From: Mark Keeney [mailto:markwood.keeney@oracle.com]
Sent: Monday, January 24, 2011 12:13 PM
To: Duberstein, Leonard (Lenny) B
Subject: The Bighorn River

Dear Sir, I live in VA. And am a land owner in MT and have spend about 30 days a year for the past 30 years enjoying the Bighorn river. I would like to provide your with my input on how to better manage this incredible resource. At my camp, we have on average 10 -15 anglers every month who come to the Bighorn to enjoy this amazing river. I have no idea how much money they spend or how much money is generate by fishermen and hunters, but I know it is a lot. My fishing and hunting licenses cost me at least $350 a year. (I have to buy the tribal license since the State and the Tribe can't seem to agree on how to license the river).

The Bighorn is a treasure, but it must be maintained in order to be enjoyed. Over the past 30 years, I have seen the river fluctuate from 1400 cfs to as much as over 10,000 cfs. This unpredictability at unscheduled times truly is a concern for those who visit the river. The fishermen are affected, but the fish and wildlife are critically affected when these changes occur. There must be some way to intelligently manage the flow from the Bighorn lake in such a way that the river could flow at a normal 3500cfs and would not go below 2500 cfs during times of drought. This would improve the fish and wildlife as well as make using the river a predictable experience.

The weather in this part of MT is unpredictable and so it would make sense to draw down the reservoir lower in the spring than called for in the draft criteria – to an elevation of about 3,614 feet in April — thereby reducing the need to rapidly evacuate the reservoir should spring storms become a problem. This will secure more water for hydro protection and reduce flooding risk to public campgrounds and marinas on the north side of the reservoir, as well as to Montana landowners along the river. It will also better secure the fishery and fishing in the Bighorn River.

I respectfully request that you consider my recommendations in your future plans for managing the wild and wonderful Bighorn River.

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