



Jackson Hole Chapter

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MINIDOKA PROJECT

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May 25, 1993

Mr. Allen E. Inman
Acting Project Superintendent
Minidoka Project Office
Bureau of Reclamation
1359 Hansen Ave.
Burley, ID 83318-1821

A C T I O N	INFO CC TO: KS.		
	600 JUNE 8, 1993		
	To	Initial	Date
	110	MYC	6/2
	400	[initials]	6/7
110	[initials]	6/7	
405	970	6/7	
No reply reqd:			

Dear Mr. Inman:

I am writing regarding the May 19th Snake River flows meeting held in Jackson Hole. At that meeting the Jackson Hole Chapter of Trout Unlimited asked the Bureau of Reclamation to investigate the possibility of using some of the winter flood storage space in Jackson Lake to store extra water that could be used to augment winter flows in the Snake River. The Chapter is pleased that the Bureau has agreed to investigate this option. Specifically, the Chapter is asking the Bureau to assess options for more slowly evacuating the 200,000 acre feet of flood control space that it provides each year under agreement with the U.S Army Corps of Engineers. Under current procedures the Bureau provides this flood space by October 1st. We would like the Bureau to assess options for evacuating this space more slowly. For example, perhaps 130,000 to 180,000 acre feet of flood control space could be provided by October 1, with the full 200,000 acre feet available by no later than February 1. The 20,000+ acre feet of water held past October 1, could be used to supplement releases from Jackson Dam in November, December, and possibly January. The numbers and dates mentioned here are only examples. We would hope that the Bureau would investigate a wide range of different flow and date combinations.

We recognize that there are some legitimate concerns that must be investigated and resolved before any decision is made. From the May 19th meeting, it is our understanding that the Bureau is most concerned about meeting flood protection needs and the potential impact to recreational whitewater rafters. We also share these concerns.

With respect to flood protection, we feel that the Bureau working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should make a detailed assessment of flood control needs for the period between Oct. 1 and Feb. 1 based on the best available data. It would be particularly interesting to know the history of flood events during these months and how much of the 200,000 acre feet of flood control space has been needed to protect against these historic events. Since the real flood potential is in late winter and early spring, it has always been the Chapter's assumption that some number less than 200,000 acre feet would meet any potential November or December flood threat. It will be interesting to see if our assumption is supported by an assessment of past flood events and future flood potential. Since the full 200,000 acre feet of flood space would

be available by no later than February 1, this option should not affect late-winter and spring flood control.

With respect to impacts to whitewater rafters, we would like the Bureau to assess this carefully and to identify a range of flows that would meet rafting needs. We recognize that changing how the Bureau presently manages the Upper Snake River will involve tradeoffs among the different users. Rather than drive a wedge between these users, we would like the Bureau to seek a mutually agreeable solution. We believe that such a solution exists.

The Jackson Hole Chapter of Trout Unlimited's long-term concern is to provide for healthy winter habitat for cutthroat trout in the Snake River. At present this winter habitat does not exist. We believe that by using some of the flood control space in conjunction with the Bureau's conditional winter release of 280 cfs from Jackson Dam (as described in the May draft report), and Wyoming's 33,000 acre feet of storage in Palisades Reservoir, it will be possible to provide for releases of between 400 and 600 cfs during the critical low flow period between October and February. This three pronged approach provides a flexible and dynamic solution to meeting winter flow needs. If for some reason one of the three sources of water is not available in a given year, the other two sources are there to potentially make up the difference.

Again, the Jackson Hole Chapter of Trout Unlimited is pleased that the Bureau of Reclamation has agreed to investigate this option. We eagerly await the results of your study. Please call or write if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Peter Morrisette
Executive Director

cc: Gordon W. Fassett, Wyoming State Engineer
Sue Lowery, State Engineer's Office
Francis Petera, WGFD
Tom Annear, WGFD
John Kiefling, WGFD
John W. Keys III, Director, Pacific Northwest Region, Bureau of Reclamation
Daniel Beard, Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
John Zelazny, Executive Director, Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited