

ORIGINAL

CONTROL NO. 92-20639

PRJ-13.00-
MIN
(Reservoir Operation)

FOLDER ID 6503



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

W-6610

SEP 28 1992

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
OCT 5 - 1992	
FBI - JACKSON	
100 <i>dy</i>	10/7
205 <i>K</i>	10/7
400 <i>MACH</i>	10/10
470 <i>dy</i>	10/21
471 <i>dy</i>	10/22

Mr. Timothy J. Bommer
P.O. Box 1728
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

Working Copy

Dear Mr. Bommer:

Senator Alan Simpson has asked me to contact you directly regarding the concerns expressed in your recent letter to him about the water supply conditions at Jackson Lake.

As I am sure you are aware, 6 consecutive years of well below normal precipitation have resulted in drought conditions throughout much of the West. The drought is both severe and widespread. Two of the States adversely affected by continuing drought conditions are Idaho and Wyoming. In particular, the drought has greatly affected the operation of the Bureau of Reclamation's Minidoka Project, which includes nine storage reservoirs in the upper Snake River drainage in western Wyoming and eastern Idaho.

The drawdown that has occurred at Jackson Lake this season is a consequence both of the drought and of releases of water supplies for delivery to entities holding storage contracts with the United States. The Congress authorized construction of the Minidoka Project expressly to provide for agricultural production. Further, holders of water storage contracts are repaying the United States for the capital investment associated with the project's development. Nevertheless, Reclamation makes every attempt to operate the project for multiple purposes, including recreation at Jackson Lake, which, as you point out, has been enhanced by the existence of the project.

Early this spring, in anticipation of the effects of the current drought, our Minidoka Project Office staff started planning for a particularly low water supply. Snowpack and runoff patterns appeared to be almost identical to those which occurred in 1934, one of the lowest water years of record. Based on water supply projections early in the year, it appeared that the entire contents of all project reservoirs would be needed to complete the irrigation season. All of those predictions, including dates, anticipated flows, and rates of reservoir drawdown, were presented in detail at the annual public recreation meeting held in Jackson, Wyoming, on May 12, 1992.

As the season progressed, it became apparent that inflows into Jackson Lake were running somewhat above the earlier predictions. Further, since many irrigation companies exhausted their storage supplies and stopped diverting for irrigation much earlier than normal, the quantity of water presently in Jackson Lake is greater than was anticipated.

It is the operating policy of the Minidoka Project Office to maintain carryover storage in the system reservoirs that are the furthest upstream. The result of this policy is now apparent, as indicated by the contents of the various reservoirs as of September 1, 1992. While the entire 9-reservoir system held only 17 percent of capacity, Jackson Lake was at 29 percent. By contrast, American Falls Reservoir was only 7 percent of capacity and Palisades Reservoir was at 16 percent of capacity. It is projected that Jackson Lake will contain approximately 115,000 acre-feet at the end of the season on October 1, 1992.

It is unfortunate that recreation has been affected on Jackson Lake this year; however, recreational boating at Jackson Lake has lasted longer than any other reservoir in the system. Recreation at American Falls and Palisades Reservoirs ended very early in the season.

As you are aware, it is not possible to store water and keep the lake level high, and also release the water for the downstream purposes for which project development was authorized by Federal law. Although, during normal water years, Reclamation can use the water supply flexibility to serve purposes in addition to the authorized functions, drought conditions severely limit that flexibility. Unfortunately, if the recent below normal precipitation trend continues, the need to use the majority of the storage in Jackson Lake for downstream purposes will continue. Similar drawdown scenarios in the future are a very real possibility until the drought ends.

