

Clark Fork Project Newsletter

Greetings and Goings On



I'm Alan Lackner, Clark Fork River Operations Manager for Avista. My dad was an operator at Grand Coulee Dam, and I grew up around the dam. To this day,

I'm fascinated by the way water is used to produce power.

Over the next two years, Avista will complete a 4-year \$40 million project to replace the original turbines at Noxon Rapids. These turbines were part of the construction of Noxon Rapids in 1959 and we began updating them in 2008, nearly 50 years later. The new turbines will not only work more efficiently, producing more electricity with the same amount of water, they are also better for the environment and require less maintenance. With the fish-friendly design of the turbine, it is a win for both generation and the environment, something we strive for every day here at Avista.

My family and I were drawn to this area five years ago because we love the rural environment, the outdoors and being part of a small community. I am proud to be a part of this community and a part of Avista.

– Alan Lackner

New Transformers Go PCB-Free

Once power is generated, it must be transported over long distances before it can be used. Generator step-up transformers are an important part of the power generation process, increasing the voltage of the power so that it can be transported efficiently, with as little loss as possible.

The generator step-up transformers at Noxon Rapids Dam are more than 50 years old. The existing transformers at Noxon Rapids contain mineral-based oil for cooling the transformer core, some of which contains small amounts of PCBs. Manufacture of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) was banned in the U.S. in 1979 due to toxicity concerns. Until that time they were used in manufacturing products and materials across the country.

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EWM: Invasive Species Wrap Up

In 2007, Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) was first reported in Noxon Reservoir. EWM is a pervasive non-native weed that chokes out native plant life, spreads rampantly and threatens habitat. The EWM Task Force was formed in 2007 from a diverse group of county, state, federal, Tribal and local representatives. In 2008, a systematic survey was conducted to quantify EWM presence in both Cabinet Gorge and Noxon reservoirs. The role of the task force is to develop EWM management activities, pursue funding, provide public workshops, and monitor results.

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To Identify EWM:

- Count the pairs of leaflets. EWM has twelve or more pairs.
- It has a feather-like appearance. The leaves collapse around the stem when removed from the water.
- The topmost leaves and stems may be reddish-brown or pink.
- Mature leaves are arranged in whorls of four around the stem.

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Clark Fork Faces: Meet the people behind the Clark Fork Project

Mike Miller: Watershed Council

Mike Miller is passionate about working with the Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group (LCFWG). Originally from western Pennsylvania, Mike always loved vacationing and flyfishing, and, in 1984, he fulfilled a dream by moving to Montana. He is a co-founder and chairman of the Elk Creek Watershed Council and runs the day-to-day operations of the LCFWG.

Miller's experience with restoring a watershed began with a project on his own land. He has transitioned to helping others on a large-scale level. The LCFWG serves as an "umbrella" organization for eight existing watershed councils, engaged in protecting the water resources of key tributaries to the lower Clark Fork River since 2003. Watershed councils are groups of local landowners and agency representatives who work to protect and enhance local watersheds.

Working with the LCFWG matches Miller's skill set perfectly. "Mike brings people with varied interests together to work toward common goals," said Avista's Joe DosSantos, who works with Miller in several different capacities.

Under Miller's leadership, approximately \$1.4 million has been provided for watershed assessment and restoration projects in the lower Clark Fork drainage. Projects have brought together various cooperators, including local landowners, the U.S. Forest Service, Green Mountain Conservation District, Avista, Montana Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.



Photos: left, new step up transformers are unloaded at Noxon Rapids Dam. Below, Replacement transformers on the deck at Noxon Rapids Dam.

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New Transformers Go PCB-Free

"Avista has careful procedures in place to prevent oil spills and safeguard the environment in the event of a spill, and the vast majority of the equipment in service at Avista does not contain PCBs," Alan Lackner, Avista's Clark Fork River Manager, said. "But the age of the equipment, a need for more capacity, and an accelerated effort to remove PCBs from our system led to a replacement effort."

The first phase of the Noxon generator step-up transformer replacement effort is nearly complete, with four new transformers in place. The project will increase the capacity of the transformers and eliminate PCBs from materials used to operate the dam. Completion of the project, scheduled for fall of 2011, will make Noxon Rapids PCB-free. As Lackner stated, "It's the right thing to do!"

