

Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Newsletter – March 2022

Weather: Winter was slow to arrive, but now it's cold, windy, and moderately snowy. The snowpack is slightly above average at the Deadman SNOTEL measuring station, <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/wcc/home/snowClimateMonitoring/snowpack/basinDataReports/>. We'll need our usual late spring snows to give us sufficient water for our lakes. You can view current weather at www.redfeatherlakes.net. Here's to a wet spring!

Fishing Report: Crystal Springs Trout Farms supplied trout for all lakes except Shagwa in 2021. Aquatics Associates supplied the Donaldson trout for Shagwa as well as grass carp for all the lakes in 2021. Both suppliers will be providing our fish this year. Crystal Springs will provide cutbows, palominos, and rainbows, but prices will be 11% higher. They are trying to procure brooks for possible stocking this fall. We are also pursuing a source for browns (see photo), but availability is uncertain at this point. Overall fishing was a bit uneven this past year. The



biggest issue was the winter kill last spring at Nokomis. We double stocked the lake to bring it back online as quickly as we could. Unfortunately, the perch survived the kill and we're working with our fish biologist on short and long term mitigation alternatives. Fishermen can help by never returning perch to the lake, keep or toss them away; they will not count towards your S&I possession limit. The other lakes all had favorable reports for fishing. The Donaldson rainbows at Shagwa and Palominos in the other lakes are doing well.

Nokomis and Hiawatha stocking: We will add one additional stocking with the spring or summer stocking to Nokomis to bring the population close to 2020 inventory. It will take another one to two years to reach the numbers of 18" and over population to equal the 2020 numbers. Last fall at Hiawatha, Crystal Springs was able to sell us 500-700 pounds of cutbows at a 50% discount. The cutbows were smaller, 8-12" than our usual catchable size, 12-15". The board felt the deal was too good to pass up and confident most of the cutbows will grow to catchable size by early summer.

Surveys: Thank you to the members who filled out the surveys during the past few years. Although we are not surveying all our lakes, the data we collect from Apache, Nokomis and Shagwa provided us with insights on the overall health of all our lakes. Due to the winterkill at Nokomis and the limited surveys at Shagwa, we determined comparisons to past years were inconclusive. The board feels we have adequate data from previous years surveys to meet our original goals, therefore, **we will not be collecting survey information in 2022**. As always, members are welcome to provide comments or feedback to the office and the board, preferably by email.

Ice Fishing: Ice fishing will again be available at Ramona and Apache for the 2022/2023 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 guests are not allowed. Due to limited winter office hours, please buy your passes before Oct 31, 2022; or well in advance by mail. Please put your name(s) and mobile phone number on a paper and place it on your car dashboard when you're out on the ice.

Dues: We are not raising dues for 2022, leaving rates the same for a fifth consecutive year. However, given the higher costs of doing business (fish, staff, professional services), we'll closely look at costs and revenues to determine if a dues increase is necessary for 2023.

Water Update: Last spring we had a large snowstorm which gave us plenty of water for the summer. We were able to keep the lakes filled well into summer and filled the lower lakes again this fall. During the spring runoff, we monitored the water quality at our headgate and observed no ill effects from the Cameron Peak Fire.

Maintenance Projects: Last fall we wrapped up a number of minor maintenance projects (fish traps, dam "dressing" and vegetation removal, toe drain cleaning). The most significant project was to redo the toe drains at Ramona. Toe drains help draw the water away that naturally comes through a dam. We monitor toe drain flow rates and clarity as part of our dam safety work.

Recreational Boating: This past year was the second season with our new recreational boating program. Our goal of having only boaters who are part of our program and following our rules (especially PFD compliance) has worked beyond expectations. We had 11 recreational boating members (5 more than the first year), and 154 boating passes (very similar to the first year).

As a reminder, key aspects of our boating program are:

- 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.
- Recreation Boating 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 also offer 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.

Boat Storage: Last fall we removed 15 boats from our five boating lakes, with the majority coming from Hiawatha, see results along north shore. Only four of the boats were properly stickered, of the other eleven, half were in various stages of degradation / abandonment – reaffirming why our cleanup efforts are necessary.



We'll continue doing this each fall, starting

by contacting owners of boats at each lake that one of three actions will be taken:

- 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.
- The boat owner can pay \$150 to store their boat where it is for the winter.
- Or we'll remove any remaining boats. Owners who can describe their boat can bail it out of our "boat yard" for \$200. Any boats not claimed by May 31, 2023; will be auctioned off later in 2023.

Be sure to register your boat and have a sticker on it!

Lake Patrol – Rules & Violations: We had a complete turnover in our patrol staff this year. We appreciated the work by all our former staff and want to thank Dave Morrison, Dan Spelts and Don Gilmore for their work in the last half of the season. We didn't have the number of violations as past years, thanks for familiarizing yourselves and following the rules. As you know, 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 watercraft or ice fishing; please print 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: Our "new" (now very seasoned) office manager, Allison Harrell did a great job managing the office – thanks!

- For 2022, we'll use the existing badges (with a date sticker). Paying your dues early allows us to get your badges back to you well before the season opens and streamlines our office workload. We appreciate receiving your dues transactions by mail (PO Box 527, RFL, 80545).
- We accept credit cards. Note, a service charge will be added to cover credit card fees.
- 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.

2022 Calendar:

May 14 Member fishing season opens!
May 28 Guest Fishing opens
June 30 – July 2 Ramona is closed to fishing until 2:00 PM on Saturday, July 2nd
October 31 Fishing season closes, boats must be removed from the lakes
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 7 through September 5
8 AM to noon – Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday
4 PM to 8 PM – Friday
September 7 through October 31
8 AM to noon – Wednesday and Saturday
November through April – by appointment only

Board of Directors:

Greg Pickerel 970-556-9814
David Mosnik 970-217-4822
Paul Barker 970-223-7653
David Frydendall 970-484-3457
Mike Calhoon 970-567-7273
Joe Jacklovich 303-819-5254
Roger Svendsen 720-480-3947

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