

Paradise Springs Water Rights, Basin 22, Teton County Idaho

Paradise Springs, located near Driggs Idaho in Basin 22 is the subject of much contention. The recommendations have been reported to the court for all Basin 22 claims as well as these Paradise Springs and those water rights related to Paradise Springs. Objections are now being filed with the court regarding these rights. This report is to document the reasoning behind the recommendations made on the water rights for Paradise Springs and those water rights relating.

Water Right Referenced in This Report

22-180A, 22-180B, 22-180D, 22-575A, 22-11537, 22-11639, 22-12714B, 22-13134, 22-13135, 22-13211, 22-13212, 22-13503, 22-13509, 22-13511, 22-13585, 22-13586.

Water Right 22-405

Water right 22-405 was decreed to J. J. Miller in "Rexburg Irrigation Company et al. vs. Teton Irrigation Canal Company et al.", commonly known as the Rexburg Decree. Water right 22-405 was decreed to lands located on SWSE and S½ SW Section 30, and NENW of Section 21, Township 4 North, Range 45 East, for a total of 160 acres. The decree entitled Mr. Miller to a total of 2.0 cfs from Paradise Springs. The decree stated a priority date of 6-1-1904.

Mike Reid, Don Leroy Miller and Rex Miller are the original claimants for 22-405. Rex Miller has since sold a portion of his land to John Collins, Andrew Richardson and some of his land if not all is now being subdivided. All of the original claimants claim the water had never been used on the decreed place of use. Don is J.J. Miller's son. He states along with the rest of the original claimants that J. J. Miller never owned any of the land described in the Rexburg decree, and that the land that the water was intended to be used on is located in the SESW and NESW Section 19 as well as NENW and SENW Section 30, Township 4 North, Range 45 East. After looking at the USGS topographic map, it was found that Paradise Springs' water could never have been used on the land described in the Rexburg Decree because it is up hill.

Don Miller brought in J. J. Millers Homestead description as well as a Notice Of Water Right submitted by J. J. Miller. The Homestead Entry for J. J. Miller and the land listed on his Notice of Water right are described as follows: E½ NW Section 30 and E½ SW Section 19, Township 4 North, Range 45 East.

Given this information it is believed that water right 22-405 had always been used on the land described by the claimants. It is also believed that the Rexburg Decree was in error.

Because of this error and the fact that the Rexburg Decree is an indeterminate decree in regard to exact acreage, Idaho Department of Water Resources' "Adjudication Memo #57" was used as a guide for these recommendations. "Adjudication Memo #57" states

that if the water right was part of an indeterminate decree, then the acres irrigated in 1987 will be used as the decreed place of use. In 1987 all of the E½ NW Section 30 and E½ SW Section 19, Township 4 North, Range 45 East was irrigated. This information was found through statements from the original claimants including signed statements from Rex Miller and Craig Kunz and by reviewing the aerial photos taken in 1987/1988 by the National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP). Though this is true, the claimants state that the NESW of Section 19 Township 4 North, 45 East was not irrigated until later (Affidavit supplied).

Rex Miller and Don Miller are brothers and each of them owned part of the land that was homesteaded by J. J. Miller. Even though the land was not split half and half between Don and Rex, the water right was. This information was obtained by a conversation with Don and a signed statement from Rex. Rex Miller and Don Miller each received 1.0 cfs of water right 22-405.

Mike Reid bought a portion of land from Don Miller therefore a portion of Don's 1.0 cfs was portrayed to him. Because of a claim that ground water users in the area were drying up Paradise Springs, Mike Reid filed a transfer to officially move the water from the decreed place of use to the land that it has always been used on. This transfer was lost in the system and when it was found it was decided that the Adjudication recommendations would accomplish the change the transfer was trying to accomplish, and the transfer was withdrawn. Rex's 1.0 cfs was also split. The recommendations for 22-405 have been created based on the above information.