Management Committee Tours Resource Projects

Stakeholders to the Clark Fork Settlement Agreement met in Noxon, Mont. on Sept. 28 and 29. The group of individuals included representatives from state agencies, federal agencies, Avista and local organizations. A day-long tour as a part of the meeting allows stakeholders to see natural resource projects in person. This first-hand knowledge is critical, since the group is charged with directing natural resource activities that are a part of the implementation of Avista's Clark Fork Settlement Agreement and license.

For more than 10 years, the members of the Management Committee have convened at least twice a year, striving to utilize adaptive management in their decision-making. Lessons learned and emergent issues drive future natural resource activities, what we call a "living license," for the Clark Fork hydroelectric project.

Meeting attendees discussed issues including Eurasian water milfoil, an invasive plant species found in Cabinet Gorge and Noxon reservoirs, and future plans for fish trap construction at Cabinet Gorge. Following the meeting, members attended a traditional barbeque dinner at Pilgrim Creek Park. The meal offers the members a chance to interact in a casual environment, celebrating the cooperation that is at the core of all of their projects.



How it spreads:

Eurasian Water milfoil is readily spread by plant fragments carried by wind and water currents or dispersed by boats, motors, trailers, live wells, bait buckets or fishing gear. These fragments can stay alive for weeks if they remain wet.

Above: Noxon Reservoir. Silt can eventually build up on the bottom barriers and provide great habitat for aquatic weeds if left in place for too long, so they are removed and cleaned the end of every summer.

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EMW: Invasive Species Wrap Up

The lower Clark Fork River is a moving water system. EWM primarily spreads through stem fragmentation and is spreading in the area at about 10% annually. Prevention of incidental movement of EWM to other water bodies is the most important management tool for EWM in Montana. Several approaches are used to control the spread of EWM, including:

- **Herbicide Trials:** Herbicide was used at specific test locations in 2009, and the 52-week post-treatment results indicated it worked well. For 2010, the application process was fine tuned and the four-week results were promising. The herbicides are proving to be selective such that EWM can be removed without damage the native aquatic species.
- **Bottom Barriers:** In Cabinet Gorge and Noxon reservoirs almost 35,000 square feet of bottom barriers are being used in areas with high boat traffic and are proving to be effective. Bottom barriers consist of fabric attached to a large frame that is placed on the ground underwater. The barrier limits growth of aquatic vegetation where it is placed. Avista funds bottom barriers that are used at public boat ramps and docks. Noxon Cabinet Shoreline Coalition, outside grants, and Avista also provide funding for bottom barriers to private dock owners at a reduced cost.
- **Boat Check Stations:** Check stations are a collaborative effort between the Task Force, Avista, Montana Department of Agriculture, and Idaho Department of Agriculture. Three boat stations are operational from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The check stations will be in place again in 2011.

Task Force partners include: Avista Utilities, MSU Extension Service, Sanders County Commissioners, Montana Department of Agriculture, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Noxon Cabinet Shoreline Coalition, Sanders County Weed District, Green Mountain Conservation District, US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and Tri-State Water Quality Council.

Left: A “multi-depth release” technique is implemented in the herbicide application. This boat releases the herbicide directly onto the plants instead of the water’s surface. This means more contact with the plants and less overall herbicide in the water.



Out and About –

Avista in the Community

Avista is pleased to announce that our second annual charity golf scramble raised more than \$7,500 for Cancer Network of Sanders County. We hope to continue this tradition of raising money for local organizations dedicated to serving Sanders County residents. Other recent donations included a \$1,000 grant to the Noxon Senior Center and a new Readerboard for Noxon High School.



If this newsletter was forwarded to you and you'd like to receive it in your own inbox, please email clarkforknews@avistacorp.com. To learn more about the Clark Fork Project, visit www.avistautilities.com/clarkfork.

