

Watch

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84	31	--	
83	41	.49	
78	42	.01	
73	33	--	
62	26	.49	
63	32	--	

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Names filed McCall race

Call City Council hopefuls
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McCall City Hall as of Tues-
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candidacy petitions.

(Continued from Page 1)

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McCall Police De-
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old small black lab

River

(Continued from Page 1)

in the Lower Payette River, farmers will be reluctant to provide water for fear of losing their water rights, Pence said. Under Idaho water law, farmers must use their water rights or lose them to other users.

"If we get more efficient with our water, then what happens to our water rights?" he said, citing what he said was a common concern.

Mike McIntyre, DEQ water quality science officer, said river flows are an important factor in improving water quality, much like high lake levels are essential to the health of Cascade Reservoir.

But to bring up the issue with farmers is to "touch on a sore nerve," McIntyre said. "To us, water quantity is an important issue, but it's a controversial issue and usually, it's not even brought up."

John Keys, regional director of the Bureau of Reclamation, said water releases for endangered salmon can be used to achieve dual benefits for resident and ocean-going fish.

Water releases down the Middle Snake River for salmon in 1994, for instance, provided more in-stream flows in July and August than existed since the early 1900s. Those flows improved water quality and oxygen levels for endangered Hagerman snails and resident fish, Keys said.

The Bureau's water releases for salmon in the Payette River system can not be diverted for irrigation and must be left in the stream, but Keys recognizes that this year's releases in late November, December and January will not help the Payette River's low flows in September.

"To be honest, I did not realize the river was dry below Emmett," Keys said last week. "We've had the water ready to move since early summer, but decided to hold it up to help out Cascade Reservoir."

After checking on the reservoir's water-quality conditions, Keys said he is not convinced that keeping the lake full helped that much. "I'm not seeing a lot of benefit to Cascade," he said. "I saw a lot of algae blooms when I flew over the lake. I wonder if there's something we can do in between to benefit Cascade and the lower river."

Ken Roberts of Donnelly, chairman of the Cascade Reservoir Water Quality Coordinating Council, said keeping the reservoir as full as possible has been helpful this year. "Everyone wants their stream or lake to be pristine," Roberts said. "But there's only so much water to go around."

If push comes to shove, Roberts said he is not sure there is enough water to address the needs of Cascade Lake and the Lower Payette. However, he added, "We're certainly willing to work with other agencies or interests in the basin to work on water-quality issues in the Lower Payette."

In terms of priorities, public efforts to clean up Cascade Reservoir have been going on since the mid- to

late-1980s, while intensive efforts to improve water quality in the Lower Payette River just started last year, Pence said.

In terms of recreation use, Cascade Reservoir used to be ranked as the most popular fishing and recreation destination in the state by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The reservoir's popularity has slipped in recent years due to widespread fish kills, algae blooms and resulting bad publicity.

By comparison, recreation use on the lower Payette has been low, typically consisting of a few trout and bass anglers, children swimming and playing on the river bank, and bird-hunting on lower Payette islands.

The vehicle for cleaning up the lower Payette River will be to develop a new water-quality management plan, to be shaped by a panel of citizens and farmers, DEQ officials said.

Payette farmer Jim Schmid said it is important to recognize that lower valley farmers have been making progress on water-quality projects. "We are working very hard to make things better," Schmid said.

Soil Conservation District efforts, such as laser measuring to check leveling of fields to reduce erosion, straw-mulching in crop rows, sediment traps and other techniques have reduced erosion, Pence said. "The idea is to keep soils in the fields, not washing off into the river," he said.

As a new watershed group forms to address the degraded water quality of the Lower Payette River, state environmental authorities say it will be important to try to knit together the needs of Cascade Reservoir and the Lower Payette River.

"Right now, there is an inherent conflict but there's just not a lot we can do about it at this point," said Dewey Worth, water quality coordinator for Cascade Reservoir cleanup efforts for the state Division of Environmental Quality. "In the long term, it's going to be important to try to address both. The key will be better management of the water."

Adds Limbaugh, "I think there are some happy mediums that can be met without a lot of argument."

A series of working groups are assigned to each look at a part of the problem, but no one is looking at the basin as a whole, said Wayne VanCour of the Cascade Reservoir Association, a citizen advocacy group.

"We've all got to sit down and see how the big picture will fit together here," VanCour said. "That hasn't happened yet and it should happen."

Dave,
Here is a copy of the article
I found in the Tribune during
table with you later,
Peter

W065

RECEIVED
OCT 13 1995
WATER RESOURCES
WESTERN REGION

Lower Payette R. suffers from Cascade Reservoir hold-back

BY STEPHEN STUEBNER
For The Star-News

EMMETT — What's good for Cascade Reservoir was bad for the Lower Payette River this summer.

At least that's how water authorities explain the fact the Payette River is a dry, lifeless gravel bed about 2.5 miles downstream from Emmett, below the diversion for Seven-Mile Slough.

This year, authorities kept Cascade Reservoir as full as possible to improve water quality. That squeezed Payette River supplies more than usual, officials say, and resulted in low flows and poor water quality downriver.

"Things are really tight," said Russ Manwaring, project coordinator for the West Central Highlands Resource Conservation and Development Council. "The water in the river is lower now than in all of the drought years."

The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation has compounded matters by reserv-

ing 140,000 acre-feet of water from Cascade and Deadwood reservoirs for endangered salmon, and holding those flows until winter, irrigation officials said.

"Basically, with the extra water reserved for salmon, there's no slack left in the system," said Mark Limbaugh, the Payette River watermaster.

Limbaugh points out there is no minimum flow set on the Payette River below Emmett, although water officials try to leave some water in the river to maintain fisheries. Irrigation needs for thousands of farms and orchards in the lower valley have to come first.

"We've come down to too many demands on the resource," said Tom Pence, a Payette Valley farmer and chairman of the Payette Soil & Water Conservation District. "More water would be helpful, but as farmers, we need to send cleaner water back to the stream."

In response to a recent lawsuit, the Lower Payette River has been ranked

with Cascade Reservoir as two of the most polluted water bodies in southwest Idaho, and both are listed among the four highest priorities for cleanup. The other two priorities are focused on the Lower Boise River.

Water-quality studies in the Lower Payette show sediment runoff from farm fields, high water temperatures and elevated levels of bacteria and phosphorus have degraded the river. A 1994 study by the state Division of Environmental Quality found 109 tons of sediment per day and 35 pounds of phosphorus per day flowed into the river from irrigated farm fields.

A shallow groundwater table - less than 25 feet deep - adds to water-quality concerns because contaminants from the surface can migrate to the aquifer through seepage. Later in the irrigation season, groundwater contaminants can emerge in the river, several studies have shown.

Although increased in-stream flows would improve water-quality
(See "River," Back Page)

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