Board members present: Chairman Perry Huston; Vice-Chairman David Bowen; Commissioner Alan Crankovich;

Others: Julie Kjorsvik, Clerk of the Board and approximately 12 members of the public.

At 6:00 p.m. Chairman Huston opened the special meeting to hear a presentation of the draft Yakima Salmon Recovery Plan.

Nancy Lillquist, Ellensburg City Council member and a member of the Yakima Subbasin Fish & Wildlife Planning Board gave a brief introduction and overview of the Yakima Salmon Recovery Plan. She introduced Richard Visser, Joel Freudenthal and David Lind.

Richard Visser, representing the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife gave a power point presentation on the Draft Yakima Salmon Recovery Plan. Information included their vision statement; plan purpose and recovery planning components; recovery goals for Steelhead & Bull Trout; priority projects; strategies for recovery; subbasin scale habitat objectives; subbasin scale administrative/institutional objectives; research & monitoring objectives; population scale objectives; population scale administrative/institutional objectives; population scale research & monitoring objectives; implementation coordination; implementation approach and considerations, funding sources & options, and current programs and studies; social & economic considerations (estimated $160 million dollars excluding major capital projects); implementation costs; estimated date of recovery; remaining planning timeline and public review process; successful examples of programs; populations and improvements. He said they must file the draft plan with the Federal Registry next month.

Commissioner Bowen asked what the historical philosophy was on naturally producing. Mr. Visser said they don’t count fish brought into the hatcheries, only those that are sheer production of harvest because the ESA says they must conserve “naturally”.

Mr. Visser responded to public questions stating that most of the $160 million dollars is for water passage facilities and acquisition easements. He said the restructure of delivering water is
expensive. Joel Freudenthal a Yakima County Fish & Wildlife Biologist also addressed concerns from the public. There was a concern that once the plan is submitted to the Federal Registry that it would become binding. Mr. Freudenthal said there will be at least three other windows of opportunity over the next two and a half years to submit more comments on the plan. Once the plan is published, it will be considered an “interim” recovery plan. He noted that the Department of Fish & Wildlife has not signed off on the plan.

Mark Charlton said the Farm Bureau has reservations of going through the process. He felt the plan was very broad and was worried that once it was published in the Federal Registry that they can’t go backwards from that point. He said they had previously gone through the same issues with the Watershed plan and questioned why there needs to be multiple layers to achieve the same goal. Mr. Visser said they tried to draft the plan in a positive way, but did understand Mr. Charlton’s concerns. Mr. Freudenthal outlined the consequences if they did not draft a plan. He said it was better to have local involvement rather than have the Fed’s come in and write the plan themselves without consideration of the local citizens.

The Board appreciated those who have made comments on the plan. Chairman Huston said the county’s critical areas were currently under review and was concerned with the philosophical debate, claiming it would only loose time, money and efforts. He appreciated the presentation and information submitted and said that if the public has concerns to get those in writing and submit them to the County or the City of Ellensburg so they can be submitted appropriately.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.