From: Jim R. Hintz [mailto:jhintz@crowleyfleck.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 20, 2011 1:30 PM
To: Duberstein, Leonard (Lenny) B
Subject: Bighorn River Flow Comment

I understand you are taking public comment on the proposed draft operating criteria for Yellowtail Dam on the Bighorn River. As a fisherman, I would like to see better regulated flows on the Bighorn to protect the trout fishery on a legendary river, which is important not only to local but also nationwide fisherman who come here for the fish and spend a lot of money in the local economy. According to MT FW&P research 3,500 cfs is the optimum flows for a healthy fishery, and 2,500 cfs is only a minimum target for drought years. Operating criteria should reflect that. In the past couple years we've seen low spring flows while the reservoir is being filled to the limit, and then we see massive releases that flood the river after spring rains that make the river unfishable. I cannot imagine such dramatic fluctuations in water levels, especially during the spawning period, help the fishery in any way. An easy solution would be to lower reservoir levels in the spring to about 3,614 feet in April -thereby reducing flooding downstream from spring storms. This will insure even better fishing on the Bighorn River, enhance its national reputation as blue ribbon waters, and that would mean more dollars in the local economy. Thanks.

Jim Hintz
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