

# Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Newsletter – March 2025

**Weather:** Winter was slow to arrive, but now it's cold, windy, and moderately snowy. The snowpack is currently below 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](http://www.redfeatherlakes.net). Here's to a wet spring!

**Fishing Report:** Crystal Springs Trout Farm supplied catchable (80%) and trophy (20%) rainbows and palominos for all lakes except Shagwa in 2024. Palominos account for 10% of the rainbows stocked. Aquatics Associates supplied catchable Donaldson rainbows for Shagwa. Aquatics Associates also supplied browns for Apache and Erie, and tiger trout for Nokomis. These cost \$10-\$12 apiece, so please handle them with care! We post a stocking report at the office and on our web page once the lakes have been stocked. But in general, we stock all the lakes in late April, again in June, and then half the lakes in later September. Last year we added more fathead minnows to Shagwa and Nokomis to further boost the forage base. This year we plan to post survey cards at those lakes to gather data about the growth of the Donaldsons and Tiger trout and whether we're turning the corner on the perch at Nokomis. Overall, we experienced a good year of fishing with normal fish growth, moderate water levels, good water temperatures and good water quality test results.



**Nokomis Perch:** As we've written in the past, we are continuing our assault on the perch at Nokomis. The strategy is the same one we used at Apache ten years ago, in which we stock aggressive trout (browns and tigers) to eat the smaller perch. In conjunction we ask (and appreciate) anglers who catch perch to remove them. It took five years of biological mitigation to control the perch population in Apache.

**Water Update:** Last year was a tale of two water stories in Colorado – wet and dry. The big snow in April allowed us to fill up by early June. Then in mid-June we started a long drought period which impacted our ability to refill mid-summer and the warm/dry weather has persisted until January. This spring, more than ever, we'll need several large wet snows to fill our lakes.

**Dues:** There will be no changes to our dues for 2025. Fish costs will be +5% higher, with other items tracking front range inflation rates of +2.5%. See the accompanying dues statement for membership options and costs. As a reminder, if you're a regular member, you must pay at least the \$230 inactive dues to keep your membership current.

**Fall Project Work:** Our main project last fall was refurbishing the dam at Shagwa. This involved building a clay mix cut-off wall on the down-slope side of the dam. We also moved the outlet to the NE corner. Together these will help reduce the seep that naturally occurs through the dam and better direct it downstream. We completed the Bellaire inlet ditch pipeline in cooperation with CPW. And we completed several annual maintenance projects this fall - upper Mitchell headgate and Elkhorn headgate work, cleaning out the toe drains at all the lakes, and did some access improvements at Erie.

**Surveys:** Last year we surveyed the members about our fishing program. We were very pleased by the response of 339 members (33%), thanks! A brief summary is:

- By roughly 2:1, there was support to reduce our possession limits. Next steps are to socialize this with various groups, bait anglers, children, and guests. Also, see what other fishing organizations in the area are doing. Look for us to ask you for your thoughts on this during this next fishing season.
- Several suggested having more patrolling. We already try and vary times and routes, but we'll look at the feasibility to add more personnel.
- Communication, we were surprised by how many don't know about our web page, despite how much we've talked about it these past 13 years. It's a source for learning more about our lakes and programs, current status (like stocking), etc.
- A number of you are open to getting 2-3 email "blasts" over the year, so we'll look into how we can accomplish this.
- Fishing method, more are using artificial flies and lures than bait by almost 2:1. This made us wonder if the bait anglers were under-represented in the survey. Another thing we'll dig into this upcoming season.
- Favorite lakes – Erie, Nokomis, and Apache topped the list; but really for all the lakes the top factors making a lake a favorite was – scenery, fish (types / quality / size), proximity to "home", accessibility, fewer anglers.
- The Board will discuss the ice fishing comments and suggestions.
- Positive comments – given the number of positive remarks, we're doing a lot of things pretty well. Thanks.

As you reflect on this past year and if you have other ideas or concerns, let us know.

**Lake Patrol – Rules & Violations:** All of the 2024 patrol staff will be returning in 2025; Andrew, Dan, Don, and Ericca. Allison will fill in, as necessary. We issued only one written violation last year to a non-member. A few verbal warnings were issued to fishing members. All watercraft users must wear a Life Jacket (PFD) when on the water. Please remember to leave a note on your dashboard or windshield with your name, any guests' names and guest pass numbers.

**Fall Boat removal:** Last fall we removed 7 boats from our five boating lakes. Only one of the boats was properly stickered. We again ask that if you want to store your boat at the lake this summer, get it stickered. We'll remove any boats left in the storage areas after October 3, upon which you'll need to pay \$200 to bail it out of our boat yard.

**Ice Fishing:** Ice fishing had a very unusual start this winter, in that Ramona didn't safely freeze until mid-January. Since then, ice fishing has been great at both Ramona and Apache. Member fees: adult season pass - \$90, child season pass \$20, adult day pass \$25, and child day pass - \$15. Guest passes: escorted adult - \$35, escorted child - \$15, unescorted adult guests are not allowed. Due to limited winter office hours, please buy your passes before Oct 31, 2025, or well in advance by mail. Please put your name(s) and mobile phone number on a piece of paper and place it on your car dashboard when you're out on the ice.



**Office:** Our office manager, Allison Harrell, did a great job managing the office, thanks!

- For 2025, we'll issue 2025 stickers to be placed on your green badges. Paying your dues early allows us to get your stickers 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).
- Similarly, it's a huge help to both you and us if you transact guest pass requests well ahead of time. They do not expire, so you can always keep a couple extra on hand.
- We accept credit cards. Note, a service charge will be added to cover credit card fees.
- Office hours; our summer office hours begin May 2<sup>nd</sup>, and our fall office hours start the Wednesday after Labor Day. See the days and times we're open on page 4.
- Lost and Found; please be courteous to all our members by turning in lost items to the office with the date and lake where items were found. If you lost an item, please check with the office.

**Lake and Fishing information:** On our web page, at [www.rfsi.org/lakes.html](http://www.rfsi.org/lakes.html), we have considerable information about our lakes (history, contour maps, overview information) and fishing (management of the fisheries and the challenges we deal with).



**Pelicans:** As many have observed, we had more pelicans on the lakes this past year, and unfortunately, they indiscriminately eat our very expensive fish. We've asked the Federal Migratory Bird Permit Office what we can do about this, and they said if they're not actively breeding / raising young, we can chase them away. By that they mean, harass but not harm. We're looking into ways we might do this with minimal impact to our anglers. One option being investigated is the Goosinator. This remote-controlled device was developed for harassing geese and works well for pelicans and nuisance animals. If we can imprint on these pelicans that there are predators, we won't have them eating our fish for two months each summer. Last year we had around 15 pelicans which eat about 4 pounds of fish, per bird, per day. At our current fish stocking rate, this costs us over \$24,000 per season. The Goosinator costs ~\$4,000 so the return on investment is very quick. Keep your eyes open for the Goosinator this summer!!

**2025 Calendar:**

May 10 Member fishing season opens!  
May 24 Guest Fishing opens  
July 3 – July 5 Ramona is closed to fishing until 2:00 PM on Saturday, July 5<sup>th</sup>  
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](mailto:rfsico@yahoo.com)  
Web: [www.rfsi.org](http://www.rfsi.org)  
Hours: May 2 through September 1  
8 AM to noon – Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday  
4 PM to 8 PM – Friday  
September 3 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 thanks you for your continuing support and will do everything possible to make this an enjoyable summer.

Greg Pickerel  
President, Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Company