



IN REPLY
REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Pacific Northwest Region

1150 North Curtis Road, Suite 100

Boise, Idaho 83706-1234

PN-3903/GCP-1400
LND-8.00

MAR 29 2002

Mr. Jason D. Robertson
Access Director
American Whitewater
1430 Fenwick Lane
Silver Spring MD 20910

Dear Mr. Robertson:

The Commissioner, John W. Keys, III, has asked me to respond to your March 6 letter concerning public access to the South Fork Flathead River at Hungry Horse Dam in Montana.

Access to the river was closed in 1956 for security in the area immediately downstream of the dam including the electrical switchyard. In addition, fishing access is restricted in the first 1.25 miles of the river directly downstream of the dam for safety. This area lies in a very narrow canyon, and sudden releases from the dam can increase the water level 10 to 15 feet in a matter of minutes making it unsafe to be on or near the river.

In 1997, to increase security for the switchyard and to deal with increasing vandalism, the fence was moved to its present location encompassing a vehicle storage building, equipment storage area, and hazardous material storage building.

Security and safety concerns at the dam have increased given the global activities that have occurred over the past several years. While moving this fence line, as you suggest, would allow boat access to the river, it would also allow a closer public access to the dam's facilities than we feel is prudent for security and safety.

Thank you for your letter and your concerns.

Sincerely,

J. William McDonald
Regional Director