From: Michael Lees [mailto:mike@wescomm.com]
Sent: Friday, January 21, 2011 11:10 AM
To: lduberstein@usbr.gov
Cc: Bonnie Edwards; Hans Stephenson; Joel Wilson
Subject: Comments on Bighorn River operating criteria.

Dear Mr. Duberstein,

As a frequent fisher of the Bighorn River tailwater, downstream of the Yellowtail Dam, I feel that it is very important that the Bureau of Reclamation modify the current draft plan to better protect the potential world class fishery in the Bighorn.

First of all I want to strongly suggest that the flows in the Bighorn be targeted at 3,500 cfs which is the ideal flow to maintain a healthy fishers according to the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks research. In my own personal experience, the very low flow conditions that were allowed in the 2009-2010 winter season had a very negative impact on the Bighorn Fishery.

Second, I feel that a better balance needs to be maintained between the reservoir pool, the lake, and the flows in the Bighorn. I suggest that the draft plan be changed to draw the reservoir down to an elevation of 3,614 feet in April, which should reduce the need to evacuate the reservoir should spring storms cause an increase in water levels, as they have for the last few years.

Please change the plan to protect the fishery!

Respectfully,

Michael Lees
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