

**2026 Watermaster's Annual Report  
Twin Lakes Water District 95-C  
Steve Neff, Watermaster  
P.O. Box 104, Rathdrum, ID 83858**

**AFFIDAVIT OF WATERMASTER**

As the elected watermaster of Twin Lakes Water District 95-C, I hereby certify that the information contained in this report is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

  
Signature

5/21/26  
Date

- The current watermaster was elected in May of 2017. Since that time, there has not been an assistant watermaster for more than a couple months.
- The 2025 irrigation season started with average runoff and precipitation.
  - According to local SnoTel sites, the snowpack for the 2024/2025 winter was about average for the history of the sites.
  - The spring runoff occurred earlier than usual, starting in late February. Flood Control District #17 began filling the lake in early March, with the lake reaching full pool by the first week of April. It remained near 10.4' until about Mid-May, when it began falling aggressively for the remainder of the season.
  - The Flood Control District transferred control of the spillway over to the water district in May, as the chances of flooding had diminished significantly by that point.
  - By early July, a new property owner along Rathdrum Creek reported the lack of flow across his land just downstream from the Finman property. With an inflow, at that point in the season, of 9.38cfs, and an outflow of 9.0 cfs at the spillway, the available inflow was no longer sufficient to cross the Finman property, where lack of repairs over the last decade allowed the creek to be channelled directly into the ground.
    - I was later informed the flow may have stopped reaching the Sylte Ranch as much as a month earlier.
  - The outflow was reduced to 3.0 cfs (roughly 1,500 gpm), where it remained for the rest of the irrigation season, and much of the winter. This amount allowed for delivery to the next beneficial use upstream of the Finman property, and is lower than any measurement taken on Fish Creek

in prior seasons, even during drought years. This amount was used in 3 prior seasons, as the condition of Rathdrum Creek has steadily declined.

- As a result of the conditions along Rathdrum Creek, very few inflow measurements were necessary during the 2025 irrigation season. All previous years show a steady reduction in flows throughout the season, with very little change, even after significant storms. Although this saved the district money during the season (and in years prior), it has been suggested the inflows should be recorded for historical data. I will be considering this going forward, as I will need an assistant for more regular measurements to be made.
- Measurements of the outflows at the dam remained consistent and accurate, using the new equipment installed in 2023.
- As the irrigation season ended on November 1, the watermaster transferred control of the spillway to the flood control district, as required by Idaho statute.
  - As watermaster, I remained in communication with the Flood Control District throughout the winter, as I have for most prior years as watermaster. I attend most monthly flood control district meetings in the winter months, as I was told it was my duty to monitor the status of water right 95-0734, the stockwater right on the Sylte Ranch. It is a water right allowing for delivery of 12 gallons per day/per head of cattle, on a year-around basis. I have always been compensated for my time, and submit timesheets to the treasurer when necessary. However, I have never measured the inflow on Fish Creek during the winter months (outside the irrigation season), as it is not part of the instructions given by the Idaho Department of Water Resources.
  - As has been customary in most prior years, Rathdrum Creek has been flushed of debris in November in order to reduce the potential of flooding during the winter and into the spring. Once the lake level had stabilized, a surge of 50cfs was released, with the expectation the flows would reach the City of Rathdrum within about 24 hours or less. At that point, the flow was found to be going into the ground on the Finman property. The flow was returned to 3.0 cfs, as there was no indication the flow would reach further downstream without significant repairs to the streambed.
  - As the winter months showed significantly less snowpack than average, the Flood Control District chose to keep the outflow at 3.0 cfs. Their goal was to fill the lake early, and to hold the level as long as possible.
    - The Sylte Ranch made multiple calls for water under their water right, 95-0734, during the winter months. I consulted with IDWR

regularly. With the unsuccessful attempt to flush the streambed in November (as mentioned above), along with the condition of Rathdrum Creek remaining unchanged throughout the winter, it was determined to be a futile call each time. Documentation of the decision was recorded and sent to the watermaster and water right holder.

- By early March, the lake level had reached a level above 10.0 feet. Flows from side streams had returned, especially the two streams downstream from the worst section of creekbed on the Finman property. The spillway was opened by the Flood Control District to release excess flows, and flows were again flowing through the Sylte Ranch.
  - After control of the spillway was transferred to the watermaster again this spring, flows have continued flowing to the recorded point of diversion for water right 95-0734 (at the barn near the furthest point downstream on the Sylte Ranch) as of May 20, 2026.
  - Snowpack was considerably below average for the winter months. Drought was declared by the Idaho Department of Water resources in mid-April. The lake level has already begun to decline from full pool, and inflows on Fish Creek have diminished considerably from where they would normally be this time of year.
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- As has always been the case, the watermaster submits a detailed timesheet to the treasurer, with a detailed description of duties performed, in order to be compensated. The current treasurer also presents a timesheet to the watermaster, and payroll checks are signed by the other party, not by the payee.
  - Many members still need to update their contact information with IDWR. We are hoping to find a way to reach those that have not responded to previous notices.
  - A list of water right/license holders is produced and submitted to the county each July for billing through the county property tax system. This assessment is a fee, not a tax. Most water districts have their own billing system, adding to the overall cost and hassle to run the district. We appreciate the county's willingness to continue this service at no cost to the water district.
  - All water district members paid \$20 "per water right holder" again in 2025, rather than "per water right". This was a change made in 2022 after discussion about whether water right holders were receiving any additional services by holding more than one water right in the district.

- There were no measurements of individual diversions, by meter or otherwise, during the irrigation season.
- The watermaster also assisted FCD17 during the winter months again this year by moving the gate under remote, online control.
  - FCD17 board members continue to have access to a camera system at the spillway, providing live views of the gate position and downstream staff gauge. They monitor the levels closely through the winter months using the cameras and electronic devices installed at the facility, and communicate regularly about conditions.
  - FCD17 shares in the expense of the Starlink system installed at the dam that provides the internet connection for the camera system.
  - There is a gate keeper on staff for the Flood Control District that regularly monitors conditions at the spillway, and moves the gate as directed.
- There were no Advisory Committee meetings held during the 2025/2026 season.
- Information about Twin Lakes Water District, the annual meeting documents (including this report), and regular updates on flow measurements and lake levels observed as far back as May 2019, can be found on our website, [twinwaterdistrict.org](http://twinwaterdistrict.org). The site was built by the watermaster in 2019, and is updated and maintained by the watermaster, as well.