

RE-REGULATION DAM CLEAN OUT IS A GO!

After 3 ½ years of work it is finally on the books! The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) has just finalized their budget for the fiscal year 2011/2012 and the clean out of the clogged low flow pipes in the re-regulation dam made it into the budget.

Many of you know the history of the re-regulation dam, the clogged pipes, and the hot water problem it has created on the river; both in Zone II and in Zone III. With some timing and cooperation between the USACE, Southwestern Power, and the ODWC, we will see this project completed sometime later this year. Most likely late into the fall when the water and weather temperatures are more moderate.

Before and After Sketches of the Project

This project is expected to produce many desirable results for the Lower Mountain Fork Fishery including:

1. 300-400 cfs of cold water will flow down Zone III year-round as opposed to the 70 cfs that flows through the pipes now.
2. A year-round trout fishery for the bottom four miles of the Lower Mountain Fork River Trout Fishery as opposed to the current seasonal fishery.
3. This constant source of cooler water will mitigate any hot water that comes over the top during the summer months.
4. It will reduce the amount of hot water that could come over the top by:
 - a. Maintaining a lower pond resting level.
 - b. Lowering the pond level more quickly after generation.
5. A lower pond resting level will effectively mean lengthening the amount of fishable river in Zone II.
6. Decrease the amount of time that Zone III is unfishable after a generation event by lowering the pond more efficiently.
7. Increasing the length of the fishery by miles will greatly reduce the crowded fishing conditions in Zone I.
8. Colder temperatures and great habitat increase the chances of natural reproduction of rainbow and brown trout in Zone III.
9. Four extra miles of trout stream during the summer vacation crowds.
10. Increased tourism dollars for McCurtain County, the Oklahoma Board of Tourism, and area businesses.
11. Southwestern Power and the Corp. should not have to release water nearly as often which means more fishable time in Zones II and III. This will be due to two reasons:
 - a. No releases will be needed to maintain the 100 cfs Eagletown federally mandated flow rate due to a constant 300-400 cfs coming through the low flow pipes.

- b. Fewer or no releases to maintain lower water temperatures in Zone III for trout survival.

As this project moves forward and the planning and timeline become more concrete, we will pass this information along to all parties so that anyone interested can come down to the dam to watch the project when it happens.

Thanks for your patience,

Dr. Patrick Waters
President, LMFRF