

PPL Montana Reduces Flow from Hebgen Lake due to Low Lake Levels

PPL Montana

Due to persistent dry conditions, PPL Montana announced on Friday (6/21) that it is reducing the amount of water it typically discharges from Hebgen Lake into the Madison River to enhance lake elevation and to ensure that required downstream flows can continue through the summer and fall months.

The company said drought conditions in the area have reduced water draining into Hebgen Lake, and the lake is about a foot-and-a-half below normal. Levels may continue to decline without significant precipitation. With unusually dry conditions expected to persist, the company is taking steps to conserve water to meet requirements in the lake and river.

“We’re taking this action now so that we can continue to release water when it’s needed this summer to keep the lower Madison River cool enough for the fish that inhabit it,” said David Hoffman, director of External Affairs for PPL Montana.

Hoffman said the reduced flows will lead to lower river levels and likely affect fishing conditions downstream from Hebgen. He said the company has been in close contact with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks regarding the need for reduced flows.

“We understand the impact this has on people who fish and spend time on the Madison River and on the businesses that support them,” Hoffman said. “We would not take these steps unless we felt it was absolutely necessary to protect fisheries and public recreation as the season progresses. We appreciate the public’s patience and understanding.”

Hoffman said the company will continue to maintain the minimum flows required under its operating license with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and will re-evaluate its decision if conditions improve.

Hebgen Lake is about 15 miles long and about four miles wide. It is used to store runoff from a 905-square-mile drainage area at the headwaters of the Madison-Missouri river system and to regulate the flow of water into that system.

PPL has 500 employees in Montana who generate and sell electricity. PPL Montana operates coal-fired power plants at Colstrip and Billings, as well as 11 hydroelectric power plants along Rosebud Creek and the Missouri, Madison, Clark Fork and Flathead rivers. It has a combined generating capacity of about 1,200 megawatts and has offices in Billings, Butte and Helena. PPL EnergyPlus operates a trading floor in Butte that markets and sells power in the wholesale and retail energy market. PPL Montana and PPL EnergyPlus are subsidiaries of PPL Corporation (NYSE: PPL). More information about PPL Montana is available at www.pplmontana.com.

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