



HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION

c/o Mike Glenn
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-or-

c/o Richard Prange
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NEWSLETTER



The Henrys Lake Foundation invites you to join our non-profit, tax exempt corporation. This organization was formed to preserve protect, and enhance Henrys Lake now and in the future. All proceeds will be used directly towards the improvements of this great fishery with no funds going for administration or salaries. Just fill in the information below and send this application with your contribution so that you can be a part of the HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION.

NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please enroll me as a member. Enclosed is a check for \$10 annual dues or \$100 life membership. I'm also enclosing \$ _____ as a additional donation (strictly optional).

Thank you—Mike Glenn, Sec.-Tres.—227 University Ave.—Twin Falls, Idaho 83301



HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION

November 1986

NEWSLETTER

WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Richard Prange

A complete Henrys Lake fishing season has passed since the Newsletter was last sent. During that six month span, the Henrys Lake Foundation has continued in it's role of working to provide a secure, quality fishery at the lake. Of special note, there seems to be unanimous agreement among fishermen that we have seen a definite increase in the growth and size of fish this year, with modest increases in hybrid catches realized by some anglers. See John O'Neill's comprehensive interview article of veteran Henrys Lake anglers testifying to improved fishing. I'm personally convinced that by 1988, we will again be hooking 10-12 pound hybrid trout in respectable numbers. Our fishing at Henrys Lake continues to be on the upswing! But for now, there is much to report.

DAM REPAIR-- The most notable development this summer was that the North Fork Water Company decided to commence with spillway and outlet gate repair on the dam. Starting about July 1, water levels at the lake began to drop rapidly, but stabilized at 3.3 ft. below the full pool mark by mid-August. During drawdown, the Idaho Fish and Game Department (IDFG) was successful in negotiating an agreement with the dam owners to allow outside sources to share in the costs of constructing a higher temporary coffer dam. A higher coffer dam would reduce the risk of fish winter kill-- this resulted in a 3.3 ft. water level drop compared to the planned for 4.8 ft. In August, IDFG fishery biologist Steve Elle contacted me to ask if the Henrys Lake Foundation would be willing to contribute up to \$2000 towards costs of the higher dam. He related that the IDFG could commit up to \$5000 in dam costs, but with the additional Foundation funds, they could also proceed with other enhancement plan work. Approximately 2/3's of the Directors were subsequently reached by telephone or located at the lake to decide on the request-- all those contacted felt that providing the money would be a prudent Foundation investment. It would be a major setback if a shallower lake resulted in significant fish kill losses later this winter.

On October 28, I talked to Dave Rydalch, manager of the water company. Dave informed me that all work had been completed on schedule and that the lake level had actually risen slightly during the construction period. No more repairs would be necessary. On November 4 and 5, the earthen coffer dam was removed. Dave will now seek clearance from the IDFG to reduce water releases into the outlet creek this winter so as to increase the likelihood of Henrys Lake refill next spring. He was most complimentary of Steve Elle's negotiation success with water company shareholders-- originally they were unwilling to have "outside strings attached" to coffer dam construction or funding.

After the IDFG reviews final costs associated with the higher coffer dam construction, the Foundation will be billed for it's share later this fall. I have looked at some historic water records for Henrys Lake and believe that at present water elevation, there should be little risk of winter kill. At the end of this October, there was about 72,000 acre feet of water left in the lake.

This compares favorably to an average of 61,910 acre feet at the end of October for the 1940 through 1985 period of record. With normal winter snowpack runoff, Henrys Lake should again fill next season.

HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING--About 90 people were on hand for the July 5 Foundation potluck and meeting at Wild Rose Ranch, Henrys Lake. Our food, weather, and companionship combined for a most enjoyable afternoon. West Yellowstone summer resident and renowned author of fly fishing and ecology literature, Charlie Brooks, came to praise and enforce the Foundation in it's efforts to secure quality fishing at Henrys Lake. Member Tommy Thomas discussed aquatic macroinvertebrate (fish food organisms) sampling results that were compiled by he and IDFG biologist, Scott Grunder, during the summer of 1985. Similar sampling had not been done for many years and their work showed that shrimp comprised about 80-90% of the Henrys Lake's fish food organisms. Thomas recommended that IDFG inventory macroinvertebrate populations every two years to help monitor the lake's ecological trends. IDFG personnel Herb Pollard and Steve Elle followed him and reported on various fish management programs at the lake. A motion was passed authorizing the Foundation to purchase a plaque which will be erected onsite dedicating our Duck Creek fencing project as the "Jim Wright Memorial Riparian Habitat Improvement Project". Many folks renewed and paid membership dues including a \$500 donation by Howard C. "Gus" Hall of Oakland, CA-- this represents the largest single contribution ever made by one individual to the Foundation. Mel Schulte, Boise, ID; Harold Husted, Buhl, ID; Tom McQuire, Colorado Springs, CO; and Polly Holbrook, Portland, OR, were elected to replace outgoing Board of Directors John Dickman, Tom Morris and Jim Wright (deceased).

A Director's meeting was held following the general membership potluck. Yours truly volunteered and was elected for another year's term as President along with rancher John Magleby as Vice President and Mike Glenn as Secretary-Treasurer. The Directors voted to combine all life membership donations (now numbered at 42) into one dedicated bank account to be operated as an interest generating trust fund. Approval was given to update and reprint the Foundation brochure and potential enhancement project expenditures were discussed.

DUCK CREEK FENCING PROJECT-- The Foundation's solar powered electric fence project located along Duck Creek on the Magleby Ranch has passed it's first birthday with flying colors! On July 5, a group of some 30 interested people toured this most unique project. The fence came through last winter in good shape and no operational problems have developed. This project was built to demonstrate the soil stabilization and fish habitat benefits associated with riparian vegetation restoration. Precluding livestock grazing from within the fenced stream corridor has, in the first growing season, allowed previous barren soil areas to naturally revegetate with native forbs and grasses-- thus beginning the healing process. The IDFG has and will continue to monitor fish population trends inside the 3/8's mile fenced section. I took numerous photographs in July and September to begin a "time lapsed photographic" record of the stream's rehabilitation. We are now planning to plant willow shoots early next spring to help Mother Nature along. The Foundation has a five year agreement with rancher John Magleby for the project, during which time we will watch overall fish, vegetation and soil stabilization trends. We are indebted to John for giving us the opportunity to conduct this project on one of Henrys Lake's important spawning streams. During my September visit to the fence, it was a thrill for me to view a group of six large adult brook trout in magnificent spawning colors, migrating upstream through our fencing project.

IDFG ENHANCEMENT PLAN WORK-- Based on a November 6 conversation with IDFG biologist Steve Elle, I'm happy to report that good progress is being made this year at completing some fish habitat improvements identified in the 1982 Henrys Lake Enhancement Plan report. First, stop log adjustments were made to the two fish screens on Targhee Creek this summer so that they are now operating efficiently without effecting irrigation water diversions. Secondly, design plans are now being completed for the two Howard Creek fish screens to be located on the Salisbury Ranch. Finished plans will be sent to Mr. Salisbury later this winter for his review and approval. The IDFG has purchased all materials needed for the project and is hopeful of screen installation next summer. These screens prevent juvenile fish losses at irrigation ditch diversions during their downstream migration to the lake. Thirdly, work is scheduled this winter for fixing adult fish passage problems at the big Targhee Creek highway culvert. The IDFG is going to use a new culvert fish passage design concept successfully developed in Montana. They will be fabricating on site, baffle plate sections to be bolted inside of the big culvert. This will be a retrofit approach and create a stair stepped "fish ladder" condition through the full length of the culvert. The work is to be finished in time for the spring cutthroat spawning run. Steve also tells me that fiscal year funds left over after coffer dam, screens, and culvert project expenditures will be used to purchase and stockpile materials for future fencing work. This is very good news indeed!

