

# Rural Water Solutions - A County-owned and Operated Water Bank

Paul Jewell, Kittitas County Commissioner

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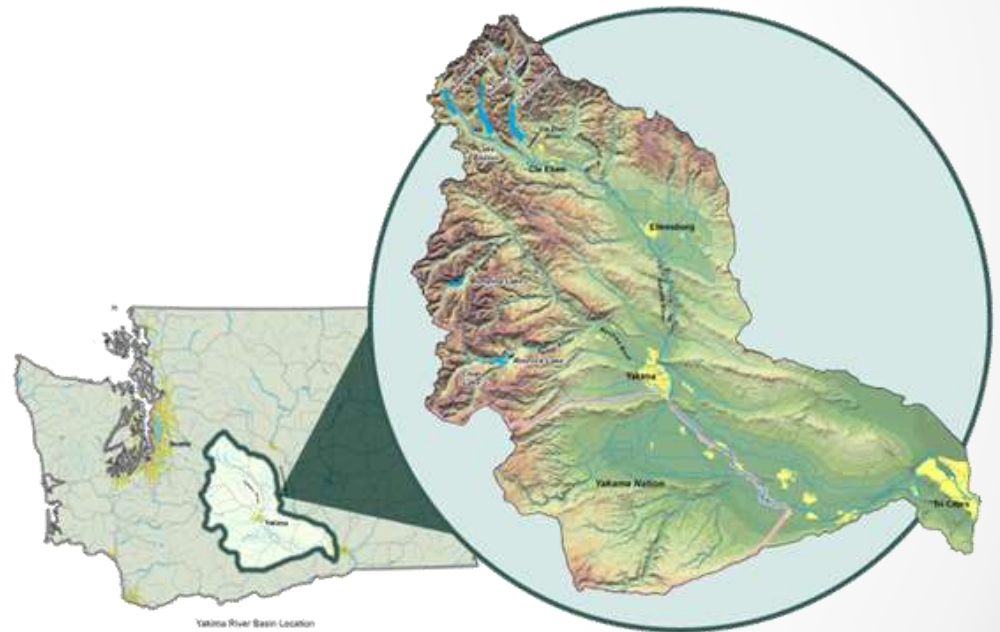
# Kittitas County

A scenic landscape of Kittitas County. A winding river flows through a valley, bordered by a road on the right. The foreground is filled with vibrant autumn foliage in shades of yellow, orange, and red. The background shows rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky.

- Population: 40,000
- Major Industries: Government, Agriculture, Tourism, and Construction
- Primarily Rural
- Head of the Yakima River Basin Watershed

# Yakima River Basin

- 4 Million Acres
- Largest Agricultural Producing Region in the Northwest
- Yakima Project – 5 Reservoirs (1 million AF)
- Irrigation Deliveries of 1.7 Million AF



# Yakima Basin Water Rights

- Fully Appropriated
- Acquavella Adjudication since 1977
- Yakama Nation Water Rights – Time Immemorial
- Senior Water Rights – May 10, 1905
- Pro-rateables
- Junior Water Rights
- USGS Study – Summer 2012

# Droughts

A scenic landscape featuring a river flowing through a valley with rolling hills and trees in autumn colors. The river is the central focus, winding through the valley. The hills are covered in a mix of green, yellow, and orange trees, indicating the fall season. The background shows more distant hills under a clear sky.

