



HENRYS LAKE FOUNDATION

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Winter 1990

Notice to All Readers from Fred Grimes, Newsletter Coordinator.

From time to time we may have articles of a controversial nature in this newsletter. It will be our policy not to censor or edit the content of the articles without the consent of the authors. However, the opinions and statements made are those of the authors and are not necessarily the views and opinions of the Henry's Lake Foundation and its Board of Directors.

President's Message

There is much to report after conclusion of another fishing season at Henry's Lake. With this "message", I'll highlight some Henry's Lake Foundation happenings during 1990. Most of you by now should be aware that President, Harold Husted, passed away from cancer last May 9. This was a great loss to our organization. The Foundation enjoyed its greatest accomplishments under Harold's leadership. Harold's ashes were spread over Henry's Lake, adding to his long legacy of love and commitment to the lake.

Our June 30 membership potluck and auction was a super success. During the annual gathering, we accounted for taking in over \$5000 between the auction, membership renewals, memorial donations, and hat sales. See the newsletter listing for auction merchandise contributors. Newly elected Foundation representatives included yours truly for President; Dr. Roger Lang for Vice President; and Mike Brikner, Jim Pangbum, Doug Siepert, and Marv Taylor for new Board of Directors. Later, on July 5, Foundation representatives met with officials from the state Division of Environmental Quality to chart the course for conducting a water quality study at Henry's Lake. That study is scheduled to begin next year - see Dr. Roger Lang's article for more details.

Project wise, a very successful willow planting outing was carried out on Howard Creek (Flying R Ranch) on May 12. About forty volunteers turned out in the rain/sleet/wind to plant willow cuttings, including folks from the Boise Valley Fly Fishermen, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and fly club members and Boy Scouts from the Rexburg/Idaho Falls area. I later returned in September to take "time lapsed" photographs at all our projects to verify some remarkable riparian vegetation recovery. The streams are healing and I observed them to be full of juvenile trout - our projects are paying great dividends in increasing the recruitment of stream breed trout to Henry's Lake. During 1990, the Foundation and IDFG joined in another challenge grant partnership worth \$9000. As a result, stream fencing was finished on the Magley Ranch (Duck Creek) and the Flying R Ranch (Howard Creek)

and materials were purchased for fish screen construction on the Diamond D Ranch (Howard Creek). In July, Lee Coonrad was hired by the IDFG to run herd on maintaining the miles of fence and several operating fish screens that have been built over the last few years. IDFG relocated the upper Targhee Creek fish screen to pave the way for screening the three remaining irrigation diversions on Howard Creek next spring.

Fishing pressure was again heavy at Henry's Lake in 1990 - especially early season. Lots of fish were harvested and many veteran fishers argue that excessive numbers of fish were taken from the lake, reducing overall catch rates and trophy fish numbers. See newsletter articles by John O'Neill Jr., Bill Schiess, and Marv Taylor. There were others that reported the fishing comparable to 1989. One thing is for sure, Henry's Lake is discovered by more anglers each season and the need for Foundation watchdogging and fishery protective measures is greater than ever. Myself and others will be reviewing the IDFG creel census data to reach a better understanding of fishing trends at the lake. I will report our findings in the upcoming spring 1991 newsletter.

It will be the Henry's Lake Foundation's tenth year in 1991. Our annual membership potluck/meeting will be held on Saturday, July 6. I hope each of you can find a way to join the festivities with us at Henry's Lake. In the mean time, happy holidays and a prosperous new year!

Richard Prange

Treasurer's Report

Bank Balance (checking account)	\$2,372.26
Columbia Daily Income Account	10,385.13
Lifetime Membership Fund Balance	18,150.95

(This amount is held in U.S. Treasury Notes)

Polly Holbrook

Mid-Season Report

For the past several seasons my report on fishing results in Henry's Lake for the fall newsletter has been entitled "The Season Ender". It has generally covered the summer season into early September, and I have left the **real** "Season Ender" to Bill Schiess, who is on the lake until freeze-up.

In 1990 Pat and I have other travel plans starting August 1, so this report will cover the season only through July. Once again Bill Schiess will do the wrap-up, which hopefully will appear alongside this effort in this fall's newsletter.

To get a better cross-section of response for this season, knowing full well there are controversial opinions about the Henry's Lake fishery for 1990, I have expanded the list of experienced fishermen interviewed from five to twelve, asking

each to give me a comparison of fishing in 1990 vs. 1989. A careful accounting for the number of seasons or partial seasons spent on the lake by these twelve men reveals a total combined experience of over 240 years, or an average of 20 years per man fishing Henry's. These men know this lake and know what they are talking about!