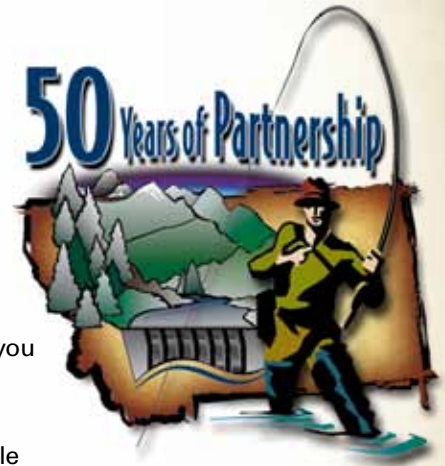
Get Up, Get Out – Recreation on the Clark Fork River

Hunters – Play Safe!

Hunting is about more than just being a good shot. It's also about keeping you and those around you safe, while protecting the environment, too.

Remember these simple guidelines:

- **Understand the laws.** Know and obey hunting laws and regulations. They're in place for your safety.
- **Live a personal code of ethics.** A responsible hunter develops and follows a personal code of ethics. Develop and follow yours. Don't do anything in the field you believe is wrong, even if it is legal.
- **Respect your surroundings.** Know whose property you are on before you hunt. If you hunt on private land, you must have advance permission. Respect other people using the area including fellow hunters and people who live nearby, and their property.
- **Always practice firearm safety!**
 - Point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction
 - Be sure of your target and beyond
 - Treat every gun as if it were loaded
 - Keep your finger off the trigger until you're ready to fire



For over 50 years, Avista has owned and operated the Noxon Rapids and Cabinet Gorge dams on the Clark Fork River. We are committed to taking care of our environment so future generations can enjoy the quality of life the natural beauty of the Inland Northwest brings.

Brought to you by Avista and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Work. Play. Live.

See You There – We hope to see you out and about at these community events.

October 30 - Charlie Brown's Pumpkin Patch, Thompson Falls Junior High School Gymnasium at 6 P.M.(contact Cindy Bronner @ 406-827-7006)

November 21 - January 1 - Christmas Lighting Extravaganza, Sanders County Fairgrounds, Plains (contact 406-826-3202, www.SandersCountyFair.com)

November 27 - Senior Center Craft Fair, Senior Center, Thompson Falls (contact Darlene Glover @ 406-241-0033)

November 23 - December 4 - Friends of the Library Silent Auction, Thompson Falls Public Library Annex (contact the library @ 406-827-3547 or bring items to the library)

December 4 - 13th Annual Gingerbread Contest & Holiday Open House, Old Jail Museum on the corner of Maiden Lane & Madison Street, Thompson Falls (contact Penny Beckman @ 406-827-3733)

December 4 - 33rd Annual Sanders County Christmas Bazaar, Thompson Falls High School Gymnasium (contact Ginny Dyer, Founder / Director, 406-827-3561 or gdyer@blackfoot.net)

December 8 - Christmas on Main Street, Thompson Falls - Top off the holiday celebration with a chili dinner at Christmas Square, visit Santa Claus and enjoy the Kissing Ball Auction and Lighted Holiday Parade (Parade Entry: contact First Security Bank @ 406-827-7000)

If you would like to submit an event for consideration, please see contact information below.



For more information on the Clark Fork Project, visit www.avistautilities.com/clarkfork. Have a story idea or event for the newsletter? Call our national resources office in Noxon at 406-847-1280 or e-mail it to clarkforknews@avistacorp.com.

Avista Corp. is an energy company involved in the production, transmission and distribution of energy as well as other energy-related businesses. Avista Utilities is our operating division that provides electric service to 355,000 customers and natural gas to 315,000 customers. Our service territory covers 30,000 square miles in eastern Washington, northern Idaho and parts of southern and eastern Oregon, with a population of 1.5 million. Avista's primary, non-regulated subsidiary is Advantage IQ. Our stock is traded under the ticker symbol "AVA." For more information about Avista, please visit www.avistacorp.com.

This news release contains forward-looking statements regarding the company's current expectations. Forward-looking statements are all statements other than historical facts. Such statements speak only as of the date of the news release and are subject to a variety of risks and uncertainties, many of which are beyond the company's control, which could cause actual results to differ materially from the expectations. These risks and uncertainties include, in addition to those discussed herein, all of the factors discussed in the company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended Dec. 31, 2009, and the Quarterly Report on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2010.