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PN-6410

AUG 9 1994

Honorable Mike Sullivan
Governor of Wyoming
Cheyenne WY 82002

Dear Governor Sullivan:

Thank you for your letter of July 22, 1994 expressing concern over the accounting of Wyoming storage water in Palisades Reservoir.

There appears to be a need to clarify the status of Wyoming's Palisades Reservoir space/water in regards to salmon flow augmentation. None of Wyoming's water was used for salmon flows. All the salmon water was provided out of Reclamation storage accounts in Ririe, Palisades, and Lake Walcott Reservoirs. No Jackson Lake storage accounts were used for salmon flows. The charge to your Palisades Reservoir account of 16,500 acre-feet [16.5 kaf (thousand acre-feet)] was solely for the purpose of providing instream flows below Jackson Lake.

In late June, after Jackson Lake water rights failed to fill, the Idaho District 01 Watermaster computed that about 42 kaf of storable water passed Milner Dam during the April 1-14, 1994 period. The water was storable because the Jackson Lake storage right did not fill on paper (even though Jackson Lake filled physically). Jackson Lake could have stored more water, but releases were made to maintain winter operating levels and for fish flows below Jackson Lake. Palisades and American Falls Reservoirs filled and were unable to prevent the "spill" of storable water past Milner Dam. The storable water that passed Milner Dam, therefore, was correctly attributable to Jackson Lake releases. This occurred before any salmon releases were made.

Until about March 1 this year, it was necessary to maintain a level of about 6,761 feet at Jackson Lake which kept ice off the dam's gates. Winter flood control space of 200 kaf is also required until March 1 when the flood control rule curves begin requiring space on a runoff forecast basis. This year, no space was required after March 1 for flood control. Therefore, the difference between 400 cubic feet per second (cfs) and the 280 cfs release which we had discussed with you for this year's operation, is chargeable to your account. This occurred between March 1 and May 20 when Jackson Lake releases were raised above 400 cfs to supply irrigation. Roughly, 70 days of 120 cfs is 16.7 kaf which is about what you were charged. At the same time, about 3 kaf was charged to our uncontracted space in Palisades Reservoir (because of a fall river inspection trip of governors and Interior officials), and about 23 kaf was charged to

Jackson Lake spaceholders. These numbers may change slightly, since final watermaster allocations depend on U.S. Geological Survey final streamgage figures and actual evaporation charges. **We must emphasize that it is not always possible to maintain a flow of 280 cfs.**

Reclamation has no uncontracted space in Jackson Lake which can be used to provide salmon flows or minimum flows out of Jackson Lake. You are correct, however, that Jackson Lake will be lower this fall because the salmon releases were made. An effort is made to keep water as high up in the system as possible. Therefore, Jackson Lake often goes into the storage season with more water than it has a right to on paper. This year, about 330 kaf was released past Milner Dam for salmon out of Reclamation-controlled storage. Some of this water would have been held over in Jackson Lake in the absence of salmon augmentation releases.

We share your concern about maintaining fish flows out of Jackson Lake this coming winter. Current inflows are extremely disappointing, and carryover storage will be so low that winter releases for gate ice protection or flood control will not be necessary. Wyoming's space in Palisades Reservoir, together with Jackson Lake spaceholder contributions, will be all that is available to maintain winter flows.

We look forward to discussing these issues further at our fall meeting with you. If you have any questions, you may contact me by writing to the above address or by telephone at (208) 378-5012.

Sincerely yours,


John W. Keys, III
Regional Director

cc: Mr. Gordon W. Fassett, State Engineer, State of Wyoming, Herschler Building, 4-E, Cheyenne WY 82002

Mr. John Kiefling, Fisheries Biologist, Jackson District Office, Wyoming Game and Fish, 360 North Cache, Jackson WY 83001

bc: Commissioner, Attention: W-1000
Director, Policy and External Affairs, Attention: W-1530
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PN-6000, PN-6410, PN-6420
(w/cy of incoming to each)

Subject: Wyoming Account in Palisades Reservoir (IRM-10.00)

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