dams. The Yakima Plan has failed to provide a range of alternatives to environmentally damaging irrigation dams whose benefits have not been shown to exceed the costs.

A massive dam at Bumping Lake would destroy one of the now-rarest biological treasures remaining in our state: over 1000 acres of uncut ancient forest just east of Mt. Rainier National Park that *should be added* to the William O. Douglas Wilderness Area.

If these forests are allowed to be destroyed by a new dam proposed by the Yakima Plan, gone forever also will be the superlative habitat for endangered species such as the Bull Trout and the Northern Spotted Owl, as well as their irreplaceable recreational, aesthetic, and transcendent values. This loss cannot be mitigated.

We are completely opposed to the destruction of the ancient forest within the National Forest roadless area surrounding Bumping Lake. After over a century of heavy logging in the Washington Cascades, these forests are all that remain of such ecological variety and huge individual size that are still unprotected.

While we support the Yakima Plan goals of land preservation, salmon restoration and water conservation, we cannot support a massive irrigation dam that would inundate a beloved natural treasure and destroy it forever. We can and wish to support some of the stated goals of the Working Group, but there are better – and certainly less costly – ways to achieve these goals. The Department of Ecology has identified many conservation projects that are not (but should be) a mandatory part of this plan, as well as untapped inactive water storage that would not require devastating and expensive dams to tap into.

The ostensible reason for even considering such dams is to provide “insurance water” for Yakima Basin irrigators in case of a future drought, and improve instream flows. The Bureau of Reclamation refused in 2008 to further study the Bumping Dam project, a high Bumping Dam has always had a negative cost/benefit ratio whenever it has been studied over the past century, and the Forest Service has stated strong concerns about this plan. Additionally, it is well known that the Bumping Lake watershed is not large enough to be useful for storage in consecutive drought years.

Other problematic parts of the Yakima Plan include the money-losing Wymer Dam, the proposed NRAs to increase ORV use, and the proposed Columbia River water transfer to the Yakima River.

We find it ironic – even tragic – that in the same era that Washington State celebrated the removal of two dams on the Elwha River, other special interests are actively promoting building two new dams which will be just as destructive.

Please join with us in pushing for mandatory conservation and water marketing rather than the current proposal to destroy our wild forest heritage and endangered species habitat.

Sincerely,

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