



**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MILES CITY FIELD OFFICE
Press Release**

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BLM installs windmills for fish

PRAIRIE COUNTY, Mont. --- The Bureau of Land Management Miles City Field Office completed the installation of a fisheries windmill on Homestead Reservoir located north of Terry on Oct. 6.

The windmill on Homestead Reservoir marks the seventh such fisheries project within the Miles City Field Office area since 2004 and the fourth windmill for Prairie County.

BLM Fishery Biologist Joe Platz, with assistance from BLM Fisheries Intern Mark Stratton, supervised the project and managed a crew of Montana Conservation Corps personnel who provided labor support during the windmill's emplacement.

Platz said that the windmills have been popular with area landowners and that fish have been doing well in each of the reservoirs where they have previously been put into operation.

"We've had fish survive the winter in Boulware (Reservoir) with only 6 feet of water," said Platz. "At Beardsley (Reservoir), people have caught up to 5-pound trout."

Normally, shallow reservoirs such as Boulware would see considerable winter kill, as fish stocks were subjected to stagnant water and reduced oxygen levels during the colder months.

In addition to Prairie County, windmills have been installed at BLM-administered reservoirs in Custer and Fallon counties. At least four to five more windmills are in the works, said Platz.

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The windmills incorporate a 12-blade turbine supported on a 12-foot tower and utilize breezes as slow as 5 mph.

Pressurized air is pumped through tubing to a 9-inch air stone anchored in the bottom of the reservoir and a column of bubbles is ejected that de-stratifies the stagnant, oxygen deprived under-layer of the reservoir's water column.

A by-product of aeration is thin pond ice during the winter. The constant release of bubbles creates an ice free area in the middle of the reservoirs. Warmer water circulated from the bottom of the reservoir tends to keep the water body open well-past normal ice-over periods.

Periods of calm can create a unique situation, as the reservoir may form thin ice, only to melt again once the wind picks up and the windmill renews pumping.

Winter visitors to these areas should be extra cautious and avoid getting on the ice, said Platz.

Photos and Cutlines:

**High-resolution copies of the following photos are available by contacting Mark Jacobsen at: mark_jacobsen@blm.gov or (406) 233-2831.*



BLM Miles City Field Office Fishery Biologist Joe Platz makes adjustments to an aeration windmill being installed at Homestead Reservoir Oct. 5. The windmill is the fourth such project in Prairie County designed to improve fish habitat on BLM-administered lands.



BLM Miles City Field Office Fisheries Intern Mark Stratton tightens bolts on the 12-foot tower of a windmill designed to aerate Homestead Reservoir to improve the fishery Oct. 5. The windmill is the latest in a series of fish habitat improvement projects installed on BLM-administered lands in eastern Montana.



Montana Conservation Corps Volunteer Miriam Waigand feeds air-hose into protective metal tubing designed to transport pressurized air to an airstone positioned in Homestead Reservoir Oct. 5. Personnel from the MCC were on site to provide labor for the windmill project, the latest in a series of fish habitat improvement projects installed on BLM-administered lands in eastern Montana.



BLM-administered Homestead Reservoir sports a new aeration windmill installed to improve fish habitat, complete with a livestock-proof fence Oct. 9. The windmill is the seventh such project in the BLM's Miles City Field Office area and the fourth for Prairie County.