



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Application No:** 200190390

**Applicant:** PPL Montana, L.L.C.

**Waterway:** Yellowstone River

**Issue Date:** June 20, 2001

**Expiration Date:** July 11, 2001

**21 DAY NOTICE**

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**Billings Regulatory Office**

**1629 Avenue D, Building A**

**Billings, Montana 59102**

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**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE  
FOR PERMIT APPLICATION SUBMITTED TO  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
AND  
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

The application of PPL Montana, LLC for approval of plans and issuance of a permit under authority of the Secretary of the Army is being considered by the District Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha, Nebraska.

**Description of Proposed Project:** The applicant requests permission to install a temporary diversion dam consisting of concrete blocks eight foot long and five feet high. The concrete blocks will be placed end to end to form a diversion dam, extending approximately 272 feet across the west channel of the river. A rubber belt approximately 42 inches in width will be placed along the upstream face of the blocks to prevent leakage. An additional 42 inch belt will be placed on the downstream side of the blocks to prevent scouring. The concrete blocks will be installed and removed with a large backhoe. The backhoe will drive into the river to place or remove the blocks. Flags with warning signs on them will be distributed across the length of the dam to warn boaters of the dam's location. A temporary boat ramp will be constructed on the left bank of the river in Coulson Park. The ramp will allow boaters to enter and exit the river upstream of the dam. Drawings showing the location and extent of the project are attached to this notice.

**Location:** The proposed activity is located immediately upstream of Coulson Park on the main channel of the Yellowstone River in Section 2, Township 1 South, Range 26 East, Yellowstone County, Montana. The proposed project will extend from the left bank of the river to the downstream end of Corette Island.

**Purpose:** The five foot high dam is designed to raise the water level in the Corette Plant to a minimum of five feet above the pump section bells to allow continued plant operation throughout the low water period.

**Background:** The 1996 and 1997 floods on the Yellowstone River washed the bottom of the river approximately two feet deeper in front of the J.E. Corette S.E.S. intake channel. This has caused problems for the plant condenser cooling water pumps during low water conditions. The condenser cooling water pumps need a minimum of 5 feet of water above the suction bells to operate properly.

Due to the currently existing dry conditions, low river flows are anticipated. The applicant has hired an engineering consultant to map the river bottom in front of the plant site and also to study alternatives for providing an adequate supply of cooling water to the power plant during low flow conditions. The consultant recently completed an environmental assessment of the proposed project. The three alternatives are described as follows: 1) Install a low head temporary and portable diversion dam in the Yellowstone River. The dam would raise the water level at the plant inlets a sufficient amount to maintain minimum suction head to the condenser cooling water pumps during periods of time when the river is above 500 cubic feet per second (cfs); 2) Place two large hydraulic low head pumps in the river adjacent to the plant inlet to pump water over a temporary dike in the inlet of the cooling water channel to supply the condenser cooling water pumps and; 3) Install two 60 inch pipes into the river bottom that would extend approximately 1000 feet upriver from the Corette intake. These pipes would raise the water the necessary 5 feet to place water over a temporary dike in the inlet channel and supply water for the condenser cooling water pumps. After studying these alternatives, the applicant has chosen to pursue the temporary low head diversion dam (Alternative No. 1) for the following reasons: 1) It will raise the water level into the plant intakes to allow continued uninterrupted operation of the plant during very low flow conditions; 2) It will only be used during very low flow conditions. The dam will be installed when the river flow is decreasing and goes below 1500 cfs and will be removed when the river flow is increasing and goes above 1500 cfs.; 3) The concrete blocks will be relatively inexpensive and the forms built for these blocks could be used to pour additional blocks for area irrigators to use and; 4) The dam will only be installed in the west channel of the river. If an icejam or sudden increase in flow were to occur, the east channel would still be open to allow unrestricted flow of the river.

**401 Water Quality Certification:** The Montana Department of Environmental Quality, 1520 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901, will review the proposed project with the intent to certify in accordance with the provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The certification, if issued, will express the State's opinion that the operations undertaken by the applicant will not result in a violation of applicable water quality standards. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality hereby incorporates this public notice as its own public notice and procedures by reference thereto.

**Cultural Resources:** The Corps of Engineers, Omaha District will comply with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended. We have checked the National Register of Historic Places and its current supplements. Although the Billings Historic District and several other historic sites in the Billings area are on the National Register, none will be affected by the proposed project. Pictograph Cave, a prehistoric site, is also listed on the National Register. Although it is located within the nearby vicinity of the proposed project, it will not be affected by the proposed activity; however, we will evaluate input by the State Historic Preservation Office and the public in response to this public notice and we may conduct or require a reconnaissance survey of the permit area to check for unknown historic or prehistoric properties, if warranted.

