**Icicle Instream Illusions**

[March 30, 2016](https://naiads.wordpress.com/2016/03/30/icicle-instream-illusions/) by [naiads](https://naiads.wordpress.com/author/naiads/)

The Icicle Work Group, about which this blog has posted much, has proposed an “Icicle Strategy” for achieving goals to manage water in the Icicle Creek watershed, which originates in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness and feeds into the Wenatchee River.   This quid-pro-quo water management proposal would involve manipulating water levels and building a new dam at the popular Eightmile Lake in the Wilderness.   The alleged benefit is that the water developed by these activities would be used to improve instream flows in Icicle Creek.

We say “alleged benefit,” because if you look at the fine print, you’ll see that improvements to Icicle Creek instream flows are not guaranteed.   The trade-off between harming Alpine Lakes Wilderness and improving Icicle Creek is a smoke and mirrors proposition.  Wilderness and river advocates should not be fooled.

The [charts below](https://naiads.wordpress.com/?attachment_id=1255)tell the story.   The blue, red and green bars indicate that of the 77 cubic feet per second (cfs) that the Icicle Strategy would add to Icicle Creek, only 22 cfs is actually guaranteed to be there, while 55 cfs is subordinate or subject to speculation (ie, 20 cfs may or may not be provided by the Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery at some unknown point in the future).



Chart produced by Icicle Work (2015).

Also of interest is that the four entities that divert water from Icicle Creek should be required to use water more efficiently and prevent harm to the instream habitat of threatened species (steelhead and bull trout).  This is already required pursuant to state water laws and the federal Endangered Species Act, but these laws are not being enforced.   The benefit to Icicle Creek provided by the Icicle Strategy is illusory.

The four Icicle diverters are Icicle-Peshastin Irrigation District (IPID), Leavenworth National Fish Hatchery, Cascade Orchard Irrigation Co., and City of Leavenworth.    IPID claims it has a legal right to take more water from the various Alpine Lakes, but this is not true.  To the extent IPID has water rights, whatever it hasn’t used has been relinquished.  Use it or lose it – that’s the rule of western water law.

The real purpose of the Icicle Strategy is to take more water out of the Alpine Lakes to serve urban and suburban growth and sprawl in the City of Leavenworth and other communities in the Wenatchee Valley.