From: John & Susan Lambert [mailto:jalambert_@msn.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 25, 2011 3:26 PM
To: Duberstein, Leonard (Lenny) B
Subject: Big Horn River Water Flows

Lenny ……We are contacting you to voice our concerns about what we have been experiencing in recent years as unacceptable variations in the flows of water being released from the Yellowtail Dam into the Big Horn River. We both are avid fly fishermen and have enjoyed coming over to Ft. Smith, Montana twice a year to spend a 3-4 day fishing trip on the Big Horn River. Initially, our trips to the Big Horn River were rewarded with very pleasant and positive fly fishing experiences. Unfortunately, the last two years we found our experiences to be quite different due to the flows in the river being either extremely low or dangerously high. The water levels have become so unpredictable that on our most recent planned trip in 2010, we would have been cancelled the trip if it were not for the high cancellation fees we would have had to pay the accommodations provided. The result was we ended up making our planned visit only to find extremely strong flows that were to such a point that we were forced, for safety sake, to limit the areas we fished due to what we considered to be dangerously high flows. Also, these conditions greatly reduced our catch and release rate and thus the overall enjoyment we achieved from our more than a thousand dollars in monetary expenditures into the local Ft. Smith economy.

While we are not water flow experts, It seems to us that such large variations in levels of flow is causing great harm to the Big Horn fish habitat and the regeneration of new trout. It seems to us that a more appropriate consistent flow of 3000 to 4000 CFS should be maintained. It seems to us that through the Bureau of Reclamations' better management of water levels in the large reservoir as well as the after bay such conditions should be able to be achieved. We trust that such an important waterway having as strong an impact on Montana and Wyoming economies should have well established and developed flow control criteria levels. It appears, however, that either the flow criteria is not being followed and or such criteria is in need of being modified including a more effective monitoring process.

As the Federal Bureau of Reclamation is the governmental agency having responsibility for overriding special and political interests in the states of Montana and Wyoming, my son and I are most hopeful your agency will resolve the most recent unacceptable variations in water flow for the Big Horn River. Please be assured that if such is not the case, we will be forced to eliminate future plans to spend our time and money visiting what we have previously found to be one of the best fisheries in the World.

Thank you in advance for your assistance in helping resolve the concerns of an aging fly fisherman and his son……..

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