**Threatened/Endangered Species:** In compliance with the Endangered Species Act, a preliminary determination has been made that the described work will not affect species designated as threatened or endangered, or adversely affect critical habitat. In order to complete our evaluation of this activity, comments are solicited from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other interested agencies and individuals.

**Evaluation Factors:** The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposed activity must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant

to the proposal will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. In addition, the evaluation of the impact of work on the public interest will include application of the guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, under authority of Section 404(b) of the Clean Water Act (40 C.F.R.; Part 230).

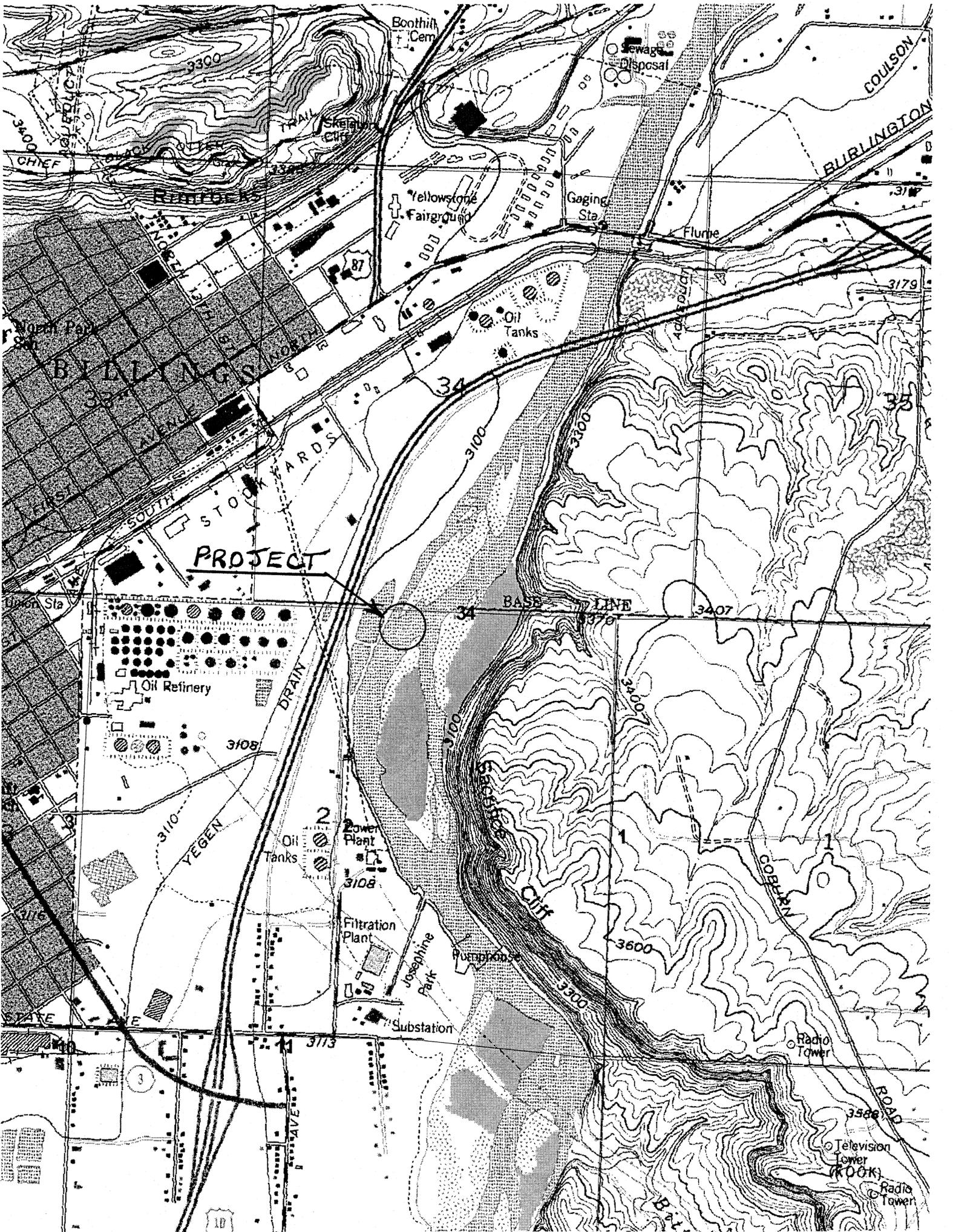
**Comments:** The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; Federal, state, and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to determine whether to issue, modify, condition or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and the other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing and to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity. All public notice comments will be considered public information and will be subject to review by the applicant.

