

**Mystic Hydroelectric Project – Aquatic Resources
Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
Bozeman, Montana
January 28, 2010**

ATTENDEES:

| Name | Affiliation | E-mail | Phone |
|---|--------------------|--|-------------------|
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AGENDA ITEMS

- Review last year's meeting notes
- Review of Mystic Whitewater Plan
- Review Fisheries Monitoring Plan
- Water Quality Monitoring Plan

DISCUSSION OF AGENCY STAFFING

Darin will be moving to Ennis, Montana this summer and will become the Zone Fisheries Biologist for the Madison and Jefferson Ranger Districts of the Beaverhead-Deer Lodge National Forest. Jon Jourdonnais: have the Custer & Gallatin forests merged? Darin Watschke: The two forest share Forest Supervision and Deputy Forest Supervisor. When key individuals leave, they merge the positions.

Scott Barndt, Fish Manager, is now acting Gallatin Supervisor. Scot Shuler – East Zone Biologist in Livingston – Acting Deputy Supervisor. Darin Watschke expects they will fill his position ASAP. Much transition in Forest Service staff. Bruce Roberts will be last remaining fish biologist in local Forest Service offices. Justin Jimenez has gone to BLM, Denver.

WHITewater BOATING PLAN

- The Whitewater Recreation Plan was approved by the stakeholders (Forest Service, DEQ, MTFWP, and American Whitewater) and filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in 2009. The Whitewater Plan specifies the protocols PPL Montana will use to determine when to release water from West Rosebud Lake to provide recreational boating opportunities.
- Results from 2009: PPL Montana provided 5 days of whitewater flows. The whitewater protocols are on the Mystic Project website. PPL Montana will sponsor a 2010 TAC meeting when the spring runoff forecast is available.
- Right now statewide snow pack is ≤ 70 percent of the long-term average.
- It is up to the recreational users to track the schedule for whitewater flow releases to know when flows are coming. Information on Mystic Lake pool levels and streamflow in West Rosebud Creek is posted on the Mystic Lake Project website (<http://www.mysticlakeproject.com/whitewater.php>).
- A question was asked about the monitoring of the recreation use during whitewater flow releases. Nancy Johnson and Jeff Frost will keep track of how many boaters use the special flows via a self-reporting mechanism. PPL Montana will do this for 5 years, then it will be re-evaluated.

FISHERIES

- In 2008 PPL Montana and MTFWP cooperatively completed the stream electrofishing section in between dam and powerhouse.
- Fisheries Monitoring Plan Item B reads: electrofish three established locations. Instead, PPL Montana will electrofish the same 200 foot section as in 2008 and the 350 foot section, established in 2005, directly upstream of the powerhouse. The bank shocker works well in this section.
- The Fisheries Monitoring Plan should be modified to delete reference to the MOU – the MOU was never signed. PPL Montana has an informal agreement with agencies. An MOU, or something similar, would come from PPL Montana and would describe the Work Plan and the funding.
- The Final License Application had a Fisheries Monitoring Plan in it (the one handed out at the meeting) but the TAC can make changes before it is submitted to FERC this year.

Each item in the Mystic Fisheries Monitoring Plan was discussed (Items A through F as follows):

Mystic Lake – Item A

Deleted sonar; changed to two sections instead of three; completed in 2009, next will be completed in 2012.

Mystic Lake – Item B (2008 - 2011)

Change this to two sections instead of three.

Ginger: Insert the dates into Plan.

Mystic Lake – Item C

This sampling was done in 2008 and is scheduled for every 2 years. The Fisheries Plan will be written as a forward-looking 6 year cycle Plan, but will mention that cooperative efforts started in 2006.

Frank will follow-up on cost of adding temperature monitoring to USGS gage.

Mystic Lake – Item D

This is the most important monitoring, it starts 2010 and will be done every 3rd year.

Mystic Lake – Item E

Discussion: when should start - this year? Completed one site in 2008. Completed both core samples last year (in 2009). Should PPL Montana start again in 2010? This data collection is supposed to match up with stream sampling. The TAC concurs that this should be done in 2010, and every 3 years. Sampling will be done first week in October.

Mystic Lake – Item F

Redd counts will be done every 2 years.

There is a reach below Pine Grove Campground that for 4 miles is good spawning, getting Yellowstone River fish coming all the way up to spawn.

No changes are needed to the Water Quality Plan, but PPL Montana needs a plan to file with FERC by the end of the year. Randy Apfelbeck will send Frank a WQ Plan format.

OVERALL DISCUSSION OF FISHERIES MONITORING PLAN:

- Take #2 out of the Fisheries Monitoring Plan, but keep it noted for the TAC to discuss every year.
- This summer Items C, D, and E will be completed.
- Get Fisheries Plan ready next week.
- Dave Hergenrider is retiring pretty soon; have to keep track of where equipment is being stored.
- Stream Report for the past 3 years of data is in process – Jeremiah is preparing. He should send a copy of the report to Ginger.
- Lake Data Report is due next year. Brent will e-mail data to Jeremiah.
- Gillnets are in sealed plastic boxes up at the Lake House where they are protected; available for use every 3 years.
- Lake data is indicating no lack of fish although fish are smaller in 2009 than they were in 2003.
- Jeremiah asked if anglers caught smaller fish in 2009 compared to 2003. After the meeting, Ginger checked the data and found that the average length of rainbow trout caught by angling in Mystic Lake in 2003 was 294 mm (n = 418). The average length of rainbow trout caught by angling in 2009 was 277 mm (n = 119).

WATER QUALITY PLAN

- Frank will submit data collected to date to DEQ by mid-year.
- Randy will send Frank an e-mail about what parameters to report and the formatting to submit to DEQ.
- Also need to format the prior year's data.
- Full program this year: temperature, chemistry, biology, and water quality.
- The Water Quality Program samples from Mystic Lake and WRC below and above powerhouse and other sites as well. Ten year plan, then review. Need full program for next 10 years.
- FERC License requires that a Water Quality Monitoring Plan be prepared and submitted this year.

BUDGET

- \$1,500 for waders. Brent didn't buy the waders yet – he will buy this spring. Need sizes for waders. Will be dedicated to Rosebud Creek. Darin and Jeremiah will send size requests to Brent.
- \$1,000 for Pelican Boat (buy from Target). Brent will work with Jeremiah on where it will be delivered.
- \$2,200 for generator – get a Honda 3000 for bank shocker to set up the Pelican boat. Dave Hergenrider has the VVP that was purchased in 2008; he will do wiring.
- \$600-\$800 for extra probe for bank shocker.
- \$500 for extra handheld GPS unit for redd counts and Safety equipment. Consider a SPOT.
- \$11,000 to MTFWP.
- \$8,000 to Forest Service.

Need to get agreements in place for funding. \$25,000 is available for this year. Need to have a scope of work for contracts; Brent needs agreements from MTFWP/Forest Service.

NEXT MEETING

Timing for next meeting: end of January or end of February 2011.

ACTION ITEMS

- Revise Fisheries Monitoring Plan and send it back to TAC for signing, then file with FERC.
- Get agreements in place for funding.
- Buy equipment and decide on where to store it.
- PPL Montana - Prepare Water Quality Monitoring Plan, send it back to TAC for signing, and file with FERC.
- Put water quality data in the format that the DEQ is requesting.
- Jeremiah – send stream report to Ginger when completed
- Brent – email Mystic Lake data to Jeremiah