



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1820 Meadowlark Lane • Butte, MT 59701

May 30, 2013

Dear Future Fisheries Review Panel,

I am writing this letter in support of proposal to repair the weir structures at the Big Hole Ditch diversion on property owned by Jim Tolton. The weir were constructed to facilitate floater and fish passage and have greatly improve the situation at the diversion by taking a single 4-ft drop and spreading it out over 4 different weirs that drop approximately 18 inches at each weir. In 2011 the Big Hole River experienced the highest flows seen in 10 years (12,000 cfs) and erosion of the newly installed weir structures occurred on the left bank of the river (west side). The structures were breached and the river eroded the bank on the west side creating a new channel. The new channel directs flow away from the center of the river and causes issues with floater passage. Continued erosion will exacerbate this problem and could further undermine the wier structures.

The proposed project to repair the weirs and key them in properly to the banks should eliminate this problem. This is a relatively easy and cost effective (the total project cost of installing the new headgate and weir were over \$160,000) fix to the problem and I support the project.

Sincerely,

Jim Olsen
Fisheries Biologist