

**Mystic Hydroelectric Project – Aquatic Resources
 Technical Advisory Committee Meeting
 Bozeman, Montana
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Sale of PPL Montana hydroelectric projects to Northwestern Energy

Due diligence is proceeding. Most likely the sale will close year end 2014. PPL Montana and Northwestern are working to make a smooth transition with key PPL Montana hydro staff becoming Northwestern Energy staff at the sale date. All hydro FERC License agreements and mitigation programs will remain unchanged and in place. MDEQ requested that Northwestern write them to confirm their commitment to the implementing FERC License Section 401 Water Quality Conditions.

Utah Chub in Mystic Lake

Scale samples from five fish were collected and otoliths were collected from two. Results: 4 fish, age 2; 1 fish age 1. The TAC looked at Utah chub otolith and scale slides – not clear on aging. It looks like growth is really fast. PPL Montana staff will try to get some more otoliths this summer.

Utah chub YOY are easy to see in Hebgen. They spawn mid-June to mid-August in Hebgen. PPL Montana staff will go to Mystic in September and do some beach seining to check for YOY.

The next Mystic gillnetting is scheduled for 2015, but some beach seining will be done in September 2014. No collector permit needed as long as Jason is in attendance.

PPL Montana will get some genetics samples from Mystic Lake and compare to other Utah chub (Hebgen). Will Utah chub disperse downstream? Into Emerald Lake? Probably.

Macroinvertebrate Sampling

Dave – MDEQ has updated metrics they use in their current standard operating procedures available on MDEQ's website.

Andy – we could update and use the metrics although we would keep the old ones for comparison purposes, too.

Didymo was extensive in 2012. Higher numbers of chironomids below the powerhouse could have been related to high 2011 flows, *Didymo*, and/or peaking operations.

West Rosebud Fish Sampling

FWP didn't get out for fall electrofishing in West Rosebud Creek until October 23rd (they ran into a locked gate in September, then flows were too high to sample until late October). Brent asked PPL operators -- to drop flows in West Rosebud October 17th because he was concerned that brown trout would spawn at high flows and then have redds be dewatered overwinter when minimum flows are 43 cfs.

FWP saw lots of big brown trout; didn't get a recap run done, many suspected migrants. Better to sample brown trout in spring.

In October saw gravid / ripe brown trout, also saw brook trout. They will go back in spring.

Brent asked operators to bring flows to about 100 cfs through October / November.

Sediment Core Samples

Core samples were done in 2012 rather than 2013. Will get back on regular schedule now.

West Rosebud Creek spring redd survey saw four redds on 10/14/13; 37 on 11/7/13. Brent saw 16 during his survey in November (only a partial survey).

Rainbow trout redd counts are highly variable from year to year. Why? Year class moving through? Flows good for movement? High flow in 2011 might have blown out a dam that opened up passage? Answer unknown. Spring redds in 2011 – flows dropped after spawning season, but young fish were observed later in season so there was some survival.

MFWP will continue to do annual redd counts in West Rosebud Creek – spring and fall.

Whitewater Plan

Two boaters this year; 3 days of flow. Nancy Johnson and Andy Welch sent the word out to the whitewater boater community. PPL Montana has to provide the recreational opportunity per the License.

Discussion on Horsepower Restriction for Boats in West Rosebud Reservoir

Could the Forest Service do that ? They will consider it. Some complaints about larger motors creating a wake. Concerned about jet skis.

Clint will talk to Jeff Gildenhaus and sort out which Mystic TAC will address it.

Forest Service has a no-wake zone on Hyalite Lake. Who has the ability to regulate? Permit / licensing questions – who can apply a restriction? This needs to be researched.

FWP: get data to Ginger for annual report.

2014 PPL Montana Funding

\$25,000 available - \$10,000 for Forest Service; \$10,000 for FWP; \$5,000 for equipment.

Discussion of starting a PIT tag Project

There is a need to spell out specific objectives prior to purchasing PIT tag equipment.

Clint / Jason / Brent will get together in a few weeks to discuss what the study objectives would be.

Money has to be spent by the end of the calendar year; can't be banked. PPL Montana can install an automated PIT tag reader but ice, sand, etc. will interfere with the signal.

Brent is going to buy some purse seines this year.

Agreement with Forest Service – needs to be reviewed. It can be set to be active for 3 to 4 years. FWP agreement – Jim is doing tracking. Don Skaar does budget amendments.

Clint is lead on fisheries side for Forest Service for now.

This year electrofishing will be done in the bypass in the 2nd week of August.

PPL Montana made a proposal to send fisheries reports to FERC every 6 years at end of 6-year cycle. The TAC would still get reports annually. FERC doesn't typically become involved in the details as long as the agencies are satisfied with the work being done by the Licensee. The TAC agrees on 6-year cycle for FERC filing of the fisheries report.