Since there is a surprising unanimity of opinion concerning the 1990 season in comparison with 1989, I shall give you a list of these twelve anglers, with some individual views on interesting points. In alphabetical order they are as follows with states from which they come: Mike Brikner (GA), Merle Browne (AZ), Don Carrier (WY), Jack Forman (CA), Bill Hayes (CA), Tom McGuire (NM), Tom Morris (ID), Jim Pangburn (UT), Bob Roseberry (IA), Ross Sanborn (NV), Marv Taylor (ID), and Carl Yates (TX). My own opinion is included, generally concurring with them, and as you may know, I hail from Alabama. These fishermen, though oriented to Staley Springs, fish every nook and cranny of Henry's Lake, not just the Glory Hole, and most of them spend several weeks, if not months, on the lake each season. They are accomplished fishermen and observers, and I respect their opinions.

Across the board these fishermen experienced a decline in numbers of fish caught in 1990 as compared to 1989 of from 30% to 75%. The median opinion was a decline of 45% to 50%. Fishing success expressed as number of fish caught per hour showed a parallel decline. One very interesting, especially accurate accounting was given by Tom McGuire of New Mexico. Tom keeps a log of every day's fishing as to numbers, species and size. He fished from June 23 to July 18 this year, several more days than in 1989, yet his catch declined 34%. The year 1989 as compared with 1988 showed a decline of 18%. Carl Yates of Texas had figures to demonstrate a 50% decline from 1988 to 1989, and another 50% from 1989 to 1990. In other words, he caught 25% as many fish in 1990 as in 1988.

The **timing** of the decline presents an interesting picture. In 1989 fishing was generally excellent from opening to approximately July 18. At that point it shut off rather completely and had a surge only in late fall (October). This season, despite cold and mean weather in June, early season fishing was once again good, but died around July 4, two weeks earlier than in 1989. It became extremely difficult to catch fish after the 4th except just "outside the wire" at Staley Springs, which is a specialized spot and not really representative of the lake as a whole. Even the famed Glory Hole chewed up and spit out the most accomplished anglers after July 15. As most veterans know, late July and August have in past seasons been very productive. It remains to be seen what 1990 offers in August, but we do know it was a dead period in 1989, and seems headed that way in 1990. Theories abound as to why, and we shall have more to say on that below.

The tally on species presents an interesting picture. The bulk of the fish caught so far in 1990 are cutthroats, most of them of good size and excellent condition. They are better fighters now than in the "Good Old Days". Percentage of hybrids, strangely, was noticeably off, although a number of fish ranging to seven pounds were caught (mostly released, with a salute to those sportsmen). It is hard to explain their decline considering the 400,000 stocking rate per season.

The shocking decline came in the number of brook trout

caught. Early season (June) usually produces hefty numbers of brookies, with a slow period in mid-summer and good results in late fall. Most of our twelve fishermen reported only two or three brook trout each in their 1990 catch, an alarming statistic. It would appear that the vaunted brook trout program of a few seasons back has fallen on hard times.

One most gloomy observation was that during the key damsel hatch, which cold weather and cold water delayed until the first 15 days of July, squadrons and battalions of nymphs were swimming to shore all around the edge of the lake day after day with few fish feeding on them. Normally big schools of fish migrate to the shore and gorge themselves. Only a few rises could be seen here and there. It was a silent march by these tasty nymphs.

In describing the decline of fishing success for 1990 compared to 1989, typical quotes were recorded from the twelve anglers as follows: "drastic", "dramatic", "possible debacle in 1991", "extremely nervous about next year", "must be careful not to have 1980 repeated", "shocking deterioration". Along with the ever-present "Something needs to be done".

How did this happen, and what can be done about it? Question number one can be answered rather simply by most opinion, and question number two also has an answer if the powers-that-be are not set in stone, with no flexibility.

As to number one, the situation on fishing pressure on the lake had a dramatic change in 1989 when angler success at Island Park Reservoir dropped dead. Anglers flocked to Henry's Lake to bait fish and troll with hardware at the start of the 1989 season, quadrupling the fishing pressure. These folks fish with the sole aim of taking fish home, and they were successful. The little fish culled after being caught on bait hooks and treble hook lures had slim chance of survival. Apparently small hybrids, being very aggressive, are among the heaviest victims at this time, which may account for their decline in numbers a year later. Again in 1990 the same scenario prevailed, with ever more boats (over 400 some days) on the lake during the first 30 days. It is not hard to figure what happened to the fish population in early season during these two years and subsequently the remarkable lack of action in August.

