

Milltown Reservoir Project Update – September 7, 2007

Construction at the Milltown site continues to focus on: 1) excavation of the bypass channel, 2) installation of a rail line for shipment of contaminated sediments, 3) fortification of the Interstate highway bridges, and 4) preparation for removal of the powerhouse. The bypass channel and rail spur work is being conducted by Envirocon and Montana Rail Link, and the Interstate Highway work is being supervised by the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers. The powerhouse work is coordinated by Envirocon and NorthWestern Corporation. In addition, Missoula County is completing a section of pedestrian trail near Bonner, the State of Montana is coordinating restoration planning, and the Milltown Site Redevelopment Working Group is coordinating a park design workshop and public meetings this month.



This photo of the site was taken from the bluff overlook this week. Construction of the bypass channel near the Interstate highway is nearly complete. Envirocon will begin lining the channel this month with synthetic liner and reno mattress, which is a rock-filled wire blanket. The Clark Fork River is scheduled to be diverted into the bypass channel in November. Envirocon continues to discharge water pumped from wells surrounding its excavation into the sedimentation pond, visible in the foreground of this photo. This simple measure reduces arsenic and iron concentrations dramatically, and protects the river and water users downstream.

We received some really good news last week when Plum Creek made a decision to donate the land for construction of a parking area and trail to the bluff overlook. The Northwest Carpenter's Union would receive the land and hold it until it can be transferred

to public ownership as part of a proposed park surrounding the Milltown site. The Plum Creek parcel is currently being surveyed, and the details of the land transfer may be completed in the near future. Once this donation is complete, public access to the bluff can be re-opened and the EPA will pay for construction of the parking area, trail, fencing, guard rail and information kiosk at the site.

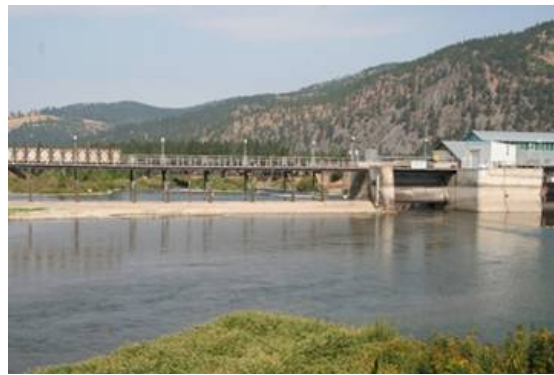


A flotilla of barges has been arranged surrounding the center piers of the Interstate highway. The barges provide a platform for heavy equipment to fortify the center piers. Workers are currently preparing to install steel sheet piles around the center piers, isolating the work area from the river. New concrete shafts will be drilled to bedrock around the existing piers, providing stability in the free-flowing river after the dam is removed. As this work begins, stabilization of the embankments under the bridges continues, through a process called jet-grouting in which concrete is pumped into the ground in interlocking columns. This work needs to be completed before the Clark Fork River can be diverted into the bypass channel and the reservoir drawn down an additional seven feet in November.

Removal of the powerhouse is now scheduled to begin in October or November. NorthWestern has begun removing electrical equipment from the powerhouse. Historic preservationists, including the Milltown Redevelopment Working Group and the Missoula Historic Preservation Officer, are working to salvage historic elements from the powerhouse and store them until an interpretive center may be built near the restored confluence. NorthWestern and Envirocon have graciously agreed to cooperate in the removal and storage of these items, including electric generating equipment, the control panel, documents, windows, bricks and timbers.



