Historic dam progress at the Mike Horse

Story/photos by Roger Dey
BVD Editor

The work to remove the Mike Horse Mine impoundment in Bear Trap Canyon reached an historic milestone at about 2:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 28. Excavators broke through the Mike Horse Dam, exposing the native soil at bottom of the canyon to open air for the first time in 75 years. Construction of the dam, which contained the contaminated mine tailings from mining operations in the Mike Horse area, began in 1940. In 1975, a June rain storm cut a swath through the dam, carrying contaminants into the Blackfoot River.

“It’s about the 75th anniversary of when the dam started being built and the 40th anniversary of when it blew out, and we have it back open,” said Shellie Haaland, project construction manager for the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. By about 5 p.m., workers reported the dam was breached.

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Lincoln man found guilty of marijuana manufacture pleads guilty to tax evasion, firearms charges

Roger Dey
BVD Editor

Agents originally arrested Dennis Peiker, 61, on a federal warrant, May 11. Peiker was indicted by a grand jury on tax evasion charges, April 17. The indictment alleged Peiker attempted to evade or defeat payment of income tax for calendar years 2002 through 2009. Court documents show that Lewis and Clark County Deputy Brent Colbert, who supported the IRS agents during the arrest, observed six marijuana plants at Peiker’s residence. A subsequent search of his property May 13 led to the discovery of 198 marijuana plants and 3500 rounds of 5.56 mm ammunition. A second charge of 

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LOCAL EVENTS

Oct. 3 Official sculpture launch: Sculpture in the Wild, 2 p.m.
Oct. 8 Flu clinic Lincoln Community Hall 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Oct. 7 Book Discussion: ‘True Grit’ Lincoln Library 7 p.m.
Oct. 11 Movie Matinee: Rango Lincoln Library 1:30 p.m.
Oct. 11 Movie Night: True Grit Lincoln Library 7 p.m.
Oct. 23 Stewgutti Lincoln Community Hall 5 p.m.
Nov. 7 42nd annual Lincoln Community Benefit Lincoln Community Hall 5 p.m.
Nov. 7 Lincoln School Science Fair Lincoln School

Calendar brought to you by Becky
DAM

had removed the contaminated 'blue goo' from the center of the drainage outbound and had cleared a swath through the old dam, down to native soil, about ten yards wide. Haaland said by next week they should have the entire dam removed.

Above the excavation area, Stream Works of Lincoln has been busy for the past few weeks restoring the streambed and flood plain of Bear Trap Creek.

To date, more than 300,000 cubic yards of contaminated material have been removed from the Bear Trap and Mike Horse drainages, two of the streams that form the headwaters of the Blackfoot River.

Haaland said overall the work to remove the mine waste is on schedule, but since it's getting relatively late in the construction season, they may wait until next year to complete some of the work in the upper end of the Mike Horse drainage that had been planned for this year. They will instead concentrate on removing highly contaminated material from the lower end of the draw, near the juncture with the Bear Trap drainage.

Haaland said they are also looking at removing additional material across one face of Bear Trap canyon where highly erosive, sandy material has been giving them problems.

CHARGES

search May 14 uncovered several firearms, including three AR-15s, and vacuum-packed marijuana. A criminal complaint affidavit was filed May 15 for the manufacture of marijuana and for being a felon in possession of firearms. Peiker had previously been found guilty in January 2000 of two counts of willfully filing false income tax returns for 1992 and 1995, felonies that precluded his ownership of firearms.

A Grand Jury indicted Peiker on the marijuana charge in June. Following a trial in August, a jury found Peiker guilty Aug. 25 of manufacturing marijuana with more than 100 plants.

Peiker didn't go to trial for the tax evasion and firearms charges. Court documents show he instead pleaded guilty to the charges as part of plea agreements in which he waived his right to appeal the conviction and sentencing in the marijuana case. Federal prosecutors agreed to recommended concurrent sentences for the three separate cases. According to an Associated Press report, Peiker also agreed to pay nearly $140,000 in back taxes for the 2002 through 2009 tax years.

Sentencing in the marijuana case is scheduled for Dec. 3 in Great Falls, before U.S. District Judge Brian Morris. Peiker is slated to be sentenced in the tax evasion and firearms cases, April 14, 2016.

BLACKFOOT VALLEY FISHING REPORT

Fishing on the Blackfoot is in Fall mode, which means it is beautiful with the yellow and gold colors to be outside.

As usual with the fickle Blackfoot, the catching is hit and miss. Plenty of opinions are out there as to why the fish aren't coming to the surface as much, but there is no definite reason. We're starting to see the last of the summer weather for the year as fall quickly approaches, and night time temps drop into the low 20's.

The best fishing seems to be in the evening when the temperatures have warmed up the water. The water level is staying steady above just above 400 but that number is making floating difficult. Reports are that floating from Spotty Brown Bridge to Russell Gates is getting sketchy. Hence, everybody seems to be doing the River junction to Scotty Brown float. The areas with large rocks again are difficult to maneuver around, but that is leaving the river excellent for wade fishing.

For dries use some fall colored hoppers, October caddis, tricos, big PMDs, BWOs, elk hair caddis, Chernobyls, Orange Stimulators, parachute adams, and small purple hazes. For nymphs, use anything with rubber legs, princes, October caddis pupae and emerger.

Whatever you do: Get Outside! The nice days are numbered.

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