

TWIN LAKES IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION P O BOX 620 Rathdrum ID 83858
(Incorporated in Idaho on October 4, 1956)

NEWSLETTER

39th year

September 1994

1st issue

LAKE LEVEL PROTECTED

Last winter we had a less than normal snowpack in the watershed with less than normal water content in the snow; so when the snow melted, the runoff was practicably immediate, leaving no reservoir for gradual runoff over subsequent weeks. In addition, this summer was very hot and very dry. On July 6th we asked the Water Resources department to activate the Twin Lakes Watermaster, as it appeared that we were in a serious drought situation.

Twin Lakes has only two STORAGE WATER rights: one held by the Twin Lakes Improvement Association from lake level zero to 6.4 feet and the other held by the Twin Lakes-Rathdrum Creek Flood Control District from 6.4 to 10.4 feet on the staff gauge at the outlet dam. It became imperative that the dam be closed down because scarcity of water and the sole rights of the two entities to the water that was available.

The water right held by the Sylte ranch is the highest priority right to IN-FLOW WATER; that is, water flowing into the lakes. The ranch is entitled to 0.07 cubic feet per second ONLY if the amount of water coming into the lakes is sufficient to get 0.07 cfs to the ranch. When there is not enough water coming into the lakes to satisfy the Sylte right, the dam is shut down as there is no responsibility to provide water in Rathdrum Creek if seepage and evaporation are in excess of in-flow. (This information is taken from Judge Magnuson's decree of April 19, 1989, case number 32572.)

This is the first drought year since the decree was handed down. As Ned Horner of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game succinctly stated: Rathdrum Creek is a seasonal stream and it dried up long before there were people around to dam it up. Ideally we'd keep water in it but if you compare the fishery and waterfowl use the lake relative to the stream, the lake's going to win out.

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STATUS OF CATTLE GRAZING

Gale Easterday, rancher, has been meeting with Dave Brown of the Kootenai/Shoshone Soil Conservation District to develop and implement BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES for the property bordering Fish Creek. It was a year ago that samples taken from the stream near the ranch showed an excessive amount of cattle pollution entering the stream.

In view of the documented offensive condition of Fish Creek (the steam that flows directly into Twin Lakes), Stan Hamilton director of the Department of Lands in Boise has offered to contact the Soil Conservation people to ascertain the practicality of building a fence along the high water mark which outlines the area under the jurisdiction of the Department of Lands.

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Note to members of the Twin Lakes Improvement Association:
PARTIAL ROAD CLOSING PROPOSAL

Can you imagine the abuse logging roads in a watershed take on a continuing basis? These private roads are owned and maintained by those who own the land. In the "old days" logging roads were steep and built adjacent to streams to facilitate building and maintaining them. Then runoff from the roads ran directly into the stream and subsequently into the lake carrying silt and pollutants with it.

In recent times, some of these old roads have been abandoned, ripped, and re-seeded. Laws now require that roads be built no closer than 75 feet from the high water mark of a Class I stream (fishery).

Modern logging roads are not steep and are relatively smooth with ditches, or waterbars on them. During the normal logging season, rain goes into the ditches and waterbars which directs it off the road. Then it can dissipate onto the forest floor. In the off-season, motorcycles, pickup trucks, trailers, RV's and other heavy vehicles use these various logging roads for recreation. During the rainy season these vehicles cut deep ruts in the softened roadbed causing the runoff water with its load of silt to follow the ruts running downslope directly into the stream at the bottom of the hill, and then to the lake. Silt carries phosphorus that promotes plant growth.

For this reason, subject to the approval of the Twin Lakes Improvement Association's membership, the Inland Empire Paper Company, who owns the majority of the Twin Lakes watershed, contemplates limiting access to two of their logging roads for the period of December 1st to April 30th, in order to prevent the situation described above and also to assure proper protection for their roads.

At the end of Twin Lakes Road is a fork in the road. About a hundred yards beyond this point where the roads narrow, would be placed a separate gate on each road. We would put up signs to dissuade anyone in a heavy vehicle from proceeding. ATV's and snowmobiles would still have access.

We are asking your opinion of this endeavor. We are asking that you return the attached form annotating whether you: (1) think it is a good idea, (2) don't like it, or (3) don't care one way or the other. Or call Don Ellis, (208) 687-2440 or (509) 928-7720 and let him know your choice.

Inasmuch as this action is proposed for fairly remote areas, we would ask that IF we decide to go with it that you would notify Don if you notice any vandalism relative to the gates or signs and any trespass beyond the gates so that immediate attention may be given and repairs made.

Although we would prefer a positive response, unless we hear to the contrary, we will assume that you approve this proposal.

RE: PROPOSAL TO CLOSE THE FAR REACHES OF TWIN LAKES ROAD (Dec. 1 to April 30)
(Not applicable to snowmobiles or ATV's)

Good idea. Don't like it Don't object

Please return this ballot to:
Twin Lakes Improvement Association
P.O. Box 620
Rathdrum, ID 83858

or call Don Ellis: (208) 687-2440 or (509) 928-7720 or a Board Member.