

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group

How Did Twisp Benefit from the MVID Instream Flow Improvement Project?

by Mayor Ing-Moody
Town of Twisp

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How Did the Town's Water Right Problems Start?

- **Twisp's original surface water right from the Twisp River dated back to 1912.**
- **In 1948, a flood destroyed Twisp's diversion, and unfortunately, at the time was not restored.**
- **Prior to the flood, Twisp had drilled wells to provide for better water quality.**
- **Twisp received certificates for its wells in 1967 & 1971.**
- **In 1993, Twisp applied to transfer its 1912 surface right to its wells, which was appealed by the Okanogan Wilderness League.**
- **In 1997, Supreme Court concluded Twisp abandoned the surface rights, which reduced Twisp water rights from 610 acre-feet to 224 acre-feet.**

Twisp Responses (1997 to 2007)

- **Over the next 10 years Twisp reduced water use from 610 afy to under 224 afy:**
 - Installed service meters and reduced pipe leaks
 - Changed rate structure to promote conservation
 - Tried repeatedly to buy rights
 - Temporarily leased rights
 - Explored reuse of wastewater
 - Converted wastewater operations to reduce potable water use in favor of internal plant reuse
 - Temporarily issued moratoriums on growth

Still Stuck! Continued Challenges

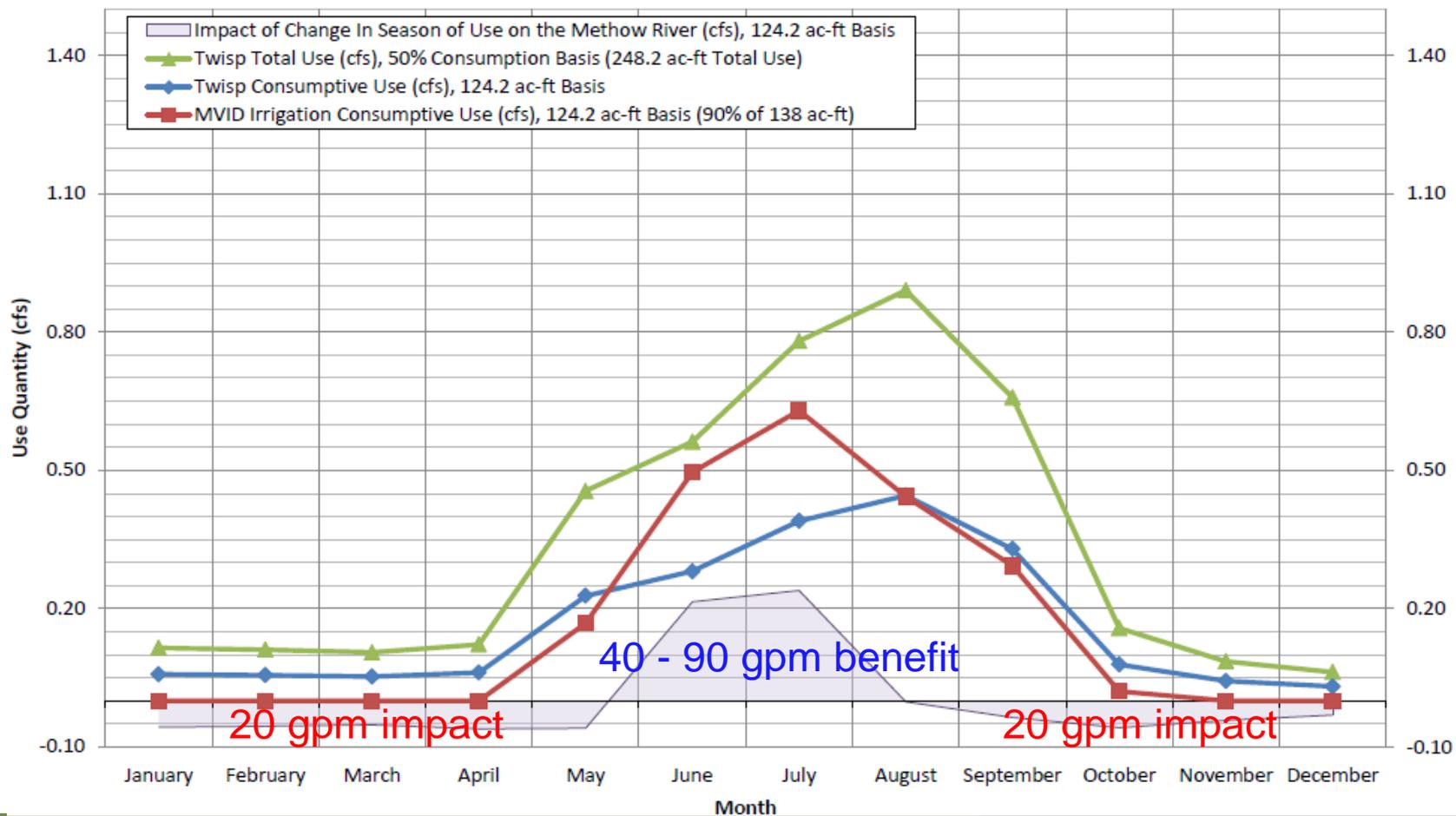
- **Not many water rights to buy at the top of the state**
- **Upstream transfers nearly impossible with adopted in stream flows on the Methow River**
- **Changing a summer irrigation right (the only kind of water right available to purchase) to year-round use is difficult, due to very small impacts on winter time instream flows**

