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United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
MINIDOKA PROJECT OFFICE
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Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Boise, Idaho
Attention: PN-400

From: Acting Project Superintendent, Burley, Idaho

Subject: Revision of Flood Space, Jackson Lake Dam
(Reservoir Capacity Allocation)

At the annual spring meeting held in Jackson, Wyoming on May 19, 1993, Mr. Peter Morrisette, Executive Director of the Jackson Hole Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU), made a strong point of requesting that Reclamation investigate the possibility of changing the flood operating criteria at Jackson Lake Dam.

Project personnel agreed to make such a request of the Regional Office. After the meeting, TU wrote a letter in which they outlined their desires. A copy of the letter is enclosed for reference. The numbers and examples cited in the TU letter are those of TU. They do not represent any commitment made during the public meeting.

Presently, the Jackson Lake Dam SOP and flood control storage reservation curve SN-902-1/1 require that 200,000 acre-feet of space be available in the reservoir from the "end of the irrigation season" through the winter months, until spring. In the spring, the reservoir is then operated to either begin filling for summer operations or evacuating additional water to make additional flood space available, as required by flood control criteria.

It is also important to note that the bottom of the wooden radial gates is at elevation 6761.17. Ice damage could result on both sides of the gates if water were to be stored against them during freezing temperatures.

Presently, water is evacuated through the summer irrigation and recreation season, and the 200,000 acre-feet of space is available by approximately September 30th. Inflows are released through the winter, and the reservoir remains steady through this period. During the past few years, the target date for having

the water evacuated has moved from just after the Labor day weekend to September 30, due to requests from local recreation interests.

In the water accounting program, the water moved from Jackson for flood control is irrigation water and is the first water debited from the spaceholders' accounts. Extending the release of "irrigation water" into the winter months may fall outside the authorized purposes of the project.

In the past, in accordance with an agreement with the Wyoming Game and Fish, very little drawdown has been permitted during the fall and winter which coincides with the mackinaw trout spawning season. It is our understanding that this guideline has been relaxed somewhat; however, this relaxation has not been formalized.

Any proposed changes in the operations would have to be coordinated with the agencies involved, including the Game and Fish, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Corps of Engineers, and perhaps others. Would a change of this nature require NEPA documentation?

Project personnel clearly explained to those in attendance that retaining water in the flood control space would reduce the size and timing of summer releases. We feel that TU represents only their viewpoint. Please note that there were approximately 100 people in attendance representing other recreation interests. These other recreation interests would also be impacted by any proposed changes in operation. A representative of these interests also requested that the effect of manipulating the flows according to this request be investigated. We agreed that they would be a part of the investigation.

We request that the Regional Office investigate the ramifications of changing the flood control criteria. If you have any questions, please contact Mike Beus or Earl Corless of our staff at (208) 678-0461.

Allen E. Suman

Enclosure

cc: Jackson Hole Chapter, Trout Unlimited, P. O. Box 4069,
Jackson, WY 83001, Attention: Peter Morrisette