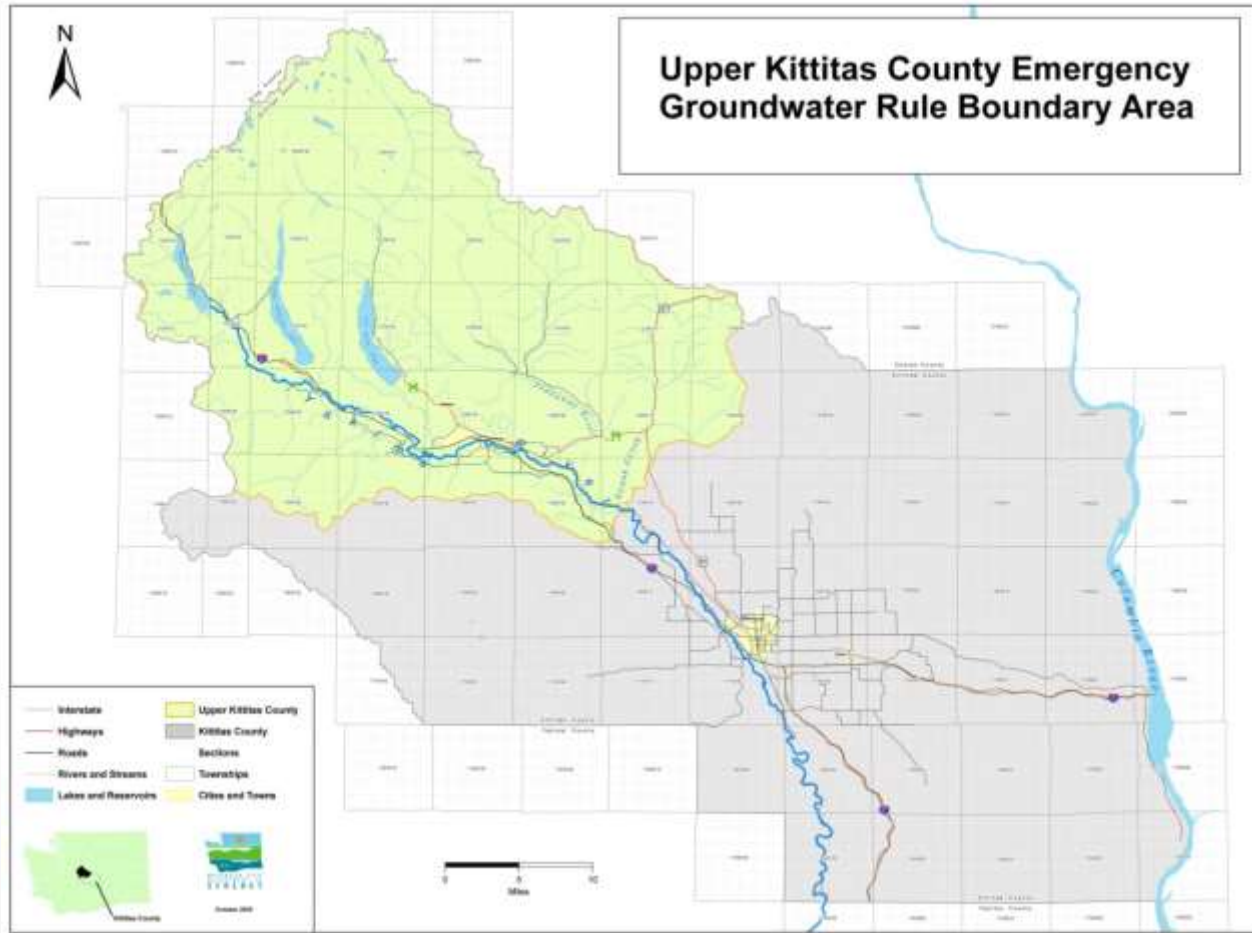
- 12 Declared Droughts Since 1977
- Pro-Ratable Irrigation Districts Reduced to 37%

# Lawsuits

- GMA Challenges 2007
- Aquapermanente Petition 2008
- Kittitas County v. EWGMHB 2011



# Well Moratorium



# Private Water Banks to the Rescue?

- Not regulated and subject to abuse.
  - a. Monopolistic
  - b. Expensive and Non-transparent pricing strategies
  - c. Conflict of interest concern
  - d. Transfer of Authority concerns
  - e. Speculation Potential





# The Kittitas Solution

## Five Components

1. New Regulations
2. Water banks
3. Over – the - Counter program
4. Metering
5. Current - user mitigation



# New Regulations

- New domestic and commercial uses require an adequate water right or mitigation.
- New domestic and commercial uses must be metered.
- These requirements are limited to the Yakima Basin.
- KCC 13.35 and WAC 173-539A

# County-Owned and Operated Water Bank

- Purchased Four Existing Water Banks
- Mitigation Packages Offered
  - i. Package A: 275 gallons per day, indoor use only  
cost: \$3080
  - ii. Package B: 300 gallons per day, 500 sq ft outdoor use allowed  
cost: \$3995
- Limited to building permit applicants



# OTC Program

- Pre-authorized Mitigation Certificates Quotas
- Organized by Sub-Basins
- Reduced Processing Time to 14 days or less
- Large-Area Permit Authority Granted



# Metering Program

- ✓ Focus Group Program Development
- ✓ Vendor Selections
- ✓ Annual Fee - \$180



# Back Mitigation Program

- Existing users are at risk.
- Kittitas County is acquiring offsetting water rights for current-user mitigation.
- TWSA only.
- Quantified at 800 AF consumptive.
- Purchased 630 AF to date.

# Current Status

- ✓ County achieved GMA compliance in 2014.
- ✓ Implementation occurred on time.
- ✓ County water bank is fastest and cheapest option available.
- ✓ County issued over 200 mitigation certificates.
- ✓ Working on expansion of the OTC Program.
- ✓ County purchased another 740 AF consumptive of senior water rights.
  - ✓ 40 to 50 years of water available for new domestic uses.
- ✓ Private water banks are still operating.
- ✓ Contracts with private water banks being developed.



# Contact Information

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