

Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Newsletter – March 2018

Weather: Winter finally arrived in December with cold weather and limited snow. Snowpack is below average, as measured at the Deadman SNOTEL measuring station, <http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov/basin.html> but it's always the late spring snows that determine how much water we'll get. You can also view the current weather at www.redfeatherlakes.net. Here's to a wet spring!

Shagwa Update: In 2017, we continued working with surrounding neighbors on the status of their wells and sewage systems. In April, we drilled eight core sample holes to better understand the rock composition at the edge of the lake. Four of these were set up for us to take water quality samples, which we did during July and August. We took sludge samples at several points across the lake bottom to understand more about the depth and composition of the biomass. We drained the lake and trenched the west side so that we could monitor the quality of the ground water that seeps / leaches into the lake. While the water samples showed a couple areas of poorer water quality, they weren't definitive enough to identify the source of contamination. No doubt the sludge has been a contributing factor, and we think the elevated water table has helped leach in sewage effluent since late 2013.

From late October through early December we dredged Shagwa, deepening both the pool in front of the dam and creating a pool and channel in the south end. We also took the top layer from the edges of the south end. In total, we moved 41K cubic yards of material. Reshaping the south end reduces the issue of the shallow water trapping fish in a lower oxygen situation.



In 2018, we'll install a new aeration system, and start filling the lake – and yes, we'll need a big runoff this spring! Once we have it filled, we'll stock crayfish and fathead minnows for forage. If we can fill Shagwa in 2018, then we hope to stock the lake for fishing in 2019.

Dues: After no dues increases for 10 years, we're implementing a ~16% dues increase effective for the 2018 summer fishing season. Initiated memberships will increase \$50/year, uninitiated \$80/year, and day passes by \$5. During the past 10 years, we've seen inflation increase by 24% and fish costs increase by 45%. We're also increasing junior and grandchild memberships by \$5, and ice fishing to \$80/year - this is the first increase for these in over 40 years. As a reminder, if you're a regular member, you must pay at least the \$200 inactive dues to keep your membership current.

Snake Pipeline: Last fall we replaced the aging Snake ditch with an 18" pipeline. The pipeline runs from the end of the concrete segment, near Minnehaha St, to the Letitia diversion and onto Snake. This will be a significant improvement to our delivery system by allowing us to run a larger volume of water with much less seepage loss. We thank everyone along the reconstruction zone for your patience and support!



Fishing Report: Crystal Springs Trout Farm supplied all our trout for the 2017 season and will be supplying our fish for 2018. We try to maintain a balance of fish varieties (brooks and browns) through our stocking program which is dependent on availability from our supplier and the health of our lake fishery. In 2018, we'll be stocking catchable and trophy Rainbow, Cutbows, and Palominos in all lakes during the April and June stockings. If we can secure a supply of large enough browns, we'll stock those. Cutbows are a cross between cutthroats and rainbows and are more disease resistant. Palominos, also known as Yellow Trout, grow as fast as regular rainbow and seem to be more disease resistant.

Fish Survey: We began a fisherman survey this past season for Apache and Nokomis, to gain insights about the fisheries. Specifically, the impact of perch and the trout growth rates; and looking at mitigation methods, walleye in Apache, and catch-and-release in Nokomis. We'll need at least three years of data and ask that you take the time to fill out the survey cards at both lakes.

Lake Patrol – Rules & Violations: Thanks to Fred Ballard (970-222-8376) and Erika Williamson (970-222-0450) for last year's service. Both will be back for the 2018 season. We processed more violations this past year, as it appears a few members are bending the spirit of the rules. This led us to review the rules and update the violations. Two key issues are – members are responsible for their guests (and therefore are fined for violations), possession limit issues (when you have your limit, you're done fishing). We'll be closely enforcing the rules and as always appreciate members bringing to the patrolman's attention if you see a problem at any of the lakes or ditches. To assist the patrolmen we ask that if you are fishing from a boat or belly boat, or ice fishing; please write your name, date and guest pass name/ number on a paper and place it on your windshield so the patrolmen know who's out on the lake. Similarly, be sure to visibly wear your badge or guest permit at all times.

Boat Storage: We continue to have too many boats left at our lakes year- round. To address this, we're initiating a program starting in November 2018, to either have boats removed or charging the owners to store them over the winter. Our first target will be Apache. We'll contact all boat owners there and take one of three actions this fall:

- Remove any unregistered boats (owners who can describe their boat can bail them out of our "boat yard")
- Give boat owners until November 15 to remove their boat (and not to another lake). Should you need help we'll have a couple sources who can move your boat for a fee
- Or the boat owner can pay \$150 to store their boat at Apache for the winter

We'll expand this to Erie, Nokomis and Letitia in the fall of 2019, and Hiawatha in 2020.

Water Status: Last year was a more normal water year, but it took the large snow in May to fill our lakes. The outlook for 2018's runoff is uncertain at this point. Deadman has below average snowpack, as does the South Platte drainage. This may affect our ability to fill our lower priority lakes.

Water System Tours: We've had several requests for a guided tour and overview of the water system (lakes and ditches). We'll offer these on Saturday afternoons of July 14 and September 15. Space is limited, contact the office and let us know your preferred date and number of attendees. We'll get back to you with the logistics.

Office: Deb Buck continues as our office manager – thanks!

- For 2018, we will reuse last year's badges with a sticker for this year. Paying your dues early will allow us to get your badge stickers and receipt back to you before the season opens and will eliminate office delays. We appreciate receiving your dues transactions by mail (PO Box 527, RFL, 80545).
- We now accept credit cards as a form of payment. A service charge will be assessed.
- Lost and Found: Please be courteous to all our members by turning in lost and found items to the office with the date and lake where items were found. If you have lost an item, please check with the office.

Thistle: Last summer we again hired a licensed applicator to treat the thistle around our waterways and dams, with an herbicide that is safe to apply around a fishery. The program was very successful during the second year and we're already seeing positive results in bringing the thistles under control.

Ice Fishing: Ice fishing will again be allowed at Ramona and Apache for the 2018/2019 season. Member fees: adult season pass - \$80, child season pass \$20, adult day pass \$20, and child day pass - \$15. Guest passes: escorted adult - \$30, escorted child - \$15, unescorted adult guest passes are not allowed. Due to limited office hours, please buy your passes by mail well in advance. Please put your name(s) on a paper and place it on your car dashboard so we know who's out on the ice.

2018 Calendar:

May 12 Member fishing season opens!
May 26 Guest Fishing opens
July 5-7 Ramona is closed to fishing until 2:00 PM on July 7th
October 31 Fishing season closes
Winter Ice fishing on Ramona and Apache is open from mid-December through early March, safe ice permitting

Office Information:

Phone: 970-881-2175
Mail: PO Box 527, Red Feather Lakes CO 80545
E-mail: rfsico@yahoo.com
Web: www.rfsi.org
Hours: May 5 through September 3
8 AM to noon – Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
4 PM to 8 PM – Friday
September 5 through October 31
8 AM to noon – Wednesday and Saturday
November through April – by appointment only

Board of Directors:

Greg Pickerel 970-556-9814 (cell)
David Mosnik 970-217-4822 (cell)
Paul Barker 970-223-7653
David Frydendall 970-484-3457
Alan Anderson 970-217-5631 (cell)
Joe Jacklovich 303-819-5254
Roger Svendsen 970-881-2859, 970-593-3012

The Board wishes to thank you for your continuing support, and will do everything possible to make this an enjoyable summer.

Greg Pickerel
President, Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Company