



State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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November 7, 1995

Mark Limbaugh, Watermaster
Water District No. 65
102 N. Main Street
Payette, ID 83661

RECEIVED

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WATER RESOURCES
WESTERN REGION

RE: Fill in Payette Lake for 1995

Dear Mr. Limbaugh:

In response to your question regarding credited fill for Payette Lake in 1995, I have the following information. The reservoirs ceased accruing water on July 28 when natural flow below the 7-mile slough went to zero. When this occurred, there was not enough natural flow to fill all rights and it became necessary to use stored water to supplement flow in the river for downstream diversions. Consequently, accrual of water in the reservoirs ended on July 27, 1995. As we discussed previously, since the Payette River is operated as a coordinated system, we do not keep track of what reservoir is holding what water on a day-to-day basis. This allows greater flexibility in physical placement of stored water for the benefit of all. When I reconciled our accounting program total system fill with the observed physical fill for July 27, Payette Lake was not full. I recorded a total physical fill of 26,470 acre-feet for Payette Lake on July 27, although the right itself had filled at 27,750 acre-feet. The dates given here are Payette time which, because of the three-day travel time, would be July 24 at Payette lake.

In response to your second question regarding the August 24, 1995 storm event which resulted in a full reading (7.05 feet on the gage) at Payette Lake, each reservoir is allowed to fill only once during a year when there is no surplus natural flow. This is standard practice for all reservoirs in the state. This protects all users since allowing a reservoir to fill more than once would take natural flow from other water right holders. During that 4- or 5-day period in August, natural inflow above Payette Lake increased by 200-300 cfs which then decreased the stored water use of downstream users by an equivalent amount.

Mark Limbaugh
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In the future, as we approach the date of final physical fill, I will more closely communicate with you and Lake Reservoir officials so you can better anticipate when the system will begin to use stored water. This will allow for more lead time to operate Payette Lake accordingly. If you have any questions or need additional information, please call me at 327-7900 or Bob Sutter at 327-7989.

Sincerely,

Sheryl Howe by Bob Sutter

Sheryl L. Howe
Hydrology Section

cc: Bob Sutter
Dave Tuthill