

# MYSTIC HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY RELICENSING PROJECT

## **Recreation, Land Use and Aesthetics Resource Group**

### *Final Meeting Summary*

Meeting Date: August 31, 2004

Meeting Location: Telephone conference call 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Note from Jon Jourdonnais: The summary discussions presented below are a work in progress and do not reflect formal decisions made by PPLM or any agency or public group.

#### **Attending via conference call:**

PPL Montana – Jon Jourdonnais

PPL Montana – Larry Gruel

Custer National Forest– Jeff Gildehaus

USFS Regional Hydropower Team – Justin Jimenez

American Whitewater – John Gangemi

American Whitewater affiliate – Ian McIntosh

Beartooth Paddlers – Ron Ladders

GEI – Doug Foss

APLE Co. – Nancy Johnson

APLE Co. – Jeff Frost

Nancy Johnson facilitated the meeting.

#### **Review of Agenda**

Nancy reviewed the Mystic RLUA Resource Group agenda as sent out to participants via email. No changes were made to the agenda.

### **I. Status of results from the 2004 whitewater flow study on West Rosebud Creek**

Jeff Frost reported that 41 surveys were completed for the whitewater flow study in 2004 between June 7<sup>th</sup> and August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Information on average hourly flows in West Rosebud Creek below the re-regulation dam will be obtained from GEI to complete the analysis of survey responses. Survey results will be available by December. John Gangemi requested that PPL Montana provide a frequency distribution graph showing numbers of floaters versus stream flows with the survey results.

Jeff Frost and John Gangemi will coordinate on presentation of results.

### **II. Discussion of measured flows on West Rosebud Creek**

Doug Foss GEI discussed flow measurements available for West Rosebud Creek. Currently flows are measured below the powerhouse by PPL Montana and the USGS, and at the re-reg dam by PPL Montana. The Beartooth Paddlers also tracks flows via a staff gage at the Pine Creek Bridge. The group discussed how these different measurements were taken and

observed discrepancies between measured flows. The group also reviewed operation of the real-time flow gage at the re-reg dam by PPL Montana during 2004 and posting of flow information to the Mystic Project re-licensing website. Representatives for the Beartooth Paddlers stated the need by floaters for accurate information on releases from the re-reg dam on a 'real-time' basis on the Internet. The group recognized the effort of PPL Montana to supply this information to floaters in 2004 on the Mystic re-licensing website.

Doug Foss reviewed operational problems that occurred during 2004 with the flow gauge and reporting of flow information to the website. Doug stated that PPLM was working to resolve these problems and that 2-hour updates of flow information would be available for 2005 on the Mystic re-licensing website. Ron Ladders asked whether the 2-hour flow information was available during 2004, given some problems with reporting to the website. Ron noted the value of this information to floaters, especially when coupled with advance notice of any operational changes at the Mystic Project that would affect flows in the creek. Ian McIntosh noted that it would be useful to obtain predictions on flows from PPL Montana 48 hours prior to a weekend to facilitate trip planning.

The group discussed correlating PPLM flow information with measurements made at the Pine Creek staff gage by floaters. Doug Foss stated that a rating curve could be created to compare the PPLM flow measurements at the re-reg dam with the height measurements recorded by floaters at the Pine Creek Bridge. Doug also said that a spreadsheet of past flows in the creek could be compiled for summer months back to 1995 for correlation with measurements at the staff gage. Ron Ladders will provide Doug with past measurements for the staff gage at the Pine Creek Bridge after reviewing Doug's spreadsheet. John Gangemi questioned whether there was a diurnal variation in flows during runoff, especially below the re-reg dam, and noted that 2004 flow information would have hourly averages, while flow information for prior years would be a daily flow average.

Doug Foss will generate hourly flow information for 2004 for use in analyzing survey results, and the spreadsheet for prior year flows back to 1995 for development of a rating curve for the staff gage.

### **III. Review of PPLM draft study requests for the Mystic Project (file attached)**

The group discussed the draft study requests developed for recreation by PPL Montana. This study request proposed 1) continuation of the whitewater flow study for 2005, and 2) collection of vehicle use counts on the West Rosebud road and trail use counts on the Mystic Lake Trail. Jeff Gildehaus stated that the FS would provide a comment to PPL Montana requesting the installation of an additional trail counter above Mystic Lake. Jeff also noted that a study proposal considered by the FS to study LAC (limits of acceptable change) thresholds at camping locations around Mystic Lake would not be needed due to completion of this study in 2004. John Gangemi questioned whether other resource groups were proposing studies that could potentially affect flows in West Rosebud Creek, and noted the need to study effects of any flow changes on whitewater conditions. Attendees agreed to continue dialog as needed on study requests to clarify information needs.

The conference call ended at 3:30 PM.