



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
696 VIRGINIA ROAD
CONCORD, MASSACHUSETTS 01742-2751

REPLY TO:
ATTENTION OF:

Construction/Operations Division

January 22, 2009

Ms. Julia Khorana
Release Coordinator, A.M.C. and F.L.O.W.
3 Birch Hill Road
Stow, Massachusetts 01775

Dear Ms. Khorana:

Thank you for your letter of November 8, 2008 to Mr. Bruce Williams requesting the Corps of Engineers look at the probability of making a 2-day water release from Ball Mountain Dam on the second weekend in May and to consider implementing time-shifting of water releases from the second week of May to Columbus day in October to benefit whitewater boating on the West River in Vermont, the Westfield and Millers in Massachusetts and on the Blackwater River in New Hampshire.

In regards to the probability of releasing water in the second weekend in May, we have been advised by the resource agencies that the full smolt migration period runs from April 1 to June 15. This determination affects federal dams and hydro power operations in the Connecticut River watershed. Any storage of water above 25 feet during that time, to support downstream whitewater recreation or for any other unavoidable reason, would negatively impact outmigrating smolt. On the West River, available flows are not the controlling factor for providing more opportunity for whitewater recreation; but instead, pool elevations above 25 feet that would effectively block downstream migration are. The conclusion of the Smith Brook Data, provided to you in previous correspondence, is that smolt are leaving as early as April, not that they aren't migrating in late May and June. It is our intention to continue to maintain a 25 foot pool elevation at Ball Mountain Dam until June 15, as we have been doing since 1991. Any scheduled releases after June 15 would impact our ability to provide water releases for the scheduled fall event.

After reviewing your proposal to provide time-shifted releases, we have decided that storing water from mid-May through Columbus Day is not operationally feasible. Beginning in 1998, we have been attempting to restore the natural flow regime at Corps dams in New England District. Our current outflow guidance, jointly developed with our resource agency partners, recommends that run-of-river flow conditions be maintained, insofar as possible, during all periods when we are not operating for flood control purposes. Your conclusion that time-shifted water releases for up to 22 weeks would not have an impact on the riverine ecology is not shared by the resource agencies. If you need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (978) 318-8321 or Mr. Bruce Williams at (978) 318-8168.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard C. Carlson".

Richard C. Carlson
Chief, Construction/Operations Division