

THE OFFICE OF COLUMBIA RIVER JOBS, FOOD, & FISH

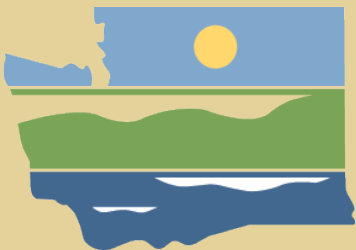
October 2010

Issue One

Weber Siphon Construction: Bringing New Water to Odessa Farmers

In this issue:

- 🌿 Issuing new water rights from the Lake Roosevelt releases.
- 🌿 Sullivan Lake: New water for cities and fish.
- 🌿 Weber Siphon: Bringing new water to Odessa farmers.
- 🌿 The Red Mountain AVA Project provides water for farms and fish.



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington



THE OFFICE OF COLUMBIA RIVER

Shortly after the turn of the millennium, business, agricultural, environmental, tribal, and governmental leaders sat down with water managers to find a new way to deal with Eastern Washington's critical water issues. The problems they faced were immense: aquifers in the Odessa Subarea were rapidly declining; low stream flows threatened salmon and steelhead; interruptible water right holders faced curtailment during droughts; cities struggled to meet the demand for additional water as they grew; new water rights for agriculture, industry, and communities were subjected to years of litigation as various parties fought over the best use of this scarce resource.

As a result of these meetings, the Legislature passed RCW 90.90 in 2006. The statute created an account to fund the development of new water supplies. The Department of Ecology was tasked with managing the account, and it created the Office of the Columbia River (OCR) to do the job.

OCR has added over 147,000 acre-feet to Eastern Washington's water supply since then and will begin issuing new water rights in 2011. Another 292,000 acre-feet (ac-ft) is under development in the near term with much more under long-term development.



Economic Benefits

\$4M Annually
\$1.4B Increased Tax Base

Environmental Benefits

4,600 ac-ft added to stream flows.

SULLIVAN LAKE: NEW WATER FOR CITIES AND SALMON

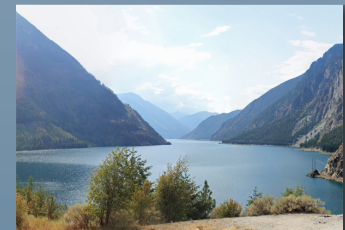
OCR saw an opportunity when it learned that the Pend Oreille Public Utility District (PUD) would no longer generate power at its Sullivan Lake facility. Potential water supply development projects are scarce in the northeast corner of the state. Sullivan Lake would be a great source for water that could be put to both instream and out-of-stream use.

Working with the PUD and local stakeholders, OCR secured 14,000 ac-ft of Sullivan Lake water for release each summer, when the water is needed most. Two-thirds of that water will be allocated for new water rights for communities in Pend Oreille, Ferry, Lincoln, Stevens, Okanogan, and Douglas counties. The remainder will go to enhance streamflows.

ISSUING WATER RIGHTS FROM THE LAKE ROOSEVELT RELEASES

With help from the U.S Bureau of Reclamation, OCR will reach an important milestone when it begins issuing new municipal/ industrial (M&I) permits next year. Water-strapped cities and businesses, many who've been waiting years for relief, will be the recipients of the largest block of M&I water, 25,000 acre-feet, that has been developed in decades.

Another 30,000 acre-feet portion is being readied for the Odessa Subarea, where declining aquifers could devastate the local economy. Additionally, the releases will help endangered salmon and steelhead by adding 27,500 acre-feet to Columbia River stream flows. Fish and interruptible water right holders will benefit as well from the extra 50,000 acre-feet of water that will be released in times of drought.



Economic Benefits

35,000 Jobs Added
\$3B Increased Tax Base
780+ Jobs Protected

Environmental Benefits

27,500 ac-ft for stream flows
17,000 additional ac-ft for stream flows in drought years.

WEBER SIPHON: BRINGING WATER TO ODESSA FARMERS

After securing a new source of water from the Lake Roosevelt releases, OCR faced a new challenge: There was no way to deliver it to the southern part of the Columbia Basin. Interstate 90 was the problem. There was only one point, the Weber Siphon Complex, where water from the Columbia Basin Project passed under I-90, and it wasn't large enough to handle the additional flow. A second siphon would be required.

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation had piping in place under I-90 at the Weber Siphon Complex. It just needed to be connected with the rest of the system. OCR paid for the design and worked with Reclamation and Washington's congressional delegation to get stimulus funding. Construction is now underway.

OCR will deliver 7,000 ac-ft of Lake Roosevelt water through Weber Siphon once it is finished. The siphon has the capacity to deliver much more water when new water supplies are developed.



Economic Benefits

\$30M in construction funding.
8 jobs as of July 1, 2010.
More added as construction moves further along.



