

## AW Black Canyon WW Release

### Previous Speakers

- Mark Stenberg reviewed the current Bear License (FERC Project #20) History...
- John Gangemi (formerly Oasis Environmental, Bigfork, MT) shared WW Rec Release the fish & aquatic studies...
- Justin Barker, (Redfish Environmental) shared the Black Canyon temperature data collected during the Soda Spinning Reserve Project evaluation...

### Benefits of the Black Canyon Recreation Releases

- Consistent with the FPA (Federal Power Act) which calls for consideration/mitigation/benefits to all resources/uses during relicensing—note that AW worked collaboratively with all ECC members to actively plan for and then participate in the various supplemental ecological studies during the 7-year delay in Rec releases through Black Canyon after the license was issued—note this was not acting against AW interests, though it could have appeared so...
- Community economic inputs—hundreds of annual visitors, almost exclusively from outside the area, and are encouraged on AW and other paddler websites to buy gas, food, and other necessities (e.g. beer!) locally.
- Positive Feedback from Recreational users—people enjoy and utilize the resource
- General improvement in water quality from annual flushing flows (annual turbidity data still shows a spike on first releases then subsequent decreases in the system)—resulting in potential improvement of spawning habitat in Black Canyon?
- Evidence for generally positive effects to the aquatic ecosystem, particularly from spring releases (although those are sometimes not the most well-attended by boaters)
- Abundant opportunities to educate recreational whitewater boaters on the ecosystem values inherent in improving water quality, native species and native fishery in particular, and threats from AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species).

What would whitewater recreational users of Black Canyon like to see?

#### Flows

- Continued annual releases
- Permanently shift some of the releases to the fall when participation greatly exceeds spring attendance. Continue to publicize when flows are in the canyon and help AW get the word out, both:
  - higher flows (e.g. recent fall releases have significantly exceeded forecasts but no one knew ahead of time...including Connelly).
  - lower flow releases around 500 cfs to hopefully introduce more paddlers to Black Canyon.

### Infrastructure

- Explore the practicality of a portage trail around the challenging “Boo Boo” rapid to offer a safer alternative to the current difficult climb through the large rocks and vegetation on this section of the river.
- Consider installing vault toilets at the put-in and takeout if merited by total use.
- Discuss the practicality and mechanism for formal permission of an annual whitewater event.
- Discuss whether it is practical to address WW boater requests for camping at the take-out, at least on release weekends.

### References

“Effects of the Variable Flow Regime on the Ecology of the Black Canyon of the Bear River, Idaho, Final Report Year 7” September 12, 2011 (Rev. 1) by Oasis Environmental (John Gangemi), Bigfork, MT

“Black Canyon Boater Program Ramp Rate Study-Fish Stranding Following Boater-Flow Releases,” 11/24/2010, Cirrus Ecological Solutions, Logan, UT.

“Grace Hydro Electric Project Boater Flow Water Quality Study,” November 2, 2010 by Ecosystems Research Institute

“Turbidity and Temperature Changes Associated with Whitewater Boating Flows Black Canyon Bear River, Idaho,” January 2, 2013, IDEQ (Greg Mladenka & Lynn Van Every), Pocatello, ID

“Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Monitoring in the Black Canyon of the Bear River: Responses to Whitewater Boating Flows,” IDFG

“Soda Spinning Reserve Temperature Technical Report,” July 19, 2019 by Red Fish Environmental (Justin Barker), Logan UT

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