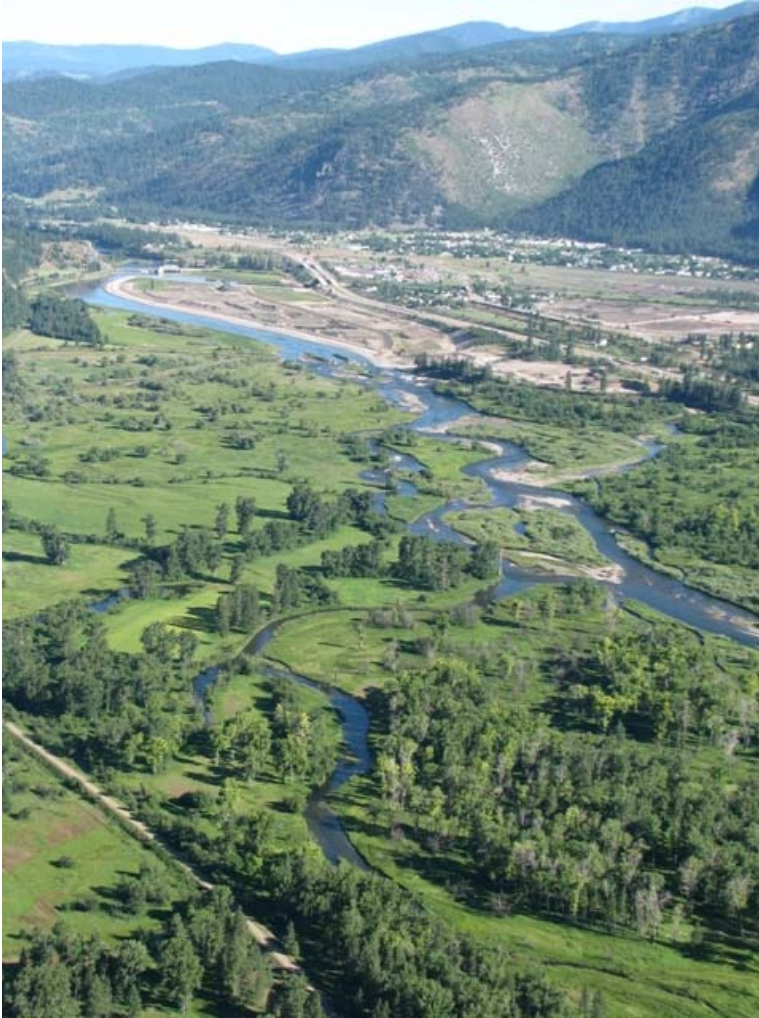
These photos show the new rail bridge over the bypass channel, about a mile upstream of the Milltown Dam. This bridge will handle rail, truck and pedestrian worker access to the sediment removal area. The bridge foundation is constructed of steel H piles, driven about 40 to 50 feet below ground where they rest on bedrock or large boulders. Once the bridge is complete, the rail spur will be completed in the sediment removal area and then up to Bonner, behind the public school and Churches along Highway 200. The first loads of contaminated sediments are scheduled to be shipped off site by rail in October.



These photos are taken looking downstream from the sediment removal area. Now that the panels have been removed from the crest of the spillway, the view is clear to the river downstream and it is getting easier to imagine what it will look like when the project is done. The water level in the reservoir will drop an additional 17 feet when the spillway is removed and the river is free-flowing again, 100 years after the dam was constructed.



The photo on the left shows the current discharge point from the sedimentation pond. This water was pumped from wells surrounding the bypass channel excavation, and had very high levels of iron and arsenic before treatment in the sedimentation pond. Once the water is exposed to oxygen in the sediment pond, the arsenic and iron quickly drop out into the sediments in the pond, which will eventually be shipped to the waste repository near Anaconda. The discharge is now very clear, and arsenic concentrations have been reduced from about 800 parts per billion to about 25 parts per billion. The photo on the right shows the discharge last winter, with iron staining the rocks and ice. Envirocon was not required to take this action, since water quality sampling downstream showed compliance with standards without treatment in the sediment pond. We appreciate Envirocon's voluntary action to limit discharges of contaminants downstream.



The photo above is an aerial view of the reservoir, looking downstream along the Clark Fork River. The sediment removal area and Milltown Dam are near the top of the photo. Much of the land in the foreground is owned by the NorthWestern Corporation, and may be transferred to State ownership for management as a publicly owned park when the project is complete. This photo was taken by Gary Weiner, of the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program. Gary is spearheading a park design workshop, sponsored by the Rivers and Trails Program, Missoula County, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the Idaho-Montana Chapter of Landscape Architects. The Design Workshop will build upon the Conceptual Redevelopment Plan prepared by the Milltown Redevelopment Working Group and adopted by the Missoula County Commissioners in 2005. The Redevelopment Group has been collecting public comments about park plans all summer. A public meeting will be held to get ideas and guidance for the design workshop, on September 12, 6:30 p.m. at the Bonner School. If you can't make the meeting but want to weigh in on the park design, fill out the attached questionnaire and return it by September 14. The design workshop will be held on September 20 and 21. A design team including more than 30 volunteers, including landscape architects and park managers, will create plans for parks, trails, public access

and interpretive facilities. The plans will be unveiled at a public meeting Friday evening, Sept. 21 at the St. Ann's Church in Bonner.

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