Faxogram Transmission

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To: Jerry Gregg
From: Jim Doty
Fax #: 334-9562
Voice Phone: 378-5276
Subject: Jackson Flows
Date: 12-10-93
Number of Pages: 3

Message: Here is a marked-up copy of your draft reply to Ms. Klobnak - most of my comments are editorial.

I agree that the letter doesn't need to address her allegations against Earl, or the details of her minimum flow plan ... those can be discussed at the January meeting.

Jim

DRAFT

December 10, 1993

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Ms. Jeanne C. Klobnuk
Public Lands Director
Jackson Hole Alliance for Responsible Planning
Box 2728
Jackson WY 83081

Dear Ms. Klobnuk:

Commissioner Dan Beard has requested that I respond to your December 1, 1993 letter concerning Snake River ~~Winter Instream Flows~~ Lake below Jackson Dam. I would like to emphasize Reclamation's commitment to maintain and increase fishery benefits both in-lake and below the dam, within our operating and legal constraints.

As stated in ~~our~~ Commissioner Beard's letter (enclosed) to Governor Mike Sullivan of Wyoming, "The fall and winter releases from Jackson Lake are explained in detail in the document "Operating Guidelines between the Bureau of Reclamation and the State of Wyoming for the use of Palisades Storage Space in Wyoming," which is being prepared jointly by Reclamation and the Wyoming State Engineer's Office. The document is still in draft form. I have enclosed an excerpt from the document pertaining to Jackson Lake winter releases. As presently written, Reclamation promises to provide a minimum release from Jackson Lake Dam of 280 cubic feet per second (cfs) or the computed lake inflow, depending upon the October 1 reservoir elevation. Since storage contracts now obligate all active storage in Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir, we do not have the flexibility to release more than the inflow. Through your storage contract for 33,000 acre-feet of space in Palisades Reservoir and the exchange agreement with Jackson Lake storage, Wyoming now has the ability to order releases above those provided by Reclamation."

The letter also describes the physical ~~restraints~~ constraints of raising the lake elevation above 6,761.71 feet. Also, Reclamation is currently in the process of revising the flood control parameters for Jackson Lake which were established in 1938. This ongoing study may change the flood control space requirements in both Jackson Lake and Palisades Reservoir.

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The 33,000 acre-feet of storage space in Palisades Reservoir that has been contracted for by the State of Wyoming is now at their disposal to release to supplement the flows ~~above the 280 cfs or natural flow which is being~~ provided by Reclamation. Since October 1, 1993, ~~the releases have been~~ approximately 400 cfs (the natural flow into the reservoir) has been maintained below Jackson Lake. Dam

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Jeanne, we are interested in working with your group and other interested public in operating Jackson Lake in a manner to balance and maximize the benefits of irrigation, flood control, recreation, fish and wildlife, and maintenance of project facilities.

Mr. Jerrold Gregg and other members of my staff are looking forward to meeting you in January of 1994 to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,

John W. Keys, III
Regional Director

cc: Governor Mike Sullivan, State of Wyoming
Bill MacDonald, COE, Walla Walla, WA
Bob Patrick, Wyoming Trout Unlimited

bc: Ed Osann, W-100
CSPO/MPO-100

JGregg:vf12/9/93
Water Operations
WTR-2.00

when you attach the letter to Sullivan, you should probably get a copy of it with enclosures from central files. It is document control number 93-10360, folder ID # 6503.

FAX MESSAGE

December

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
CENTRAL SNAKE PROJECT OFFICE
214 BROADWAY AVENUE
BOISE, IDAHO 83702

Telefax: Com (208) 334-9562
FTS 554-9562

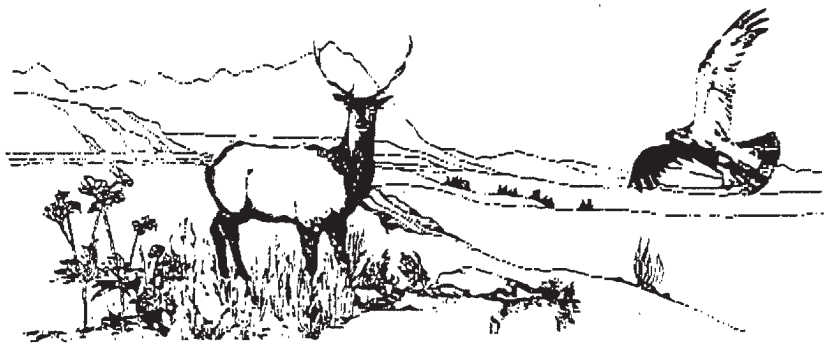
DATE: 12/9

TO: PN-700, 470, 150, Burley Office
OFFICE: Earl Coveless
TELEPHONE:

FROM: Jerry Gregg
OFFICE: Boise, Id
TELEPHONE: 334-1460

PAGES: INCLUDING COVER SHEET: 6

REMARKS: I have been asked to respond to the attached letter from the Jackson Hole Alliance. I would appreciate any comments on my draft (sent by LAN) by COB tommorrow. Jerry



JACKSON HOLE ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE PLANNING
Box 2728 Jackson, Wyoming 83001 (307) 733-9417

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TO
FILES

December 1, 1993

Mr. Dan Beard, Commissioner
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

SENT VIA FAX

RE: Snake River Winter Instream Flows, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

Dear Dan:

It was a pleasure to see you at the American Rivers conference and banquet. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to discuss the winter flow situation on the Jackson Hole portion of the Snake River. Since I've not previously had the pleasure of doing so, allow me to congratulate you on your new job. What a relief it is (to us, probably not to you!) to know you're there charting a new course of direction for the Bureau. You certainly have much to wade through.

