



Eugene Water & Electric Board

500 East 4th Avenue/Post Office Box 10148
Eugene, Oregon 97440-2148
541-685-7000
www.eweb.org

March 8, 2010

Re: Watterville Canal & River Fluctuations

Dear McKenzie River Guides:

Your e-mails to EWEB regarding the Watterville Canal were forwarded to me for a response. By way of introduction, I am EWEB's Generation Manager, in charge of all of the utility's electric generation facilities, including the McKenzie River Projects.

I understand your concerns about fluctuating river levels, and we have made efforts over the past several years to become more aware of the impact that unannounced fluctuations in the river level can have on the experience of the angling public and river guides. We also realize that our facilities can have an impact on fisheries and habitat, and we are committed to mitigating those impacts under the guidance of EWEB biologists, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, as well as state and federal fisheries and other natural resources agencies. This commitment is balanced with the electric power needs of our customer-owners who rely on hydropower as their main source of electricity and as an energy source to accommodate intermittent renewable energy, such as wind power.

The annual three-week maintenance shutdown of the Watterville Canal is normally scheduled to coincide with the peak wild salmon migration in early June. This schedule allows us to assist the wild salmon migration while also allowing us to do necessary maintenance work. In addition, between April 15 and October 31, we may shut down the canal for a day or so weekly, as needed, and as agreed to with federal and state fisheries resource agencies to manage fish at the Watterville fish barrier. However, EWEB has not had any weekly shutdowns of the canal for fish delay at the Watterville tailrace barrier since 2007. Other shutdowns can occur throughout the year due to extremely low or high flows. Our aim is to provide you and others who use the river as much advanced knowledge as possible about planned shutdowns or changes in the river flow to meet these fisheries and power-production obligations.

This year, the annual shutdown (or "outage") is scheduled to coincide with fish passage construction on the Watterville fish barrier return channel. This outage is likely to be fairly lengthy, three to five weeks. Currently, we are planning to shut down the canal, or reduce flows into it greatly, between late July and September. The start date is contingent on receiving federal and state permits, and adhering to the state in-water-work period: July 1 to August 31. Permit issuance is unpredictable and may even mean postponing the project until 2011. These facility improvements are intended to eliminate the need for weekly canal outages during the migration season.

Please contact Joe Harwood 541-685-7471 from our public affairs department if you have any further questions.

Yours,

C. van Donkelaar, P.E.
Generation Manager

Cc: EWEB Board; EWEB records retention

Rely on us

-----Original Message-----

From: Steve Schaefers [mailto:sgsfish@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, March 03, 2010 1:19 PM
To: Electric Ops Coordinators
Subject: [EWEB.org] walterville tailrace

Dear EWEB,

The 2010 spring salmon run is forecast to be in the 60,000 range over Oregon City Falls and during the peak of the run (May 15 to June 15) a good portion of these fish will delay their migration by entering the Walterville tailrace. Your efforts last year of dewatering the canal on a weekly basis did move the salmon but these 18" fluctuations of the main river does have a negative impact on angling success and on the aquatic life along the river. I suggest a 30 day period starting May 15 where the canal would be not be used for generation purposes. This increased flow in the river would draw the salmon away from the tailrace.

In a related matter, thanks so much for the new boat landing at the head of Leaburg Lake. It will be a great facility for river and lake users.

Steve Schaefers

-----Original Message-----

From: Aaron Helfrich [mailto:aaron@helfrich.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 02, 2010 9:16 AM
To: HOWELL Dena; PENSELIN Stephanie
Subject: [EWEB.org] Walterville Canal

Your operations on the Walterville Canal in 2009 had a very negative impact on my guiding business and the business of others. By dewatering and rewatering the canal weekly, fishing in the section effected by the canal, was extremely poor. Fish do not bite well with the water level going up or down. As the water rises, debris floats in the river fouling hooks. For all practical purposes, the section was unfishable 5 days a week.

There has been a recent push to improve the native fishery below Hendrick's. ODFW will not stock the section in 2010 and have no plans to resume in the area. Now would be a great time for EWEB to step up by dewatering the Walterville canal during the prime fishing season also a time some rainbows are spawning in the area. I ask you to dewater the canal on May 15th and do not rewater until July 1st.

Please pass this on to the Board.

Sincerely,

Aaron Helfrich

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