Four seasons ago, under the less pressurized atmosphere that prevailed then and after studies of the population in the lake, the stocking rate of cutthroat fingerlings was cut from two million to one million annually. Hybrid stocking was maintained at 400,000 and the brook trout program continued. These rates were to be maintained for five seasons, then evaluated, and this is what is still planned for 1990 and again in 1991. At the time this decision was made, not in their wildest imagination did the fishery managers dream that pressure on Henry's Lake would be **quadrupled** starting the third season. Yet it has happened, with attendant plunge in late season success, and to our knowledge at this date no adjustment to compensate for these changed conditions has been implemented. It is hoped that plans for 1990 can yet be changed and an additional emergency stocking of fingerlings can be made, with an additional million designated for 1991. Perhaps Bill Schiess will inform you in his article if results have been obtained.

If emergency fish can be allocated to Henry's Lake for 1990 and 1991 and if the heralded new "Trophy Lake" program for Idaho with more stringent regulations and limits can be imple-

mented for the 1992 season (now in rudimentary planning stages), Henry's Lake may avoid the debacle visited upon it by poor management in the early 1980's. If such measures are not taken, the above twelve interviewees, or myself, would not bet a kopeck on the continuation of quality fishing in this lake.

John O'Neill, Jr.

The Water Quality Monitoring Program

We are all interested in maintaining renewable quality fishing in Henry's Lake. The equation for a healthy fishery in our lake is complexed. Among the variables are water quality, fishing pressure, insect and aquatic life, seasonal and long term weather changes, stream spawning conditions, shoreline integrity, and, of course, the number and types of fish in the lake.

Each of the above variables, and others, have various weights in the sum of our equation. Few are totally out of our control (i.e. the weather), some are completely dependent on our actions (fish kill) and some remain unknowns at this time (water quality).

A complete equation cannot be calculated with too many unknowns. Thus our Foundation has encouraged the State to proceed next year with new water quality measurements of Henry's Lake, measuring electrolytes, waste byproducts, organic pesticide levels, oxygen levels, etc.

Prior to the testing next spring, the Department of Environmental Quality and/or the Idaho Division of Water Quality will start training for citizen volunteers for routine water sampling. The Foundation will cooperate with them in the fullest and we will need membership involvement.

The state has committed up to \$80,000 to contract with professionals for diagnostic testing for the Henry's Lake project. Such funding is dependent on some cost sharing, mostly in volunteer time, from groups such as Henry's Lake Foundation.

In 1991, with consultation with the Division of Water Quality, we may purchase some monitoring equipment and schedule some volunteer water testing at selected sites in the lake and perhaps in some tributary streams.

Much of the volunteer work will entail boating and dipping of water samples and other low technology assistance and should be interesting as well as new and enjoyable.

This will be a great opportunity for the Foundation to directly participate in discovering some unknowns in the big equation that makes continued trophy - fishing possible in Henry's Lake.

Roger A. Lang

June 30 Silent Auction

Thanks a million for your donations of items for the silent auction at our annual meeting at Wild Rose Ranch on Henry's Lake on June 30, 1990. The auction is a key money-raising event for funds to use on conservation projects on the nine tributary streams to the lake (fish screens, fencing to prevent over-grazing, water gaps, planting of vegetation, etc.). It is heartwarming to walk down these streams and see the results obtained in riparian improvement **and** increased cutthroat fry in the streams after just a few years of effort!

You are supporting a worthy cause that benefits a great trout fishery, and we hope we can count on continued support in the future seasons.

1990 Henry's Lake Foundation Auction List of Donors

Jacklins Inc.	Madison River Outfitters
Blue River Flies	John O'Neill
Emma Thompson	Jack Forman
Augie Alves	Lois Johnson
Forest Willis	Al Funk
Rex Day	John Dickman
Sue Yates	Tom McGuire
Chuck Polityka	Polly Holbrook
Cortland	Columbia Sportswear
Dan Baileys	Stream Line
Fred Grimes	Roe Mfg., Inc.
Terminal Tactics, Inc.	Anglers Workshop
Grant Hamilton	Bill Schiess
Marty Benowitz	Roger Mabry
Adelyn Hamilton	Larry Peace
Bud Lillys	Tom Turner
Bob Roseberry	Ruby Alves
Mike Brikner	Carl Yates
Bill Hayes	Marv Taylor
Nick Lyons	Neo Sport
Henry's Fork Anglers, Inc.	Jim Wood
Clarence Wright	Gordon Hunt
Yellowstone Wilderness Supply	
Mel Schulte - Stream Side Adventurs Fly Shop	
Jim Gabettas - All Seasons Angler	
Fur-Feather and Fly - Doug & Mary Ann Siepert	

A total of forty-eight donors raised over \$3000 for the Henry's Lake Foundation.