Recommendations for 21-405:

- Mike Reid owns 35.6 acres of the Homesteaded land and receives 0.7 cfs and is reflected in the following claim files: 22-13212 (0.5 cfs), 22-13503 (0.2 cfs).
- Don Miller owns 9.6 acres and receives 0.3 cfs reflected in claim number 22-13211
- Rex Miller at one time irrigated 93.8 acres using water right 22-405 and water right 22-587. He owns 1.0 cfs of 22-405 and did not claim any additional water from 22-587 although he owned land covered by that right. He sold 7.2 acres and 0.08 cfs to Russel Bourne who then sold it to John Collins. John Collins' land was decreed as 22-587 and was therefore was recommended as such. Rex then sold another piece of his land to Andrew Richardson who received 0.34 cfs for 31 acres on land decreed as 22-405. Rex was left with 55.6 acres and 0.61 cfs on land covered by both 22-405 and 22-587.
- Rex Miller 55.6 acres and 0.61 cfs. Combination of 22-405 and 22-587 reflected in claim number 22-13585.
- Andrew Richardson 31 acres and 0.34 cfs. Portion of 22-405 reflected in claim number 22-13586.

- John Collins 7.2 acres and 0.08 cfs. Portion of 22-587 reflected in claim number 22-12714B.

Water Right 22-13509

Later in time the NESW of Section 19, Township 4 North, Range 45 East started being irrigated by water that came from a ditch along the Western hillside. There was an affidavit submitted by Chester Miller, one of J. J. Miller's sons. This affidavit went through some history about the water from Paradise springs but the only concrete date that can be taken from that affidavit was 1960. Because of this information the priority date that was given to water right 22-13509 for the irrigation of the NESW of Section 19, Township 4 North, Range 45 East.

Water Right 22-4104

According to the claimants in 1969 a pump went in on the East side of the spring and pumped water through a pipe for sprinkler irrigation. This pump not only irrigated all of the homesteaded land, but also began irrigating a small piece of land owned by Don Miller in the NWNW of Section 30 Township 4 North, Range 45 East. The affidavit provided by Chester Miller supports this beneficial use water right 22-4104. This right was split between Don Miller and Mike Reid.

Recommendations for 22-4104:

- Mike Reid receives 0.59 cfs reflected in claim number 22-11639.
- Don Miller receives 0.14 cfs reflected in claim number 22-11537.

Water Right 22-587

This water right was decreed in the Rexburg Decree to Caroline Withrick for an "undivided ¼ of Paradise Springs" with a priority of 6-1-1904. The land in the decree is stated as follows:

"NE1/4SE1/4, and SE1/4 of NE1/4 of Section 30, T. 4 N., R., 45 E., B. M. also, Homestead not described in pleadings."

The Homestead for Caroline Withrick was found on the BLM website (www.glorerecords.blm.gov) but her name was spelled slightly different. The homestead was issued to Carolina Wuthrick dated May 20th 1862. The land was listed as follows:

"S1/2SE Section 19 and NWNW Section 30 of T 4N R 45E"

The land listed on the decree and on the Homestead Entry total 200 acres.

7.2 acres of SWSE Section 19, Township 4 North, Range 45 East has been recommended to John Collins as 22-12714B. The remainder of that quarter-quarter has been recommended to Rex Miller as 22-13585. Duane Kunz claims 1.6 cfs of 22-587 reflected in water right claim number 22-13511. He claims the water has been used on NESW and NWSW Section 30, Township 4 North, Range 45 East, which is not the decreed place of use and no evidence has been submitted suggesting an error in the decree. As a result that claim has been disallowed.

Water Right 22-575

Water right 22-575 was decreed in the Rexburg Decree to George Walton for 100 inches (2 cfs) from Paradise Springs with a priority of 6-1-1892. The land it was decreed to is described as follows:

“NW1/4 of SW1/4 and W1/2 of NW1/4 of Section. 29, and NE1/4 of NE1/4 of Section 30, T. 4 N. R., 45 E., B. M., Containing 160 Acres.”