"THE HYBRIDS ARE BACK"-- I made a quick fall trip to Henrys Lake September 20 through 23. The weather was sublime and between Foundation chores, I was able to fish about half the time. I experienced my best day ever at catching hybrids on September 23. At the urging of Bill Schiess, I fished about 3/4's mile offshore in 19 ft. of water, from my float tube (for better line control) using a HI-D line and leech patterns on the bottom. This technique brought me ten hybrid hookups-- eight fish were landed. At one point I made three consecutive casts and hooked three fish! I felt, of course, that the two fish I lost were the largest ones hooked. I did land three fish that were 4 pounds. Bill, fishing within a few hundred yards, landed two fish that day that weighed 6 1/2 pounds! These fish were fat and fought hard in the hybrid tradition. During the 1986 season, Bill has caught over 400 hybrids and he insists that many of us are not using the right strategies for catching these beautiful fish. He's made a believer of me for fishing the deep water! I'm really excited over this experience because I do not consider myself a veteran expert at fishing Henrys Lake, but I think we're headed for noteworthy hybrid fishing next year and in 1988 if some of us are willing to change tactics.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE HENRYS LAKE FISHERY

by John O'Neall, Jr.

In order to get a handle on the trends in the Henrys Lake fishery through the summer of 1986, I solicited the opinions of five experienced fly fishermen. These fishermen have spent all summer at the lake for the past three years. This compendium does not express a snap judgment, for these five anglers collectively have spent an impressive number of days on the lake during those three summers. The conclusions are based on literally thousands of trout caught and released; there is no quesswork involved. Also, each was asked if he had some special suggestions to offer that would improve the fishery. Several interesting thoughts were expressed, and are included in my report.

By some coincidence, four of these full-time fishermen are residents of California, while this writer resides in Alabama. We do not pretend to know what this means except that the Goldrush State produces some darn fine fishermen. Anyone who has had much experience at Henrys Lake knows the four featured gold panners know how to catch fish! They were each sought out for interviews, and their opinions are individually presented.

E.W. (Bill) Hayes, Hemet, CA. Bill has spent every vacation at Henrys Lake since 1971. For several years since retirement, he has fished the entire summer on the lake, June 1 to September 1. His prowess in catching large numbers of fish almost daily is well known. His report on 1984 indicates an over-population in the lake. Fish could be caught on nearly every cast; there was little challenge in fishing. He places the average size at 12". In 1985 he found fewer fish, but still very fast fishing, with the average increasing to 14 1/2". In 1986 he found a marked increase in size and weight, with average now at 16", and the fish definitely larger at the end of the season. He was puzzled why there were not more cutts of three to three and a half pounds; he caught only about twenty of this size. Compared to the old days, Bill concludes that the fish sizes reflect a definite slower growth rate due to the extremely high rate of stocking in '83 and '84. He thinks that the reduction from two million cutt fingerlings to one million in 1985 was very likely a fine move and should eventually result in a better growth rate.

On hybrids, Bill Hayes found a markedly better number of them coming to the fly in 1986. They averaged 2 1/2 pounds, which were presumably two years old. His biggest was 5 pounds, and there were a few of this class in 1986. For 1987 there should be an encouraging number of 5 pounders and a few considerably larger. He did not catch many one-year fish of 10"-12". He thinks there should be a higher percentage of hybrids in the overall catch, which originate from artificial hatchery production. And on brook trout, Bill had an encouraging percentage in early summer, but this declined to a much smaller portion as the summer progressed. He recorded only one fin-clipped brookie (the exotic Canadian strain) during the 1986 season.

Harry Tupper, LaCrescenta, CA Harry has extensive experience at Henrys Lake, having spent summers on the lake since 1956. His blue heeler dog, "Dingo", announces vocally every fish that Harry catches. Sometimes he tuckers completely out and collapses in the bottom of the boat. The dog's antics alternately amuse and infuriate fellow fisherman, few of whom are catching that many fish!

Harry characterizes 1984 as a fabulous year for fishing, for numbers but not size. He keeps very precise daily records of his fishing. In 1984 he concentrated very hard on Henrys from late May to mid-October. His log reveals 3,687 fish caught and released; 3,370 were cutts, 248 brookies, and 69 hybrids. The latter represented barely 2% of his catch, far lower than desirable. The fish averaged 12"-14". This was the first year that the 2 million stocking rate really took effect. Little skill was involved, just the determination to stay out there and keep the fly in water.

In 1985 Harry fished from early June to late September, but spent only 17 days combined in August and September on the lake. His records reflect a total catch of 1,493 fish; 1,300 were cutts, 137 brookies, and 56 hybrids. The hybrid percentage was 4%, or twice that of the previous year, indicating better hatchery results. The growth rate still seemed slow, as fish averaged 13"-15".

