United States Department of the Interior
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area
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Fort Smith, Montana 59035
(406) 666-2412

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JAN 24 2011

January 20, 2011

Dan Jewell, Area Manager
Bureau of Reclamation
Montana Area Office
P.O. Box 301137
Billings, MT 59107-0137

Dear Mr. Jewell,

The National Park Service has reviewed the draft Bighorn Lake Operating Criteria Evaluation Study and Report dated September 14, 2011 and we appreciate the hard work from you and your staff in this undertaking. The mandates for managing the Yellowtail Unit for the Bureau are many and complex, as you well know, and satisfying the needs and interests of your constituents only adds to the complexity.

Upon careful review of the draft we agree with the proposed modifications of the operating criteria and feel they will provide a significant benefit for all user groups. Predicting precipitation is not an exact science yet the Bureau has been able to develop operating criteria using historical data and available science that aids in developing major operational decisions in a transparent manner. The complexity is exacerbated by changing climatic conditions affecting historic precipitation patterns and seasonal runoff from winter snowfall.

We understand this is a living document and over time will evolve as historical data is established and the science of predicting precipitation improves. We look forward to working with you in the future to provide a better balance between all Bighorn River water user groups.

Sincerely,

Jerry L. Case
Superintendent

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