# DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

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COVER LETTER

October 1, 2013,

TO: Governor's Office, Tim Burton, Rm. 204, State Capitol, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, P.O Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620
Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 1625 11th Ave. Helena, MT 59620, Director's Office

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Finding of No Significant Impact - Notice of Decision has been prepared for the Painted Rocks Dam Outlet Concrete Repair Project in Ravalli County, Montana. Please contact James P. Domino at (406) 444-6622, e-mail jdomino@mt.gov should you have any questions about the Finding of No Significant Impact - Notice of Decision or the project. The Final EA and Notice of Decision can be viewed on the DNRC website at www.dnrc.mt.gov in the environmental documents section. Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Tim Davis
Administrator
Water Resources Division

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT-
NOTICE OF DECISION
October 1st, 2013

Dear Reader:

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on August 27th, 2013 on the Painted Rocks Dam Outlet Concrete Repair Project.

Painted Rocks Dam is located in Ravalli County, approximately 20 miles south of Connor, Montana at township 1 south; range 22 west; section 26. This project will repair damaged concrete in the outlet tunnel. The concrete repairs, although minor, are needed to allow for the continued, safe operation of the outlet tunnel. Failure to make these repairs could lead to instability in the structure and necessitate more costly repairs in the future, along with a longer repair time duration, potentially resulting in more severe adverse effects to downstream fisheries and recreational resources. In order to safely access the tunnel and complete the repairs, the gates will have to be closed for up to four hours on two consecutive days, temporarily curtailing flows in the West Fork of the Bitterroot River. The DNRC State Water Projects Bureau, working cooperatively with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, developed a set of practices that will be used to reduce adverse effects to downstream fisheries and recreational resources, as follows:

1. The gates will be slowly staged down over the course of one week to allow fish to move into deeper pools.
2. Volunteers will be on-site downstream from the dam to move any distressed fish to deeper pools.
3. Flows will be restored after four hours (maximum closure time, 30 cfs after day one, and normal flows after day 2).

The EA public comment period closed, with no comments received. A public open house meeting concerning the project was also held on Thursday, September 19th in Hamilton, Montana. Those attending did not express any opposition to the project.

Based on the EA's disclosure and analysis of potential impacts and comments received, the DNRC concludes that the proposed action will not result in any significant impacts. Adverse effects to downstream fisheries and recreational resources will be temporary, short-term and end with the completion of the repairs. Any adverse effects will be mitigated by the implementation of the aforementioned practices. The DNRC will adopt the draft EA as the final EA and proceed with the project as planned. Copies of the Final EA are available upon request. The Final EA can be viewed on the DNRC website at www.dnrc.mt.gov in the Environmental Documents section. Please direct any questions to:

James P. Domino, MT DNRC
State Water Projects Bureau
1424 9th Ave., P.O. Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620-1601
(406) 444-6622, e-mail: jdomino@mt.gov

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

Tim Davis
Administrator,
Water Resources Division