

Lake DeSmet Advisory Board Meeting  
September 21, 2016  
3PM

Board Members Present: Mike Whitaker, Commissioner Bob Rolston, Bert Jellison, Jim Fennema, Dave Belus

Operating Department Personnel Present: Cheryl Benner, Jim Hicks

Public in attendance: Commissioner Linda Greenough, David Schroeder, Scott Pehringer

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 by Chairman Whitaker. Chairman Whitaker asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2016 meeting. Commissioner Rolston moved and Mr. Fennema seconded that the minutes be approved as written. Motion carried.

Mrs. Benner submitted a department report.

- The elevation of the lake on September 1, 2016 was 4608.07. The lake was filled to a high of 4612.08 on June 1, 2016. As of September 15, 2016 11,783 AF of water has been released of which 10,421 was released from the north dam and 1282 from the south dam.
- Several people leased Johnson County's water for the season for irrigation and industrial uses. Mr. Schroeder asked what the operating board is charging for agricultural water. Mrs. Benner stated it was currently charging \$15.00.
- Monitoring wells were checked in June and will be checked again in October. No wells were outside of historic limits.
- The budget was set in July and there were no major changes.
- Three staff members from Senator Barrasso's office were in Buffalo on August 22 to visit Tie Hack and Lake DeSmet to help them understand water issues in the area. Harvey was available to explain the history of Lake DeSmet. Dave Schroeder, Superintendent for Board of Control District 2, was also in attendance and explained beneficial uses and how they are tied to the water rights and how the Yellowstone Compact affects water in the Powder River drainage.
- Johnson County Road and Bridge is working with Game and Fish to dredge the main boat ramp bay at the Mikesell-Potts recreation area. We are hoping the work will be completed by the first part of December. We will likely begin filling the lake upon completion of the project if it isn't iced over. The salvaged material will be used in the Mikesell-Potts Recreation Area and by Game and Fish.
- There was one party reported violating the shoreline regulations by setting up a campsite. Lake DeSmet Operating Department personnel explained the regulations and the camp was dismantled.
- A piece of metal, likely from a cattleguard on the old highway, is sticking up above the water level in a bay on the north end of the lake. Mrs. Benner will contact Search and Rescue to see if they are able to help mitigate the situation.

Mr. Schroeder advised the board that Kearney Lake is filling early as there were maintenance needs that made it necessary to lower the level to a point that winter freeze could damage some of the outlet works.

Mr. Fennema reported that the Lower Clear Creek Irrigation District will be funding the entire Leiter Ditch project. He did not have an update on the progress of the project from the Wyoming Water Development Commission.

Mr. Jellison reported that the Lower Piney Water Users had done extensive research into the possibility of using stored water to supplement stream flows for the fisheries on Piney Creek. An instream flow biologist with Wyoming Game and Fish advised them that Game and Fish had the ability to lease water for instream flow, but it hadn't been tested legally. The group was referred to an attorney that was interested in the concept. The attorney advised the group that they did not own the rights, but were using the water based on contracts with Reynolds that were signed in 1962 for domestic, livestock and irrigation. The Lower Piney Users decided there was nothing they could do until there was legislation or litigation clarifying the issue. Winter releases are not possible during the winter months from the north end of the dam because of potential damage to the facility from freezing. There was a short discussion about the possibility of building a siphon at the north end.

Unless there is business for the Board to discuss, the next meeting will be held in the spring of 2017.

As there was no further business to come before the board, the meeting was adjourned at 3:55 PM with a motion from Mr. Belus and a second from Commissioner Rolston. Motion carried.



Michael Whitaker, Chairman