

2018 CRT Libby Dam Production

Last year, 2017, Libby Dam produced 2.557 million megawatts at a value of \$54 per megawatt. Total gross value is \$138 million at Libby Dam, although there is a production cost of \$4.16 per megawatt.

In addition, the storage area behind Libby Dam which we call Lake Koocanusa, provides 5.8 million acre feet of water for generation of electricity to 19 dams on down the Columbia River in Washington and Oregon and at least one dam in British Columbia.

So if last year was about an average flow, then the value per acre foot of water was \$138 million divided by 5.8 million acre feet, or \$23.8 million per acre foot just at Libby Dam. I don't know if the value at each dam is similar, but 19 times \$23.8 million is \$452 million. That \$452 million can't happen without Libby Dam pushing spring runoff over the old Kootenai Valley.

In 2012, Lake Koocanusa was filled two feet higher than full pool to prevent flooding at Nelson, B.C. and other places around Kootenay Lake. In general terms, that extra two feet meant an extra \$47.8 million just at Libby Dam plus all the added generation downstream. In addition that extra two feet of higher water washed a new erosion ring around Lake Koocanusa, which led to tons of sand, clay, rock and trees caving into the water. Spring winds over the bare lake bed cause thick dust storms around the whole Tobacco Valley.

With Lake Koocanusa full pool level at an elevation of 2460 feet above sea level, as of today, April 16, 2018, the level is 2359, or 101 feet below full pool. That is a lot of sand, rock and clay showing without a stem of vegetation. Soon, the reservoir will begin to refill, with a target of being near full pool by July 1. With a big Canadian holiday on July 1 and our Independence Day on July 4, many visit the lake to fish, swim and play.

That beautiful full pool is short lived. By late summer, the level of Lake Koocanusa is dropping again. Soon the boat ramps grow longer, and eventually don't come close to the receding water line. Muddy, or dusty, gullies and sand dunes and flats appear around the shoreline.

Rough
Estimate
By Mike
Cuffe