Lenny & Paula -

This is my comment on the Draft Operating Criteria for Bighorn Lake.

I have been a fishing guide on the Bighorn River for the last twenty five years. I have watched the quality of the fishing experience deteriorate since the early 1990s when extreme high flows began to erode the river bottom and close off the flows through the side channels. Many of the prime fishing spots were the structure of the islands and shelves in the river. The last two years of extreme high spring flows has completely eroded away whole islands and smoothed out the bottom of the river. The Bighorn River of today has lost the side channels that used to provide great habitat for trout and waterfowl as proven by the Geomorphic Study released by the Bureau of Reclamation last year.

I have guided fishermen from every walk of life that have come from all over the world. I have been fortunate enough to share the experience of fishing the structure of the famous Bighorn River for the greater part of my life. It is heartbreaking and a tragedy to watch these national treasures just wash away and disappear forever.

I appreciate how difficult it is to manage the unpredictable flows though the entire Bighorn drainage. The river flows above 7500 cfs must be avoided to stop downstream resource damage. I suggest that the Bureau of Reclamation schedule higher river flows earlier in the year so the destructive extreme high river flows never happen again.

Thanks,

Dennis Fischer