The figures for 1986 cover only late May to September 1, when this report was being compiled. Only 17 days were spent at Henrys in July, and 14 in August. The total catch for the above period was 1,332 fish; 1,139 cutts, 142 brookies, and 51 hybrids. The hybrids remained at about 4%. Of these none was landed in May, 35 in June, 11 in July, and 5 in August. The cutts averaged 15"-17", and 1/4 to 1/2 pound larger than in 1985. With season's growth, fish were averaging two pounds in August. It is interesting to note that the percentages in the catch of the three species were much the same in 1985 and 1986. The fish in 1986 were healthy and in good shape.

Harry's recommendations include stocking a good percentage of the cutt fingerlings in the lower ends of the nine tributary creeks so that they will be imprinted to a certain stream, to which they might later return and spawn. This would immediately boost the potential for an improved spawning run in these creeks, one of our prime objectives. Perhaps fingerlings stocked in the lake do not readily find a tributary creek, and thus fail to spawn. His second recommendation is to double the yearly hybrid plant to try to achieve an 8% return of hybrids in the catch instead of 4%. The latter figure is too small. There is no objection to sterile hybrids if this program proves feasible.

He concludes that the "bread and butter" fish, the average caught day in and day out, now begins to approach those of yesteryear, speaking of fish from two to two and a half pounds. The difference is that there were many bigger individual fish in the "old days", both cutts and hybrids. Perhaps we are slowly growing our way back to the days when there will be a number of four to five pound cutts, and hybrids of leader-busting size.

Clarence Wright, Stockton, CA Clarence Wright has spent vacations at Henrys for 32 years, including 13 full summers since retirement. His credentials include a 17-pound hybrid hanging on his wall. His notes include a similar range in size for fish the past three years, as noted above, also a 4% rate on catching hybrids in 1986. Fishing has held up very well all through the 1986 season, with a dandy catch rate per hour fished. Most every angler is satisfied with the excellent catch rate.

Clarence's recommendations include using some means to keep the mature fish in the lake which now annually escape by the thousands each spring over the dam. He feels that these two and three pound fish are our end product, and it is foolish to let them go down into the outlet creek and haul them off after netting, when they could be returned to the lake or prevented from escaping in the first place. The great push to escape comes at spawning time. We are letting these mature fish go and replacing them with fingerlings that take three years to grow to similar size, thus making Henrys Lake in effect a very large rearing pool. He thinks that a good expenditure for the Henrys Lake Foundation would be some permanent device that could be placed on the dam to discourage this annual exodus of fish without interfering with normal discharge of water. He states that there was a fish ladder on the dam shortly after it was constructed in 1923, and suggests a study of the feasibility to put one in place again. He realizes there are questions about introducing other, perhaps unwanted, species in the lake. A device to prevent escape of fish would be more desirable.

Walter Stephens, Glendora, CA Walt owns a cabin facing on Staley Springs, which was owned by his father before him. Walt has spent summers on the lake since 1947, and has kept fishing logs much of that time. He reflects the above views that the fish have grown from 13" (1 1/4 pounds) in 1984, to 15" (under 2 pounds) in 1985, to 17"-18" (over 2 pounds) in 1986, with quite a few 3-pounders showing up this past August. The average cutts are now slightly smaller than the "good old days", but should approach the old average in 1987. Hopefully the surviving big cutts will grow on to 5 pounds in future years. His records indicate that in 1972, many years before the recent difficulties, the typical cutt was over 19" and 2 3/4 pounds.

His hybrid catch approached 4%, most of which were caught early in the season. He has seen six 4 1/2 to 6 pound hybrids caught this season. There should be a few big ones in 1987. The brookie fishing also was good in early season, declining sharply later. He caught no brookies with clipped fins so far this season.

Walt recommends that the limit be left strictly as it is. It has taken too long to reduce it to two fish. He would prefer artificials-only regulations on the lake, but realizes such might not be possible to attain. He also thinks that a good percentage of the fingerlings should be introduced each fall directly into tributary creeks instead of into open lake waters.

