Terror Lake Water Level Down

Wednesday, 29 August 2012

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The six turbines at the Pillar Mountain wind farm peak over the hill on a recent sunny day. The three new turbines will come online soon, helping to preserve water at Terror Lake, which drives two, and soon three, hydroelectric turbines. Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The three additional wind turbines Kodiak Electric Association built this summer are going to be coming on line soon. That's fortuitous, because water levels at KEA's Terror Lake hydro-electric plant have been suffering due to two dryer than average years in a row. KEA's Darron Scott says the water level drop is something the company started noticing a few months ago.

-- (Terror Lake 1 16 sec "Yes, we're down a little lower ... this time last year.")

Precipitation for 2011 was 39.31 inches, which was 6.8 inches below average. So far this year, total precipitation has been 32.8 inches, which is 13.31-inches below average. The cool weather has also denied Terror Lake of some snow-melt this summer, and Scott said that despite the record snow at sea level, it was average or less in the mountains around the lake.

-- (Terror Lake 2 17 sec "Believe it or not, probably ... up at Terror Lake itself.")

In the future the water level at the lake will be even more important, as a third hydro-electric generator will soon be installed. Scott says prep work has been done this summer:

-- (Terror Lake 3 15 sec "We're doing some of the ... work will take place next year.")

Unlike the last really dry summer when the Cost of Power Adjustment, or COPA (co-pah), had to be increased because so much extra diesel generation was needed, Scott says the three new wind turbines will keep that cost down:

-- (Terror Lake 4 36
sec "Our original plan a
couple ... a lot of diesel in that window.")

He said the
three new turbines at the Pillar Mountain wind farm should be turned on and start contributing power to the grid next week. A huge battery storage facility will be finished this fall. It's designed to even out the power delivery of the six wind turbines.

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