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CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

**Project Title:** Yakima River Basin Integrated Plan

**Headline Title (2-5 words):** Yakima River Basin Integrated Plan

**Brief Summary (Abstract):**

The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is a 30-year, \$3.8 billion plan that restores the ecological integrity and provides assurances for water needs for agriculture in the face of on-going climate change. Faced with 5 drought years in the past 15 that has severely impacted the multi-billion dollar agriculture sector, and plummeting salmon and steelhead populations, the Yakama Nation and the local irrigators have joined together along with local, state and federal governments and conservation organizations to design and implement a basin-wide climate adaptation strategy that secures a future for fish, farms and families in the Basin.

**Project Location:** Yakima River Basin, tributary to the Columbia River, Washington State (4 million acres total)

**Partners:** Yakama Nation; Washington Department of Ecology; U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; WA Department of Fish and Wildlife; Washington Department of Natural Resources; U.S. Forest Service; NOAA Fisheries; US Fish and Wildlife Service; Yakima, Kittitas, and Benton Counties; local irrigators (Kittitas Reclamation District, Kennewick Irrigation District, Roza Irrigation District, Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District, Yakima-Tieton Irrigation District); conservation organizations (American Rivers, Trout Unlimited, The Wilderness Society); local communities (Cities of Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Mabton, Wapato, Yakima, Zillah, Moxee, Roslyn, Union Gap and Towns of Naches, Granger and Harrah); businesses (Central Washington Homebuilders Association, Kennewick Public Hospital District, Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce, Plum Creek Timber Company, Red's Fly Shop, Suncadia Resort, Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce, Vision Cle Elum, West Richland Chamber of Commerce, Yakima Chamber of Commerce, Yakima County Development Agency); recreation organizations (Back Country Horsemen of Washington, Kittitas County Parks and Recreation District 1; Washington Trails Association); Mountains to Sound Greenway and the Yakima Basin Fish and Wildlife Recovery Board.

**Background:**

In 2011, local, tribal, state, and federal governments, irrigation districts, and conservation partners in Washington's Yakima River Basin adopted the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan (Integrated Plan). The Integrated Plan is a collaborative ecosystem protection and restoration plan to strategically and creatively address the realities of climate uncertainty and position the basin on the path to resiliency over the long term. The plan lays out seven key elements to help protect, mitigate, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat; provide increased operational flexibility to manage instream flows to meet ecological objectives; and improve the reliability of the water supply for irrigation, municipal supply, and domestic uses.

**Project Goals:**



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CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

1. Protect land and rivers and restore their health.
2. Enhance fish habitat.
3. Provide a more reliable water supply for farmers.
4. Develop a comprehensive approach for efficient use of water.
5. Improve the ability for water managers, as well as fish and wildlife, to adapt to climate change.
6. Contribute to the vitality of the regional economy in an ecologically sustainable way.

**Strategy Goals Implemented:**

All of the NFWPCAS goals are implemented through the YBIP.

Goal 1: Strategies 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4;

Goal 2: 2.1; 2.2;

Goal 3: 3.1; 3.2; 3.4

Goal 4: 4.2

Goal 5: 5.1;

Goal 6:6.1; 6.2; 6.3

Goal 7:7.1; 7.2; 7.3;

**Climate Impacts Addressed:**

Impacts on habitats and species (forested habitats, riparian habitats; salmon and steelhead predominantly) and sustainable agriculture in the face of hydrological changes related to the timing and quantity of available water.

**Status of Project Implementation (Timeline, Milestones, Next Steps):**

Thirty-year project in three phases (generally 2011 – 2041). The first phase to be complete by 2025 includes purchase of at 50,000 acres of forested lands and management for restoration and conservation of watershed values, fish passage at Cle Elum Reservoir, Cle Elum pool raise, Kachess to Keechelus conveyance pipeline, \$100 million in salmon restoration projects throughout the basin, and water conservation that will save 85,000 acre-feet of water primarily for instream flow improvements.

Currently Washington state has invested \$132 million in direct funding for the 50,000 acre of the Teanaway Community Forest (a key piece of habitat that provides critical aquatic and terrestrial connectivity, the restoration and conservation of which essential to the overall restoration of salmon



NATIONAL *fish, wildlife & plants*  
CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

and steelhead populations in the entire basin); the pool raise at Cle Elum Reservoir, and essential seed money for the rest of the Phase 1 projects. The federal government has invested over \$15 million as well.

**Project Outcomes**

Stable water supplies to support recovery of salmon and steelhead populations (projected at 300,000 fish including the largest sockeye run in the lower 48 states) and ensure the existing agricultural water supplies at 70% their allotted amounts during drought conditions.

**Funding Sources:**

Washington State legislature, U.S. Federal budgets (Bureau of Reclamation predominantly, other federal funding sources utilized as well), local cost share

**Contact Info:**

Michael Garrity, American Rivers

206-852-5583 [mgarrity@americanrivers.org](mailto:mgarrity@americanrivers.org)

Mike Leita, Yakima County Commissioner

509-574-1500 [mike.leita@co.yakima.wa.us](mailto:mike.leita@co.yakima.wa.us)

Mike Livingston, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

509-457-9325 [michael.livingston@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:michael.livingston@dfw.wa.gov)

Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner

509-962-7508 [paul.jewell@co.kittitas.wa.us](mailto:paul.jewell@co.kittitas.wa.us)

Lisa Pelly, Trout Unlimited

509-888-0970 [lpelly@tu.org](mailto:lpelly@tu.org)



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CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Phil Rigdon, Yakama Nation 509-865-5121 ext 4655

[prigdon@yakama.com](mailto:prigdon@yakama.com)

Ron VanGundy, Roza Irrigation District

509-840-2911 [ronvan@clearwire.net](mailto:ronvan@clearwire.net)

Tom Ring, Yakama Nation Water Resources Program

509-865-5121 ext 6709 [ringt@yakama.com](mailto:ringt@yakama.com)

Urban Eberhart, Yakima Basin Joint Board & Kittitas Reclamation District

509-929-5859 [urbaneberhart@gmail.com](mailto:urbaneberhart@gmail.com)

Derek Sandison, Washington, Department of Ecology

509-457-7120 [dsan461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:dsan461@ecy.wa.gov)

**Photos/Attachments:**

Photo/Figure Credits (do we have permission to print):



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Suggested Photo Caption:

## Overview of Yakima Basin Integrated Plan



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**Photo Credit:** Tom Ring

**Suggested Photo Caption:** Yakima River Basin