What Did We Do?

- **Partnered with Office of Columbia River to find creative solutions**
- **Partnered with MVID and TU on a regional improvement project with significant instream flow and habitat benefit**
- **Negotiated purchase of irrigation right**

Summary of Water Right Purchase

Seasonal Benefits and Impacts - MVID Project Analysis Town of Twisp, Washington



A New Future . . .

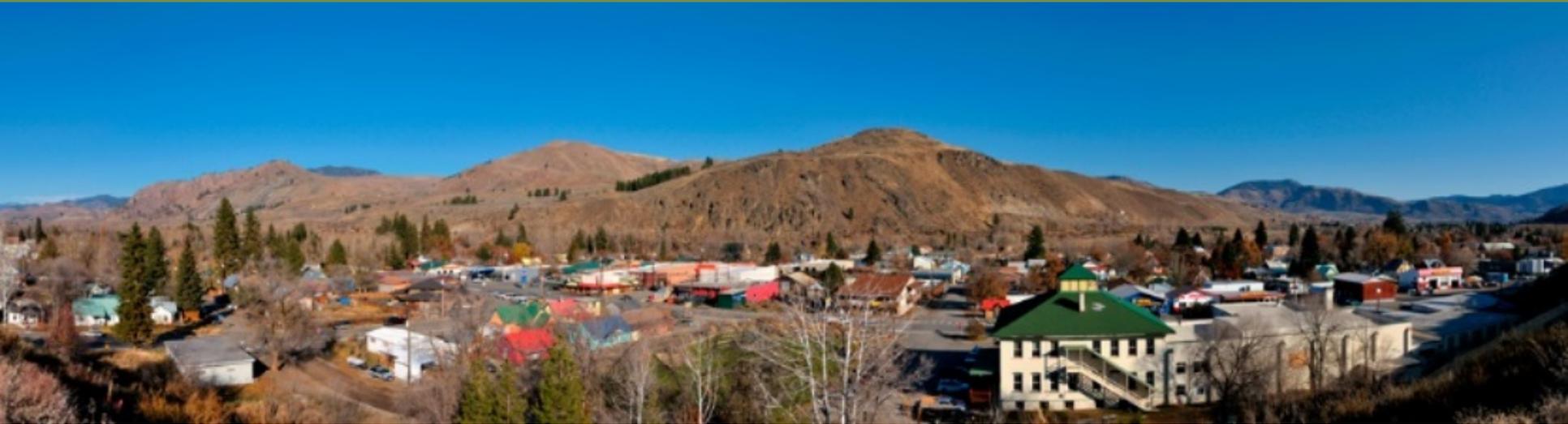


- Twisp bought 124.2 ac-ft of consumptive use from MVID, which helped MVID defer their future pumping costs after switching from a gravity system
- OCR provided initial funding through a 20-year water service contract to be paid back by Twisp
- Twisp received a new water right out of the MVID Water Bank
- Twisp 20-year growth now secure

Next Steps . . .

- **Because Twisp is at the top of the state, we need to plan for 50 to 100 years of water right authority.**
- **Typical 20-year water system planning is o.k. for wells and storage, not for water rights**
- **Twisp continues to look for future additional water right acquisitions or water supply projects**
- **We will maintain conservation incentives to ensure that what we have can be stretched as long as possible**

Questions?



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