

Mystic Lake Hydroelectric Project
Whitewater Resource Group
Conference Call – Annual Consultation Summary
June 14, 2011

All participated via conference line:

PPL Montana – Jon Jourdonnais

PPL Montana – Lance Elias

PPL Montana – Deb Mallowney

PPL Montana – Frank Pickett

PPL Montana – Roscoe Kronfuss

PPL Montana – Brent Mabbott

DRNC – Chris Smith for Kim Overcast

MFWP – Jeremiah Wood

MFWP – Ken Frazer

MDEQ – Andy Welch

MDEQ – Randy Apfelbeck

American Whitewater – Kevin Colburn

Beartooth Paddlers – Ian McIntosh

American Lands – Nancy Johnson

REC Resources – Jeff Frost

The call began at 9:00 AM. Nancy Johnson confirmed those participating and reviewed the Mystic whitewater flow enhancement protocol posted on the Mystic Lake project website. Nancy noted the protocol checkpoints of Wednesday noon and Friday noon for checking flow levels on USGS gauging station # 06204050 (West Rosebud Creek near Roscoe MT). Specified flow levels in the protocol indicate whether a flow enhancement is planned for the following weekend.

Ian McIntosh questioned whether a Friday noon checkpoint could be added to the protocol item specifying:

When the Wednesday noon streamflow reported on the USGS Streamflow Gauge West Rosebud Creek near Roscoe MT (#06204050) is greater than 400 cfs, no whitewater flow enhancement will be provided.

Ian questioned whether a whitewater release could be provided when flows were between 286 and 400 cfs on the Friday following a Wednesday noon reading over 400 cfs. Roscoe Kronfuss indicated he would look at the operational steps for providing such a release. Jon Jourdonnais and Brent Mabbott indicated they would also review this release option and get back to Ian.

Lance Elias reported that current inflow to Mystic Lake is 186 cfs and warm temperatures that would start runoff had not arrived at Mystic. The early June snowpack level provided by NRCS for the Upper Yellowstone basin is at 300 percent of normal. The NRCS Fisher Creek Snotel site is reporting a water equivalent of 50 inches, compared to a normal reading of 25 inches for early June. Nancy indicated as of June 8 Mystic Lake is currently at elevation 7,615 feet, more than 50 feet from full pool. Lance's expectation is for high runoff flows in West Rosebud Creek beyond what is normally seen, with decreasing flows in the second to third week in July.

Ian questioned whether any automation of gate operation had been completed at the West Rosebud Lake dam. Roscoe indicated that a new gate had been installed and that it was less labor intensive than the older gate. Roscoe also indicated that gate operation still needed some fine tuning, and that it still may be necessary to pull boards at the dam during a release.

Nancy asked for other information items from the group. Frank Pickett indicated that stage information/water level monitoring would not be completed this year by PPL Montana at the Pine Grove Bridge and Allen Grade Bridge as in previous years. Nancy confirmed that paddler registration would again be requested during flow enhancement events, and that she would inform the group when spill at Mystic Lake Dam is imminent.

Ian questioned whether the Wednesday noon checkpoint on the protocol for reading flow levels in West Rosebud Creek could be dropped, using only a Friday noon checkpoint to indicate a flow enhancement. Kevin Colburn offered that the Wednesday noon checkpoint does provide some information to kayakers on a potential release, especially for those planning long-distance travel. Jon indicated that dropping the Wednesday noon checkpoint would simplify the protocol and that it could be considered. Brent said he would take a look at the paired Wednesday noon-Friday noon gauge readings to help answer Ian's question. Nancy noted that the Wednesday noon reading had been added to the protocol to help both kayakers and Mystic operations staff plan for a release. Jon stated PPLM would look at this option and provide feedback.

With no further discussion from group members, the call adjourned at 9:30.