At your suggestion, the attached provides an overview of the low winter flow problem on the Snake, and recommends examining options to evacuate flood storage space more slowly to augment existing winter flow rates. The purpose is to enhance native Snake River Cutthroat Trout habitat. The information was provided by Bob Patrick, President of Wyoming Trout Unlimited. Please call either he or I if we may assist you further in investigating this matter.

Your immediate and thoughtful attention given to our concerns is appreciated greatly.

Sincerely,

Jeanne C. Klobnak
Public Lands Director

enclosures

cc: Ed Osann, Director of Policy and External Affairs
Jerrold Gregg, Project Superintendant, BOR, Boise, ID
Bill Mac Donald, Study Manager, COE, Walla Walla, WA

JACKSON HOLE ALLIANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE PLANNING

WYOMING TROUT UNLIMITED

Contacts: **Jeanne Klobnak**
307-733-9417

Bob Patrick
307-733-3630

Recommendation: Investigate the possibility of altering the existing "winter flood storage evacuation plan" at Jackson Lake, and assess options for evacuating the 200,000 acre feet of flood storage space more slowly to supplement existing winter flow rates and achieve a 700 cfs continuous winter flow objective. This could reasonably be accomplished in such a manner as to render the entire 200,000 acre feet storage capacity available by later winter/early spring, when a flood of this magnitude might potentially occur.

Rational: According to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, the single most important factor limiting an increased population of native Snake River Cutthroat Trout is the artificially diminished winter flow rates associated with the Jackson Lake Dam. Low winter flows have a severe impact on Cutthroat mortality rates during extreme winters.

During the fall of 1987 and 1988, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department studied the impacts of various Jackson Lake Dam releases on physical winter habitat for trout to determine an optimal winter release figure. The geographic area studied included the Snake River, downstream of the Jackson Lake Dam to Moose, Wyoming at the southern boundary of Grand Teton National Park. Study results were published in a report entitled, "Snake River Instream Flow Studies," by Thomas C. Annear. In summary, the study concluded that a release of approximately 1250 cfs between October 1 and March 31 would yield optimal results, but that natural historic average winter flows suggest maintaining approximately 700 cfs under average conditions.

Annear observed a limiting disparity between natural winter flow conditions and optimal habitat flows. He then used this information to emphasize the importance of "maintaining historic average monthly flows or the natural instantaneous winter inflow to the reservoir, which ever is less." Maintaining winter flows that do not fall below natural average levels would result in a reservoir release of approximately 700 cfs between October 1 and March 31 under average conditions. Since records have been kept, average Jackson Lake Dam releases for this period ranged between 524 and 798 cfs. In recent years, however, winter releases were far below these average figures, at times dropping as low as 50 cfs, resulting in devastating trout population mortality rates.

During the 1986 $86,000,000 reconstruction of the Jackson Lake Dam, BOR agreed to a 280 cfs minimum winter flow rate below the dam. In 1991, the State of Wyoming paid $567,000 to purchase 33,000 acre feet of Minidoka System storage space and transferred storage rights to Jackson Lake to supplement the 280 cfs, and move closer to achieving the 700 cfs winter flow objective.

Unfortunately, BOR, as represented by Earl Corliss in Idaho, has not only been reluctant to supplement the 280 cfs with Wyoming's 33,000 acre feet, but in fact has worked to foster a divisive relationship between users, pitting one against the other. Mr. Corliss' behavior seems to suggest a very strong, loyal personal alliance to the Idaho irrigators, with little or no regard for Wyoming's concerns. Attempts to add 120 to the 280 cfs to institute a flow regime of 400 cfs resulted in BOR asserting that it would drop its release from 280 to 160 cfs.

Given Wyoming's financial commitment to maintaining a healthy Snake River fishery, we join the State in its extreme frustration over the lack of BOR cooperation or interest in this matter. You may have recently received a letter from Governor Mike Sullivan further describing this problem.

Preliminary discussions about this subject with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicate that they are very interested in working toward a solution to this problem. We are also pleased to note that, on November 30, 1993, BOR Project Superintendant, Jerrold Gregg, called Jeanne Klobnak to discuss this matter and agreed to meet for this purpose in January 1994. We greatly appreciate Commissioner Beard's and Policy Director Osann's assistance in initiating cooperation, and look forward to a long-overdo positive working relationship.

We recognize that there may be legitimate concerns from other river and lake users which must be taken into consideration before any final decisions might be made. Should that be the case, we would welcome the opportunity to work with them in devising an appropriate release schedule.

In conclusion, we believe that working together to achieve ecologically beneficial winter instream flows in the Jackson Hole portion of the Snake River is a win/win situation for all parties involved. In addition to benefitting the Snake River ecosystem, it will serve as a benchmark project to demonstrate both BOR's interest in acting in an environmentally responsible manner, and its willingness to establish positive cooperative partnerships with affected local communities.