

# MYSTIC HYDROELECTRIC FACILITY RELICENSING PROJECT

## Recreation, Land Use and Aesthetics Resource Group Final Meeting Summary

Meeting Date: March 24, 2004  
Meeting Location: EconoLodge, Livingston, Montana

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.

### **In attendance:**

PPL Montana – Jon Jourdonnais  
Custer National Forest– Jeff Gildehaus  
APLE Co. – Nancy Johnson

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

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. No changes were made to the agenda.

### **Review of January 20, 2004 meeting summary**

As part of the meeting review for January 20, Nancy noted the status of tasks for study of whitewater resources on West Rosebud Creek:

1. John Gangemi (AW) has provided to PPLM dates of whitewater floats on West Rosebud Creek for 2000 through 2003 that were noted in diaries of floaters.
2. PPLM has sent information on stream flows to AW for the specified float dates.
3. Jon Jourdonnais stated that PPLM has a June 1, 2004 target date for installation of a real-time stream flow gauge below West Rosebud Lake. Real-time flow information would be available on the Mystic project web site. Jon also noted that the expected fill date for Mystic Lake would be posted on the web site.
4. APLE staff will work with AW to develop an internet-based survey of whitewater floaters for 2004.
5. PPLM will determine whether the floater survey could be made available on the Mystic Project website, with survey responses submitted electronically

## **I. Discussion of measures for protection, mitigation, and enhancement of recreation resources in the Mystic project area**

The group discussed possible measures for recreation resources, and identified partnership opportunities between PPL Montana and the Forest Service. Timelines for measures that could be implemented over the next several years also were discussed. The following short-term measures were identified:

- Trail maintenance and backcountry restoration activities, possibly using work crews from the Montana Conservation Corps. This measure would involve rehab of heavily used campsites along the south shore of Mystic Lake following FS review, rehab of segments of the Mystic Lake Trail showing erosion or deterioration, and smoothing of approaches to trail bridges. Jeff G indicated that FS staff would begin an inventory of these locations.
- Locating a real-time flow gauge below the re-regulation dam on West Rosebud Lake to report flow conditions to whitewater boaters and assist them in trip planning. Jon Jourdonnais noted a June 1 target date for installation of the gauge, with flow information available on the Mystic Project web site. Information on the expected fill date for Mystic Lake would also be posted to the web site.
- Providing a solid waste collection facility (dumpster) at West Rosebud Lake to service the fishing access sites and Mystic Lake Trailhead. Possible locations and the need for this measure were discussed. Jeff Gildehaus provided information on operation of existing dumpsters at Emerald Lake and Pine Grove campgrounds.

Other measures were identified as possible PM&E measures for a 5 to 10-year time period. These included expansion of parking capacity at the Mystic Lake Trailhead, reconstruction of the upper foot bridge over West Rosebud Creek on the Mystic Lake Trail, PPLM participation with the FS to address future needs for I&E (interpretation and education), and development of carry-in boat launch facilities and an accessible trail and fishing pier at West Rosebud Lake. The group also agreed to explore options for improving the condition of the West Rosebud Road.

Other measures discussed by the group for long-term implementation were:

- Long-term use monitoring by PPL Montana in cooperation with the Forest Service, including periodic visitor surveys and use of automated road and trail counters. This measure would provide drainage-specific information to supplement data from the National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) to help guide adaptive management of recreation resources in the Mystic project area.
- For aesthetic resources, PPLM would consult with the Forest Service when requested for aesthetic and design considerations related to maintenance or upgrades of Mystic project facilities.

The group noted that discussion of these measures would continue, and that public scoping for project re-licensing would provide additional feedback on these and other measures.

## **II. Need for and timing of collection of recreation use information via car counters in the Project area**

The group discussed use of car counters to collect information on site use in the upper West Rosebud drainage. This data would supplement that from the 2001 APLE visitor survey. Jeff G will check with FS engineers on the availability of counters. PPLM identified installation and use of car and trail counters as a partnership opportunity with cost sharing if additional counters are needed. The group discussed possible locations for counters, and implementation in 2004.

## **III. Review schedule for FERC site visit and project scoping in August and set next meeting date, location, and agenda.**

Jon Jourdonnais noted the FERC scoping visit August 10<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, with agency scoping in Red Lodge the morning of August 11<sup>th</sup>. Nancy noted that the next meeting of the Mystic RLUA resource group would be scheduled following group review of a whitewater survey. American Whitewater will prepare a draft survey. An on-site meeting at the Mystic Project is planned for the third week in June for further review and discussion of PM&E measures listed above. An email will be sent to the group with a specific date and time.

/3.24.04 Mystic RLUA RG mtg summary