

MYSTIC LAKE PROJECT

Whitewater Working Group Conference Call Summary May 14, 2008

Participants via conference line:

PPL Montana – Jon Jourdonnais	MFWP – Jim Darling
PPL Montana – Lance Elias	MFWP – Andy Brummond
PPL Montana – Frank Pickett	MDEQ – Ann Harrie
Beartooth Paddlers – Ron Lodders	American Lands – Jeff Frost
Beartooth Paddlers – Ian McIntosh	

The conference call began at 10 a.m. with introductions and a review of the agenda.

Frank Pickett led a review of this year's draft study plan, distributed to all participants via email. Frank and Brent Mabbott will meet with fisheries biologists June 6 to refine strategies for measuring potential effects of releases. Frank reported that he had been onsite recently at West Rosebud Creek to inspect locations for installing water level loggers. He observed a steady flow of 70 cfs, which correlated with 0.84 on the Pine Grove staff gage. One objective for this year is to build a rating curve between the gages and determine what cfs flow achieves the target whitewater flow measured as 2.0 feet on the Pine Grove staff gage. This will facilitate more focused whitewater releases and efficient use of water. Because of tributary inflow between the two measuring sites (the Emerald Lake USGS gaging station and the Pine Grove staff gage), the error in the correlation might be 5-10%. Frank encouraged anyone going on-site to record the staff gage height at the Pine Grove bridge and date/time of measurement and forward the information to him.

Lance Elias reported that it was still too early to make accurate forecasts regarding the amount or timing of this year's runoff, and that it would be best to wait until at least June to begin discussing naturally-occurring whitewater flows and potential dates for releases. In general April and May have had below average temperatures, and above average temperatures are forecast for July, which should provide sufficient water for good whitewater flows. Ian McIntosh mentioned we need to give boaters reliable information about potential whitewater releases, even if this information might not be available until July or August.

Jon Jourdonnais noted that PPLM wants to gather data this year on flow changes that will have potential measurable effects. While probably not as large a flow manipulation as last year, these flows should "push the envelope" enough to increase our understanding of potential effects from whitewater releases. This manipulation would need to occur during the week to maximize agency and PPLM staff participation. Ron Lodders said that in addition to this test, a less-robust release on the descending limb of the hydrograph, augmenting flow about 100 additional cfs to bring the creek up to boatable flow, would test what is possible with relatively small impacts. This could be accomplished with the valve at the re-regulation dam and provide a weekend opportunity for boaters this year. Jon Jourdonnais and Jim Darling clarified that none of the testing is intended to push limits to levels that are expected to harm resources, but flows should be large enough to test effects of flow augmentation.

The next conference call was set for **Friday, June 13th from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.**

The conference call adjourned at 10:40 a.m.