Any person may request, in writing and within the comment period specified in this notice, that a public hearing be held for the purpose of gathering additional information. Requests for public hearings must be identified as such and shall state specifically the reasons for holding a public hearing and what additional information would be obtained. The request must be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Billings Regulatory Office, 1629 Avenue D, Building A, Billings, Montana 59102. If it is decided that additional information is required and that a public hearing should be held, interested parties will be notified of the date, time and location.

Any interested party (particularly officials of any town, county, state, federal agency, Indian Tribe or local association whose interests may be affected by this proposal) is invited to submit to this office written facts, arguments, or objections on or before the expiration date listed on the front of this notice. Any agency or individual having an objection to the work should specifically identify it as an objection with clear and specific reasons. Comments, both favorable and unfavorable, will be accepted, made a part of the record and will receive full consideration in subsequent actions on this application. All replies to the public notice should be addressed to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Billings Regulatory Office, 1629 Avenue D, Building A, Billings, Montana 59102. Please reference the Application Number found on the first page of this notice in any correspondence. Larry Robson, telephone number (406) 657-5910, may be contacted for additional information. You may also fax your comments to (406) 657-5911 or e-mail them to: [Larry.G.Robson@usace.army.mil](mailto:Larry.G.Robson@usace.army.mil).

Comments postmarked after the expiration date of this public notice will not be considered.

**Statutory Authorities:** A permit, if issued, will be under the provisions of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.





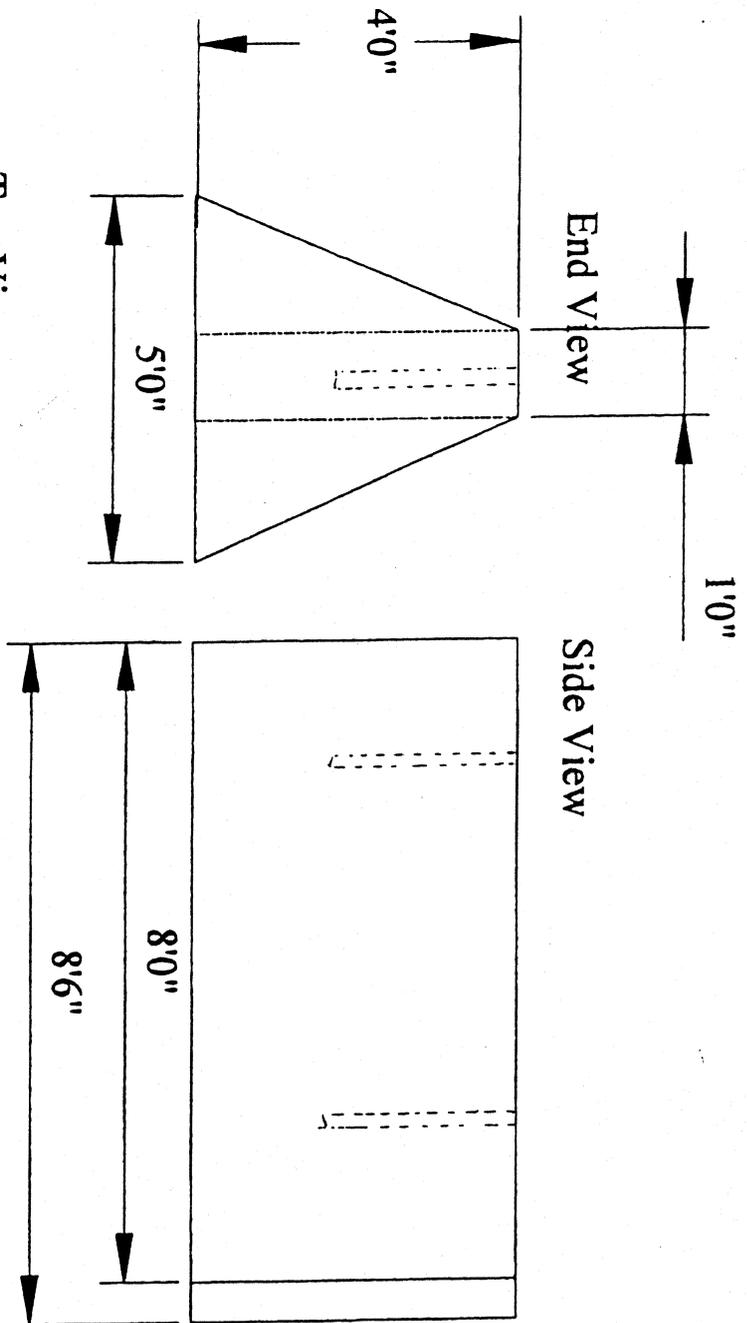


Fig. # 7

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