

Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Newsletter – March 2020

Weather: Winter finally arrived early, with ice on the lakes before the end of fishing season. Followed by the big snowstorm Thanksgiving week and extended cold weather all winter. Snowpack is at average levels, 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!

Recreational Boating: For the past few years we've had a number of issues arise around boating on our lakes. Most of them involve non-Red Feather residents boating on our lakes instead of using the public lakes, boaters (recreational or fishing) infringing on other fishermen, or boaters who are not following our or State boating regulations. After soliciting the inputs from our members, the Board presented motions (which were approved) at the 2019 Annual Stockholders meeting to implement a new boating use program.

The goal of the boating use program is to:

- Provide boating as an additional recreation option to fishing memberships.
- Provide boating as a purchased recreation option to Red Feather residents.
- Have a clear way to identify "valid" vs "invalid" boaters on our lakes, and therefore be able to deal with those who aren't allowed.
- Better articulate our rules and expectations, and ensure boaters know and follow them.
- Make an overall better recreation experience for those using our lakes.

We're therefore implementing a multifaceted boating program effective in 2020:

- All boaters must have a valid badge to boat, either a fishing badge, guest fishing badge or a boating recreation badge. Simply stated – "no badge, no boating".
- All boaters must follow all RFS&I rules. See page 2 of the rules for all the details.
- Boating Recreation Badges can be purchased (limit 2) as part of a fishing membership. These are assigned to the primary named fishing member who is responsible for assuring that the boater wearing the badge understands and follows all rules.
- We're also offering an Annual Boating Membership for residents of Red Feather Lakes. Residents are those within our initiated membership area that are either property owners or long-term renters. These boating memberships get two boating recreation badges with their names on them. They do not get any of the other benefits that fishing memberships get. And like fishing memberships, they agree to follow all RFS&I rules.

The RFS&I Board will monitor how the boating use program is working (please give us feedback) and make any changes to further its success. Thanks in advance for your support and patience as we implement this new boating use program.

Shagwa: We had a very successful fishing season and the lake's water quality and eco-system has measured very good. We stocked the lake with Donaldson rainbows. This variety of rainbows is more expensive but grow a bit faster than some of our other varieties. Donaldsons are an aggressive fighting fish and prone to jumping more when hooked. Plans are to keep Shagwa as a Donaldson fishery. Fishermen feedback over the fishing season was very positive. We again remind anyone wading along the shore, that the contours are different than the past – be careful!



Fishing Report: Crystal Springs Trout Farms supplied all of our trout for all lakes except Shagwa in 2019. Aquatics Associates supplied the Donaldson trout for Shagwa as well as grass carp for all the lakes in 2019. Both suppliers will provide all of our fish this year, at an overall increase in cost of 2.3%. Even though water temps rose to 70 degrees in August causing a lull in fishing, the reports we received through the season were overall very favorable. The Donaldson rainbows at Shagwa were a big hit with our members due to their size and aggressive fighting. The Palominos continue to be very popular with members with reports of several 19" plus caught from all of our lakes that were stocked with Palominos. The brook trout are also doing well in our lakes with a number caught at 16-19". Although the browns were harder to catch, there were some very nice 19" plus caught in Apache, Erie and Nokomis.

Surveys: Thank you to the members who took the time to fill out the surveys. We analyze the surveys to determine the growth of our trout population and health of each fishery. The Shagwa surveys give us a good comparison of growth rates between the Donaldson and other varieties. Although we are not surveying all of our lakes, we feel the data we collect from these three lakes provide us with insights on the overall health of all of our lakes.

2019 survey results – 89 at Apache, 112 at Nokomis

<u>Lake</u>	<u>12-15"</u>	<u>16-19"</u>	<u>20"+</u>	<u>Trout kept</u>	<u>Walleye caught</u>	<u>Perch caught</u>
Apache	492	120	17	55	25	37
Nokomis	602	227	9	3	NA	15

From 62 surveys at Shagwa, growth rates of the 12-16" Donaldson trout

<u>Length</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>August</u>
12"-15"	32	8	14	8
16"-20"	19	48	34	22

The board encourages members to complete the survey forms at Apache, Nokomis and Shagwa in 2020. We are receiving good data from the surveys that help with our fishery management. Please feel free to include comments on the surveys.

Lake Patrol – Rules & Violations: Thanks to Fred Ballard (970-222-8376), Erika Williamson (970-222-0450), and Shanna Fiorino (970-218-9154) for last year's service. **We've done a major overhaul of the rules, pulling all the boating related rules (new and old) into one section, so be sure to read and familiarize yourself with this year's rules!** We take issues like trespassing, guest violations, and badge misuse seriously and always appreciate members bringing issues 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.

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

- For 2020, we'll have a sticker for your badge. Paying your dues early will allow us to get your 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 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.

Water Status: Last year was a fairly normal water year, but it took several large spring snows to fill our lakes. The outlook for 2020's runoff is positive at this point. But no doubt, we'll need a couple late spring snowstorms to fill the lakes.

Boat Storage: First of all, thanks to the boaters at Apache for removing all their boats last fall! We removed about a dozen boats from Erie, Nokomis and Letitia. In 2020, we'll add Hiawatha to our annual boat removal effort. Our program to remove boats at the end of the season is paying off, Apache was much better for summer boat storage with the "dead beats" out of the way. In 2020, we'll add Hiawatha to our annual clean-up efforts. In the fall we contact all boat owners at all the lakes and take one of three actions:

- Remove any unregistered boats (owners who can describe their boat can bail them out of our "boat yard") – so be sure to register your boat!
- Give boat owners until Oct 31 to remove their boat (and not to another lake). Should you need help we'll have a couple people who can move your boat for a fee.
- Or the boat owner can pay \$150 to store their boat where it is for the winter.

Ice Fishing: Ice fishing will again be available at Ramona and Apache for the 2020/2021 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 before Oct 31 or 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.

Board change - Alan Anderson has stepped down from the board. He was a great help in keeping things running smoothly and we'll all miss his contributions. Thanks, and best to Alan! In his place we've appointed Mike Calhoon to serve out Alan's term on the board. Mike and his family have been long-time members. Mike manages the Fort Collins Parks Dept and brings a lot of experience in recreation management and water board administration to the board. Welcome!

2020 Calendar:

May 9	Member fishing season opens!
May 23	Guest Fishing opens
July 2-4	Ramona is closed to fishing until 2:00 PM on July 4 th
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 2 through September 9
8 AM to noon – Monday, Wednesday and Saturday
4 PM to 8 PM – Friday
September 9 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
Mike Calhoon	970-567-7273 (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