

From: <ENGLISHJ98@aol.com>
To: <steffentlyrod@lycos.com>
Date: 1/24/2006 11:55:03 AM
Subject: Lees Ferry Fishing Conditions

Dear Mark Steffen & Bill Persons

I just wanted to drop you a line about the current fishing conditions at Lees Ferry. I wish I could be in better spirits about this but, here it is. As you know, fishing was not good thru the steady flows of Sept & Oct (no drift), but with the arrival of the higher flows it has become as bad as I can ever remember. It is equal to the disaster of the early 90's. Myself along with the rest of the guides here are searching and exhausting everything within our inventory of knowledge to catch 1 to 3 fish per client per day. The flyfishing has always suffered first, but lately the spin fisherman's experience has been the same, this is new, also very scary. With the lower water on Sundays we have had slightly better results, but let me quantify this, I mean just slightly. My hope, and I do believe the fishing will improve somewhat with the coming of lower flows in March, however we are asking this ecosystem to mount a recovery like it has never been asked to do before. With all the challenges before us, Insufficient dissolved oxygen, Zero available food for fish due to steady flows, New Zealand Mudsnaills consuming the nutrients of the food base, and food base destruction from experimental floods, in our future, I wonder how many more hurdles Lees Ferry can endure. I guess my message to you is that we are at rock bottom now, I only hope you can convey this to the TWG & AMWG. Our business is now at 50% of what it was 5 years ago, three of our guides have moved on in the last 6 months, two other outfitters have quit completely. Marble Canyon Lodge is now closed Mon-Thur, for the first time ever.

We have always cooperated with our votes at both the TWG & AMWG meeting's to do the experimental flows and floods, all of it to try and help them understand this complicated resource. I think it is now time for them to try and understand ours, and show some mercy upon it with their decisions about the detrimental effects included within future experimental flows, or else we may loose it all. Bill, have you any input from the shocking in Dec? Does it reflect what we are seeing? What about the fish density, condition, size? I am aware of what you are facing and sympathize with all the restraints placed upon your ability to deal with this problem. As you know, I have personally witnessed how hard both of you work to defend the Ferry, but Bill & Mark I think we need to push harder for science to get into the Benthos and begin understanding the foundation of the food chain. In closing, I ask that you inform them we are on our last legs as a recreational resource, known around the world, with an uncertain future. Thanks for your time and help to our cause, and I wish you both good luck at the meetings this week.

Jeff English, Fishing Guide &
Owner Cliff dwellers Lodge