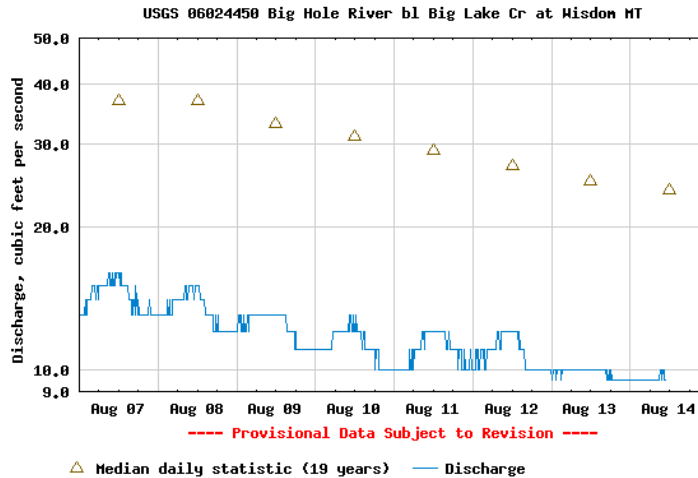




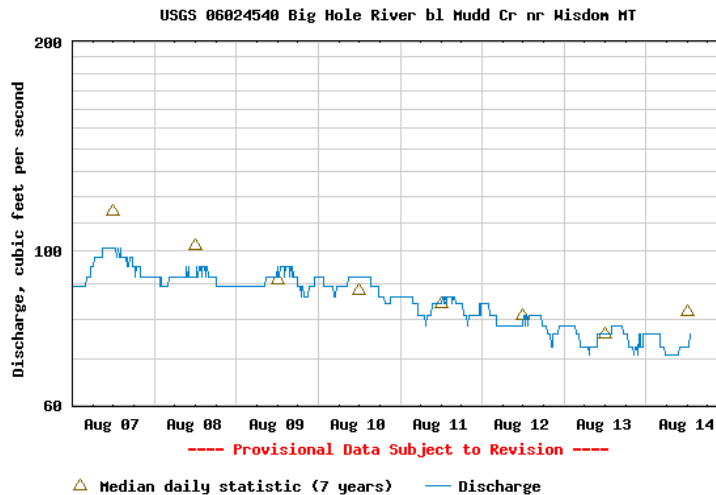
Big Hole Drought Update – August 15, 2007

Southwest Montana experienced the hottest July on record and below average precipitation. Weather conditions are expected to continue hot and dry. The only bright spot is cool night-time temperatures, particularly in the upper basin. The 19-mile reach of the Big Hole from Rock Creek Road to the mouth of the North Fork near Wisdom remains closed. As of today, flows on the reach from Melrose Bridge to the confluence with the Jefferson River have fallen below the trigger that initiates a fishing closure. The reach from Dickie Bridge to Melrose Bridge is anticipated to fall below the closure trigger tomorrow. (Remember: triggers are based on Average Daily Flows, not instantaneous flows). While authority for a fishing closure rests with Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, a closure for both reaches appears imminent. The reach of the river from the mouth of the North Fork to Dickie Bridge has not reached either the flow or thermal trigger that initiates a fishing closure. However, due to biological concerns specific to the Big Hole River, a fishing closure should be anticipated on this reach also. An MFWP press release will be published in area papers within the next day or two. Please be on the lookout for that official notification.

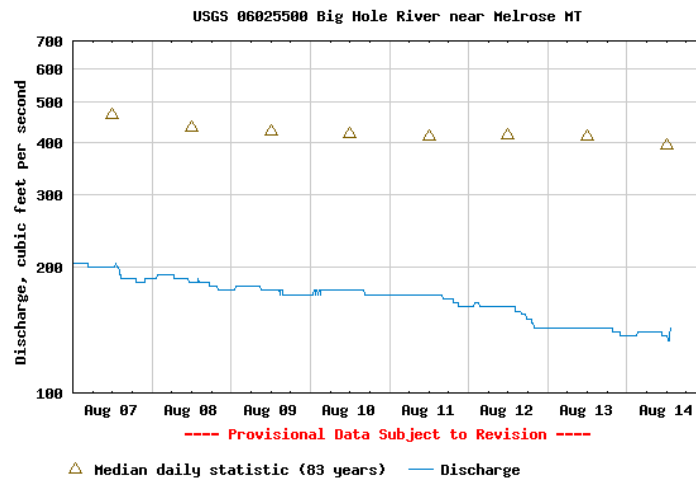
Rock Creek Road to Mouth of the North Fork (measured USGS, Wisdom Gauge) – Current flows are 9.5 cfs at the Wisdom gauge. This is 40 percent of the median for this gauge based on 19 years of data. A fishing closure remains in place for this 19-mile reach.



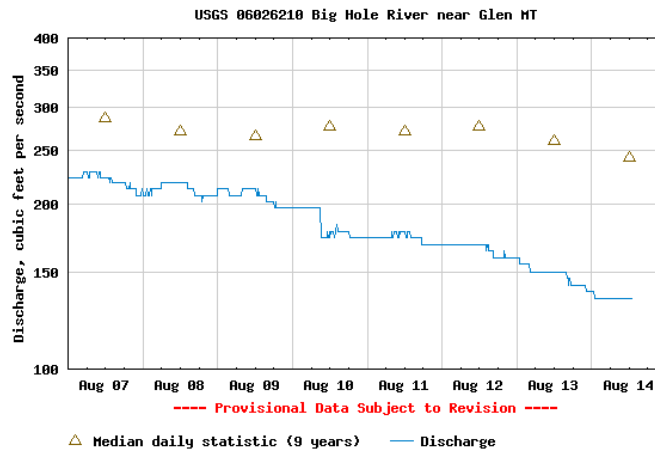
Mouth of North Fork to Dickie Bridge (measured at USGS Mudd Creek Gauge) –Flows are currently 76 cfs. For the month of August, water temperatures have generally been below those that warrant closure of the North Fork to Dickie reach (i.e. temperatures >70°F for 8 hrs/day for 3 consecutive days). The last time temperatures exceeded 70°F for any length of time was on 8/4 when temps were >70°F for 4 hours. The maximum temp recorded during August was 74.3 degrees.



Flows: Dickie Bridge to Melrose Bridge (measured at USGS Melrose Bridge Gauge) - Flows are currently 143 cfs, which is 36 percent of median flow based on 83 years of data. This reach will close to fishing when Average Daily Flows fall below 140 cfs - likely to occur within the next day. Water temperature did not exceed 70°F since Sunday.



Flows: Melrose Bridge to confluence with the Jefferson River (measured at USGS Glen Gauge) - Current flows at the Glen Gauge have dropped to 134 cfs which, according to the Big Hole Drought Management Plan, warrants closure of this reach without any additional thermal criteria. Last week's stream temperatures have generally been less than 70°F. However on both 8/2 and 8/3, temperatures exceeded 70°F for 8 hours. The maximum temperature recorded thus far for the month of August was 73.8°F on 8/2.



For Information Contact:

Randy Smith, BHWC Chairman 406-835-3451
 Noorjahan Parwana, Director 406-782-3682 nparwana@bhwc.org

Other Contacts:

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Dillon office – 406-683-9310

Internet Resources

Drought Report - <http://www.nris.state.mt.us/drought>
 USGS Real Time Flow Data - <http://waterdata.usgs.gov/mt/nwis/current?type=flow>