

PPL Montana addresses drought's effects on the Madison River

Throughout southwestern Montana, the prolonged, stubborn drought — the worst in decades — and day after day of scorching heat are lowering water levels in rivers and streams.

The Madison River has been hit particularly hard. It's one of the best rivers for trout in the United States. The fish, PPL Montana's first priority under its federal operating license, are threatened because the lower-than-normal water is heating up in the relentless summer sun.

This serious situation has brought together PPL Montana's biologists and hydroelectric plant operators with local, state and federal fish and wildlife agencies, anglers and private conservation groups to look for ways to deal with the damaging effects of the drought.

"Like everyone in the southwestern part of our state, PPL Montana is very concerned about Madison River fisheries, habitat and the boaters, anglers, river guides and other people who use the Madison River," said David Hoffman, director of external affairs for PPL Montana.



Hebgen Lake, part of the Madison River system 20 minutes west of West Yellowstone, is a popular destination for fishing, camping and boating.

"The drought is also affecting the people who have summer cabins and docks at Hebgen Dam. Boat ramps and docks may be left high and dry," he said.

"It's a situation that may get worse as continued dry and hot summer weather conditions will result in lower lake levels and minimum river flows," Hoffman said. "We want people to know that we're doing everything we can to balance a wide variety of interests."

PPL Montana's first priority is to help cool the river water and protect the trout. It's done with "pulse flows," where a very specific quantity of water is released from Hebgen Dam near West Yellowstone, down the upper Madison to fill the reservoir formed by Ennis Dam.

As the drought continues, Hoffman asked everyone who uses the Madison River to voluntarily conserve water.

"We're in this together," he said. "It's a tough situation, but the best ideas and solutions always result from cooperation. We have a common interest to protect the health of the Madison."



The PPL Montana Community Giving Report, which tells about our commitment to Montana families, the environment, communities, education and the economy, is available at www.pplmontana.com. If you'd like a printed copy, contact Lisa Perry, manager of community affairs for PPL Montana, at 406-237-6914 or lperry@pplweb.com.

Get to know your PPL Montana Community Fund Advisory Board members

Starting in this issue, Montana Currents will begin introducing the 18 members of the PPL Montana Community Fund Advisory Board. Composed of PPL Montana employees, elected officials, and business and community leaders, the statewide



John Engen

organization helps PPL Montana award grant money for projects that will improve the quality of education, enhance the environment and spur economic development in Montana.

As a corporate neighbor with 500 employees in Montana, PPL Montana is committed to working with Montana communities and this board to improve the quality of life

for today and tomorrow.

Since the fund was started in 2005, the Montana Community Fund has provided \$500,000 in grants to organizations across the state.

John Engen: Mayor of Missoula, he began his first four-year term on Jan. 3, 2006. He is a Missoula native and joined the advisory board in spring 2007.

How do you see the role of the advisory board?

PPL Montana is clearly reaching out to the communities it serves to ensure that grant applications are appropriately reviewed. The Community Fund's mission is clear and, as board members, I think we're responsible for helping the fund remain true to the mission. And because board members represent a

variety of communities, we can serve as informed advocates for applications that come from our friends and neighbors.

What do you hope to accomplish during your term on the advisory board?

I have to confess to some bias here, inasmuch as I want to appropriately advocate for projects that serve western Montanans. Beyond that, though, I think it's a privilege to help give away money to worthy causes, so I want to be fair, generous and true to the mission of the fund.

What are your other interests when you're not managing day-to-day affairs in Missoula and working with community fund grants?

I like to cook, my wife and I enjoy movies, and we try to walk our greyhound regularly for exercise.

PPL Montana joins federal agency to help renovate popular campground

PPL Montana and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management are teaming up to renovate the facilities at Holter Lake campground, a popular recreation area near the company's Holter Dam north of Helena.