Economic Benefits

\$9.2M Annually
103 Jobs Added

Environmental Benefits

7,500 ac-ft added to stream flows.
1,200 acres of shrub steppe habitat protected

RED MOUNTAIN AVA PROJECT: WATER FOR JOBS AND FISH.

Some of the best wine grapes in the world are grown in Washington's Red Mountain American Viticulture Area (AVA), but a lack of water prevented growers from planting new vineyards. The bordering Yakima River has water problems as well--summer flows are critically low in the stretch upstream from Red Mountain AVA.

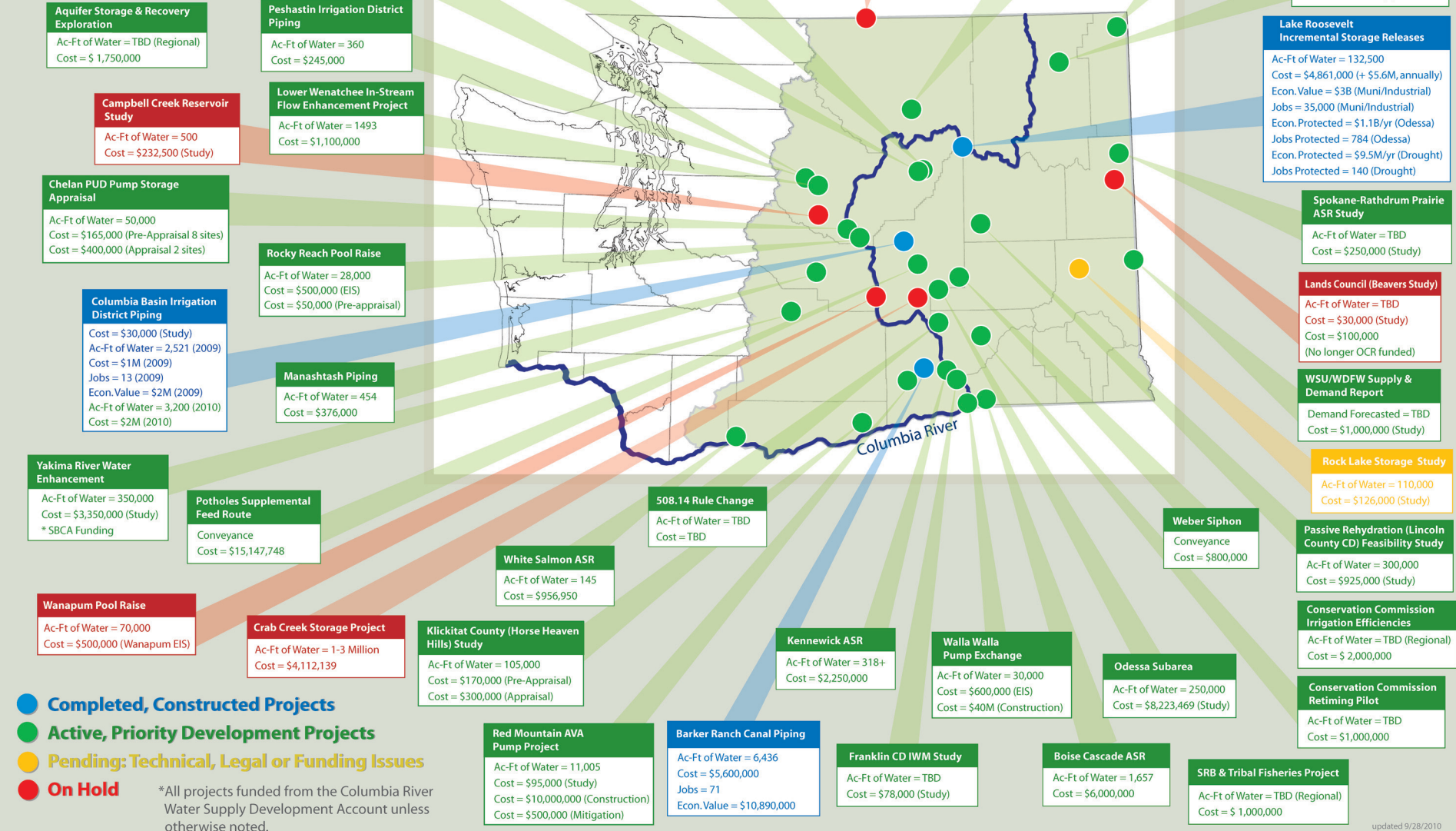
OCR, in partnership with the Kennewick Irrigation District (KID), solved both problems in a very creative way. Water savings from efficiency improvements and past land use changes are being used to provide irrigation for additional wine grape acreage. Stream flows will increase between Prosser and Benton City by moving the KID's diversion point down stream.

Working with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, OCR also developed a mitigation plan to protect nearly 1,200 acres of shrub steppe habitat.



Photo/PNNL

OCR Funded Projects



updated 9/28/2010

Special accommodations

To ask about the availability of this document in a format for the visually impaired, call Office of Columbia River at 509-575-2490. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.