We appreciate knowing of your interest and concern regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

(sgd) LAWRENCE P. HANGOCK

~~FCM~~

Dennis B. Underwood
Commissioner

bc: **Regional Director, Boise, Idaho**
Project Superintendent, Burley, Idaho
W-6610, W-6600, W-6500, D-5000, D-1001
(w/c of incoming to each)

WBR:JLudwig:pd:9/11/92:6271:925982
REV:L Mauro:pd:9/23/92

FIELD OFFICES
CASPER 261-5172
CHEYENNE 772-2477
CODY 527-7121
GILLETTE 682-7091
JACKSON 739-9507
LARAMIE 745-5303

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-5002

ALAN K. SIMPSON
WYOMING

VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER—SUBCOMMITTEE ON
IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE AFFAIRS

ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
RANKING MEMBER—SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NUCLEAR REGULATION

RECEIVED
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
OCT 3 - 1992

ACKNOWLEDGMENT
MADE BY

August 10, 1992

OFFICIAL FILE WASHINGTON		
DATE DUE 9-17-92		
Date	Initial	Code
8/27	ja	W-610
		6610
	FILES	W-6918
CLASS INTL 4.33		
PRJ MLN FR 1279		
CONTROL 7200-132		
KEY INTL 5102140		

Paul Holtz
Director
Office of Congressional and
Legislative Affairs
Bureau of Reclamation
Room 7654
18th and C Street
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Paul:

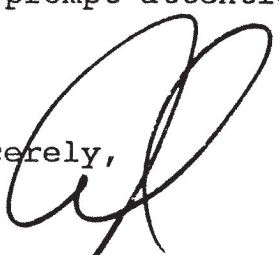
I am enclosing a copy of a letter from my constituent. I am sure that you will recognize Timothy Bommer.

I would like to ask that you contact him directly with a thorough chronology and an explanation of actions regarding the drawdown of Jackson Lake.

I appreciate your efforts and your prompt attention to this matter.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,


Alan K. Simpson
United States Senator

AKS/ss
Enclosure

TIMOTHY J BOMMER

ATTORNEY AT LAW

P. O. BOX 1728

JACKSON, WYOMING 83001

307-733-3818

FAX 307-733-0822

1992 JUL 25 AM 5:16

July 14, 1992

Hon. Alan K. Simpson
United States Senator
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Hon. Malcolm Wallop
United States Senator
Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Al and Malcolm:

My request to you has some urgency, and I sincerely appreciate the inquiry by one or both of you into the following matter.

I do not pretend to be a student of the history of Jackson Lake Dam, but I do understand the purpose of the water storage to be for irrigation in Idaho. As a result of that water storage, recreational facilities, including marinas, were constructed on Jackson Lake at their present location. Their existence and use is certainly consistent with the Congressional mandate that national parks are, in part, for the public use and enjoyment. It now appears that the use and enjoyment of boaters on Jackson Lake is about to be severely impaired for no apparent reason.

As a result of the predictions of drought and some actual drought in Idaho, the gates at Jackson Lake Dam have been wide open causing the Snake River to run "wall to wall" with water and further causing the water level on Jackson Lake to drop approximately two feet per week. At that rate, in a couple of weeks Colter Bay Marina will be out of business with Leeks Marina to follow shortly thereafter. The use of the lake by hundreds of boaters will be eliminated, because they (and I) will have no place to moor their craft.

As you know, Jackson Lake was drawn down to the natural lake level during the dam repair, and if my memory is correct, I believe that Malcolm pursued the funding for that project. Due to the duration of that project, the marina facilities were either relocated or modified to accommodate the change. In the present situation, there is apparently no intent by Grand Teton National Park and the concessionaires to do the same. I doubt

that anyone would protest the situation, if it was known that it was essential to drain the lake. However, I have made some limited inquiry which indicates that there is absolutely no reason for the Bureau of Reclamation to continue the unrestricted outflow of the lake.

As requested above, your immediate inquiry into this matter would be appreciated and, as a result, I request:

1. The Bureau of Reclamation either substantiate to your satisfaction the need to drain Jackson Lake or be requested to immediately cease the outflow.

2. Make further inquiry for the future balancing of the situation so that it does not reoccur.

Hindsight is always twenty-twenty, but it occurs to me that at the time the dam was repaired, it would have been an appropriate time to take into consideration the recreational use of Jackson Lake and negotiate when that use could be impaired by the Bureau of Reclamation.

Respectfully,



Timothy J Bommer

TJB/mjp

cc: Jack Neckels, Superintendent, Grand Teton National Park
Fred Goodsell, Bureau of Reclamation