

BIG SPRINGS DAM REMOVAL:

(I am going to do this report in the best chronologic way that my notes dictate.)

As most of you remember BIG SPRINGS in Adams County is where Perrier-Nestle tried their next water grab--after the Mekan Springs. They did not win there either. In July of 2004 CWTU President John Gremmer received a message from Bill Petterson of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service asking if C.W.T.U. would like to form a partnership with the Wildlife Service and Adams County to remove a private dam on Big Springs Creek.

Big Springs Creek was considered a Brown Trout stream and the dam impeded upstream and downstream fish movement. At that time Adams County was part of C.W.T.U.'S territory but later was given to the Plover chapter. The land-dam owner was interested in removal after the thoughts on hydro-production were eliminated. President Gremmer e-mailed and the chapter was now fully involved. Bill Petterson told me that the contact in Adams would be Cris Murphey of the Adams County land and water conservation Department. Cris told me that there was still much local animosity from Perrier's try to take over the springs and also the dam operator had no trust in the WDNR due to earlier problems.

The community was polled and they expressed that they would like to again see it as TROUT water. The stream is only about a mile long above the dam and 2 to 2-1/2 miles long below the dam and is supposed to have warm water species from the dam down stream. PROBLEMS-????????????? Maybe!! I contacted Scott Ironside, WDNR Fish Manager from that area and he was gung-ho to get this to trout water. At this time, the River Alliance was contacted, as well as a stream restoration specialist.

On August 20, 2004 Dick Kraus and I went to Big Springs to see what this was all about. The road(dam) was partially gone due to to a flood problem and the water above the dam was still backed up 10-12 acres to about 1 to 2 feet with loads of silt. There are two roads that cross this stream. At the upstream bridge Dick crawled down the bank and recorded a water temperature(see picture on Homepage) of 57 degrees F. At the lower bridge(dam) the water temperature was 60 degrees F and the water clarity was excellent. I did the data recording and picture taking-- we have the pictures on a disc for reference. We drove around the spring and found two smaller feeder streams and springs bubbling out of the ground in numerous places. One of the feeders was producing a lot of

water but seemed to be running through a farm feed lot-barn yard. A very interesting area. In September of 2004 I got another call from Cris Murphy in which he said the dam owner again wanted to produce power. The situation was very delicate and he was going very slowly with the land owners. My next correspondence with Cris was in late November of 2007. He told me that in the intervening years the make up of the County Board wanted no part of doing anything with the spring stream and the dam-road. The new County Board came in and did a 180 and we were now off and running . Cris' call was also a request for monetary help for a culvert. My answer that CWTU was not real flush in the cash department.

Things really took off and on June 15, 2008. The County and Town Boards had to decide which way to go--there were several grants now available and would be lost if no decision was made. Part of the problem was and still is whether to close the road fully or re-build with a culvert. At this time the River Alliance was going full steam and really wanted approval of the plans. On the 19th of June the agreements were signed--though the Mason Lake District still objects.

Phase one starts July 1, 2008 with dam removal and road closure and should be done by October 1st.

Phase two is still a little up in the air as to culvert placement or not. The number i got for the culvert was \$160,000. Cris is sure this can be worked for the best benefit of all.

Phase three will start in 2010 and here is probably where we can help--in the stream restoration. There was another request for monetary help, but I told him cash wise we were poorer than the time of the last request.

Some names and groups that should be mentioned: Helen Sarakinas of the River Alliance---Cris said their help was invaluable, Mike Juleson, the town of New Haven chair, and Mark Knutson(dam owner) who finally made the decision to remove the dam and recreate the trout stream. All of this came to fruition because various agencies worked together---from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State D.N,R.(Scott Ironside), Adams County Land and Water Conservation Department, various sportsman's clubs and of course--C.W.T.U.

IT LOOKS LIKE A SUCCESS STORY!!!!!!

Tom Poullette, CWTU Watchdog Committee