In water right transfer number 3555 Gary Zohner transferred 1 cfs of water right 22-575 from NWNW Section 29 and NENE Section 30, Township 4 North, Range 45 East to the NWSE and SESE Section 19, Township 4 North, Range 45 East. Also in the same transfer he moved 0.7 cfs of water right 22-180 from the NENE Section 30, Township 4 North, Range 45 East to the same place of use in Section 19.

After transfer # 3555, the land pertinent to 22-575 is as follows:

NWSW and SESE Section 19, SWNW and NWSW Section 29 all in Township 4 North, Range 45East.

Teton Rainbow Ranch at one time prior to 1987 owned land located in the SWNW and NWSW Section 29, Township 4 North, Range 45 East. They sold that land to Peter Shields and reserved the water as stated in the warrantee deed located in the claim file for water right 22-13134. Teton Rainbow Ranch then moved the water to SENE and NESE Section 30, Township 4 North, Range 45 East. Based on this information the recommendations follow.

Recommendations for 22-575:

- Gary Zohner receives 1.0 cfs reflected in claim number 22-575A limited to 80 acres.
- Wally Rothgeb receives, as an accomplished change in place of use, 0.13 cfs for 8.9 acres reflected in claim number 22-13135.
- Teton Rainbow Ranch receives, as an accomplished change in place of use, 0.86 cfs for 54 acres reflected in claim number 22-13134.

Water Right 22-180

Water right 22-180 was decreed in the Rexburg Decree to H. C. Bowles for 140 inches (2.8 cfs) from Spring Creek, with a priority of 6-1-1889. The land describe in the decree is as follows:

“SW1/4 of SW1/4 and SW1/4 of SE1/4 of Section. 29, N1/2 of NE1/4 of Section. 30, T. 4 N., R. 45 E., B. M., containing 160 acres”.

After transfer # 3555 mentioned above the lands to which water right 22-180 was pertinent is as follows.

NWSE and SESE Section 19, SWSW and SWSE Section 29, and NWNE Section 30, Township 4 North, Range 45 East.

Though 22-180 was decreed the source of “Spring Creek”, no one knows exactly where Spring Creek is. Some of the local names for Paradise Springs are Sulfur Creek and Spring Creek. In my analysis Paradise Springs, springs up into a pond and when water is high it will flow down and add to the water down stream in what is locally known as Miller Slough or Paradise Creek. Paradise Creek is a gaining reach and water can be found in it even after water is too low for Paradise Springs to feed it. It is possible that at the time of the Rexburg decree, Paradise Springs and Paradise Creek were referred to as separate sources. It is my opinion that the Rexburg Decree decreed rights to Paradise Springs and also Paradise Creek but named it Spring Creek because it was connected to Paradise Springs at times. For lack of other evidence and the fact that for years, it has been accepted that 22-180 is part of Paradise Springs my recommendation is that 22-180 be decreed, at least in part, to Paradise Creek. A transfer was even approved by the Department for this right and no protests were received to my knowledge. The Rexburg Decree did however decree 40 acres of land to this water right on the East side of the River. This is the portion of the right that Duane Kunz is claiming. That is why I recommended Unnamed Stream to this right. Why that land was decreed is unknown to me. It may be an error, or the land on the West side of the river may be in error. It could also be that H. C. Bowles allowed the water to flow into the Teton River and then he took it out upstream in an exchange fashion, otherwise I don’t understand why 80 acres would be decreed right on Paradise Creek and 80 acres decreed ½ mile upstream and 40 acres of it on the East side of the river. It may be that we want to recommend 22-180A and 22-180D as Paradise Creek to differentiate between Paradise Springs and Paradise Creek, and then have a point of injection and a point of re-diversion.

Based on that information the recommendations for 22-180 are as follows.

Recommendations for 22-180:

- Gary Zohner receives 0.7 cfs for 80 acres reflected in claim number 22-180A (Paradise Springs)

- Duane Kunz receives 0.7 for 40 acres reflected in claim number 22-180B (Unnamed Stream)
- Larell Kunz receives 0.44 cfs for 25 acres reflected in claim number 22-180D (Paradise Springs)

Report by Trent Galbraith 12-15-06: Revised 10-1-2007