John O'Neall, Jr., Hatchechubbee, AL I've spent large chunks of the past fifteen seasons at Henrys Lake, watching it go from great to very mediocre, and now rebounding to a strong and improving fishery. Having conducted the above four interviews, there is little to add on the numbers and sizes of fish caught during the past three seasons. Our hybrid figures would be closer to 3% than 4%. There seems to be a strong consensus among the five people discussed here as to the size and growth rate of the fish over the past three seasons.

Some, and in fact most, of the suggestions made by these individuals make plenty of sense and should be adopted. Some require funds, and some do not. Additional suggestions that I might offer include a prompt solving of the two problems affecting the spawning run on Targhee Creek, i.e. correcting the two diversion fish screens to work properly and fixing the culvert under the highway so that spawners can go upstream in the spring. The Idaho Department of Fish and Game has assured us that both problems will be addressed by fall of 1986 so that this creek can go into full production in 1987 (see update on these two items under WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT). This one creek represents some 50% of the potential of all nine tributaries combined for wild fish production, so getting it's problems corrected is paramount. Suggestion number two involves achieving a higher percentage of hybrids in the catch. Based on the lake's management objectives, the catch rate needs to be tripled at least, and that may well take a higher number of hybrid fingerlings from the hatchery. We have been assured last year and this, that the hybrid program is now on the "front burner". Results of this could begin to be felt in 1987 in increased numbers of small fish. If not, a concerted effort should be made to influence the Idaho Department of Fish and Game to give us increased numbers.

As this is being written, repair work is about to begin on the gates and spillway of the Henrys Lake Dam. The lake has been dropped 42" and an earthen coffer dam constructed. Apparently the water is not to be dropped further, which is most encouraging news. It is the general feeling that such a drop will not adversely affect the lake and that it will recover to full pool by the

spring of 1987 (see update on dam repair under WORDS FROM THE PRESIDENT). Hopefully there will be no winter kill or other effect on the strong population of fish in the lake.

* * * * * SHORT CASTS * * * * *

THE HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION BROCHURE.....

will be revised and reprinted this winter. It will be updated to discuss the Foundation's numerous project efforts since our formation in 1981. We want to create an "eye catching" brochure cover and have need of a trophy fish photograph. If you have a reproduction quality black and white or color (slide or print) photograph of some lucky angler holding a 10 pound or better Henrys Lake hybrid trout, we would be most interested in considering it for the brochure cover. Send your candidate photo(s) ASAP (no later than December 13 please) to: Richard Prange, HLF President, 2320 Independence Dr., Boise, ID, 83706. All photos, whether used or not, will be returned.

DIANE RONAYNE, EDITOR FOR.....

the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's periodical, Idaho Wildlife, relates that an article will be written for the May/June issue on the Henrys Fork fisheries. She is looking for good reproductive quality color slides of people fishing Henrys Lake during the summertime for possible use in the magazine article. Send your prospects by December 1 to: Diane Ronayne, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, P.O. Box 25, Boise, ID, 83707.

YOUR HLF MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE (MONTH-YEAR).....

is now posted on the upper right corner of the Newsletter mailing label. Use this to determine when you need to pay your annual membership dues. If your label shows "99", however, that indicates that you're a life member and not required to pay annual dues. Some labels have "?"; this means that you are a government agency or are long overdue in renewing your membership. We will now stamp an expiration notice on Newsletters being sent to members who are tardy in paying their annual tax deductible dues of \$10. If your membership is not current, send your \$10 (or more) renewal ASAP to Mike Glenn, Secretary-Treasurer, 227 University Ave., Twin Falls, ID, 83301, so that you will receive our next winter Newsletter. But most of all, we need your donation to further the fishery improvement efforts at Henrys Lake. If you choose not to renew, this will be your last Newsletter.

THE NEXT NEWSLETTER.....

will be sent in February. It will feature an article written by Bill Schiess, manager of Wild Rose Ranch. Bill may be the most knowledgeable Henrys Lake fisherman around. He will be writing in part, about his recent fishing successes at catching hybrids. Bill took about 20% hybrids in his catches this year! We also will have some good information and data on the monitoring of the Henrys Lake fishery by the IDFG crew during the 1986 season. HAPPY HOLIDAYS!!