"This is one of the most beautiful spots in west central Montana for a weekend getaway or a place to embark on a backcountry trip," said Jon Jourdonnais, PPL Montana's director of Hydro Licensing and Environmental Compliance. "On behalf of the many PPL Montana employees who love the outdoors, it's a privilege to be part of another project to improve our state's recreational resources."

Holter Lake campground is one of 32 recreation sites that PPL Montana has partnered with local, state and federal agencies to develop along the



PPL Montana is helping with the renovation of Holter Lake campground, near the shore of Holter Lake.

Missouri-Madison River corridor as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of its nine hydroelectric facilities in the corridor.

With the resources from PPL Montana, the Bureau of Land Management plans to enhance the campground by adding a new boat ramp and parking area, drinking water

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Volunteers band together to build home for family in Great Falls

About 20 PPL Montana employees from Great Falls strapped on tool belts and rolled up their sleeves to help with a Habitat for Humanity home construction project in the city.

Over two half-days, the group erected interior walls and the roof frame for a family home on Eighth Avenue North.

“PPL Montana gave us two very valuable half-days on June 19 and June 20. It was amazing what they accomplished in a relatively short time with strong, physical labor and a lot of building know-how,” said Jim Sullivan, construction manager for the Great Falls Area Habitat for Humanity. “They had great spirit, and we were thrilled to have them work with us.”

With the help of Habitat for Humanity, Thrivent Financial and seven Lutheran congregations in Great Falls, the home — built by volunteers — is expected to be ready for occupation in fall.

The Great Falls Area Habitat for Humanity is a locally run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing organization. Habitat for Humanity works with people in need to build and renovate decent, affordable housing. The houses then are sold to those in need at no profit and with no interest charged. Volunteers provide most of the labor, and individual and corporate donors provide money and materials to build the houses.



Adam Rouselle (left) and Ron Wombold were among the 20 employees who volunteered for a Habitat for Hummanity project in Great Falls.

Pitching in to complete trail and clean up riverside

A group of PPL Montana employees from Great Falls banded together to help complete a hiking trail in honor of National Trails Day on June 2.

The crew of about 35 people — including volunteers from Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; the Montana Conservation Corps; and the Great Falls Bicycle Club — worked on completing the upper loop of the River’s Edge Trail from Ryan Dam to Morony Dam.

The trail allows people to travel from the Ryan trailhead and back from the dry waterfall off the main trail to Morony.

“It’s only a four-mile trail, but it provides some of the most beautiful scenery I know,” said Rod Caldwell, dam operator at Great Falls. “When you’re back there, you feel like you’re alone with nature. I’ve loved this place since I was a kid.”



Volunteers from PPL Montana help complete the River’s Edge Trail from Ryan Dam to Morony Dam during National Trails Day.

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Trail day *(continued from page 3)*

Caldwell, along with Matt Marcinek of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Doug Wicks of River’s Edge Trail, helped organize the event.

During the same weekend, PPL Montana provided lunch and refreshments to a group of volunteers cleaning the banks of the Missouri River in Giant Springs State Park.

About 10 volunteers from the Medicine River Canoe Club participated in the cleanup from Giant Springs to Rainbow Dam.

“We had a nice weekend and both activities went well,” Caldwell said. “The volunteers got a lot of work done on these very worthwhile projects.”

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Campground *(continued from page 2)*

and irrigation systems, and toilet facilities. The 15 campsites will also be improved.

Holter Lake campground is closed for the rest of the summer while the work takes place. It will reopen in time for next year’s camping season. Other recreation facilities on Holter Lake operated by the Bureau of Land Management will remain open.

Holter Lake and the recreation land around it provides opportunities for boating, horseback riding, swimming, wildlife observation, hiking, and fishing for rainbow trout, kokanee salmon, walleyes and perch.

Montana Currents is your source of information about PPL Montana’s commitment to the environment and our communities. It’s just one more way we’re putting our energy into Montana communities.

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