



Statement of the Sierra Club on the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project 2009 Work Group – Discussion Draft Integrated Package, November 9, 2009

The Sierra Club remains opposed to the Bumping Lake Dam small option as set out in the Discussion Draft Integrated Package because it has similar and unacceptable significant adverse impacts to endangered spotted owl and bull trout habitat as the large option. The smaller option would still flood old growth forests, a National Forest inventoried roadless area, trails and campgrounds. In addition, the Bureau of Reclamation did not include any Bumping Lake Dam project in its Yakima River Basin storage project benefit/cost analysis. It is time to put in place water conservation measures that have been identified over the past 30 years.

The Sierra Club also reasserts its support of water conservation measures and opposition to new storage projects as set out in our January 15, 2009, comments on the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resource Management Alternative Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

“We oppose any new storage projects on the Yakima River and its tributaries, including the Bumping Dam Enlargement (Large or Small Option), Wymer Dam (on Lmuma Creek), and Black Rock Dam. DOE and Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec) identified numerous possible measures for improved water conservation, including measures in the No Action Alternative and the Enhanced Water Conservation Alternative of the January 2008 *Yakima River Basin Water Storage Feasibility Study Draft Planning Report/Environmental Impact* (Draft Report). The conservation measures of these alternatives should be implemented before there is any further study or action on new storage projects.”

“Sierra Club is committed to water supply solutions that involve common-sense water management. We believe that in the face of climate change, aggressive water conservation, adoption of water efficiency standards and metering, water markets, low-impact storage projects (e.g., aquifer storage and recovery), forest and flood-plain restoration, and other strategies to promote natural storage are much more cost-effective than new dams, and could vastly improve the efficiency of water use in Washington State. The historic, massive hydrologic re-engineering of Washington’s rivers using dams and irrigation projects has caused historic environmental damage. We strongly urge you to focus on future water projects that fix existing problems, not cause new ones.”

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