Past Recollections

My memories of Henry's Lake go back to the opening week of the 1955 fishing season. Responding to magazine articles in national publications about this "fantastic trout lake in eastern Idaho", as well as stories of its huge fish by local anglers, we decided to give Henry's a try. Since reports out of Island Park Reservoir were also positive, we set up our camp at this big reservoir.

It turned out to be a very wise decision. Although the fishing was far better at the Big H, so was the midge hatch. We hit the famous early June "snow fly" hatch head on. We learned quickly the value of wearing large bandannas around our necks. The hatch got so bad that year we had to shift our bandannas over our mouths and noses just to breathe.

On our second trip to the Big H, a year later, the snow fly hatch nearly caused three divorces in the family. We pulled into Staley Springs to spend a week working the big cuts, brookies and hybrids, only to find the June midge hatch again in wild profusion. The ladies in our party - my mother, sister, and wife - informed their spouses in words we could hardly misinterpret that one day, just one day, tenting in this infemo of bugs would be just cause for three trips to divorce court. We ended up camping once again at Island Park Reservoir.

I would like to report we ripped out trophy-sized Henry's Lake trout with fly rods and imitations tied with feathers and fur. The truth is we caught all of our fish on Mepps Spinners and red and white spoons. My knowledge of fly fishing at that point in my anglers career was limited to Renegade dry flies in the streams nearer to my home in Nampa, Idaho. As far as I

knew, leeches were merely a nuisance to be contended with when you swam in most of our lakes and reservoirs; and a damsel was something the young "bucks" chased on Saturday night.

Both Henry's Lake and my approach to fishing it, have changed over the years. I've switched from trolling and bait fishing gear, to fly rods and sinking lines. I understand a bit of aquatic entomology, and even tie my own flies now.

I won't argue that I'm a more competent Henry's Lake angler now - we caught more than our share of fish when we were trolling the Big H during the mid 50's - but I will stipulate I enjoy my fishing more; partly because I now also subscribe to catch-and-release principles.

But back in the mid 50's, we laughed at catch-and-release (until we had most of our limits). Over-fishing the Big H seemed unlikely. My memory of specifics are a bit hazy, but I doubt I ever saw more than 50 boats on Henry's Lake during the first week of the season. And the Nampa group that developed the "Idaho System" of float tubing were just getting their act together.

The first two years we fished Henry's Lake, our catch was almost exclusively the hybrids stocked during the early 50's. We caught a few brook trout, with an occasional cutthroat mixed in, but it was the hard-fighting rainbow-cutthroat hybrid that drew us back to the lake again and again.

With the press of raising a family and building a career my top priorities, I wasn't able to fish the Big H again until the mid 60's. By this time I had developed a strong preference for fishing moving water and I wasn't as impressed with Henry's Lake as I had been during the decade of the 50's.

About this time I became acquainted with float tubes, sinking fly lines, fly tying, and aquatic entomology, and once again began to sample the delights of Henry's Lake.

Unfortunately, this was the era that heralded a change in Fish and Game's policy of planting hybrids in the Big H. During the decade of the 70's, we fished Henry's Lake off and on, but didn't really become addicted to the lake. Fish and Game vacillated on its game plan for the lake and through the end of that decade - and the early part of the 80's - we found our fishing pleasures mostly in other waters.

Finally Fish and Game developed a quality fishing program for Henry's Lake, and things began to look up. I won't chronicle the management of Henry's Lake during the past six or seven years, except to suggest their five-year plan is in desperate need of revision.

We have, over the years, watched Henry's Lake live up to its potential only rarely. What a shame to see the richest trout lake in the state become merely another food source for the "pantry ethic" of far too many eastern Idaho and Utah anglers.

I would hope that Bill Schiess' year-end report will joyfully tell us Fish and Game has come to its senses and reduced the daily limit. I'm not sure we can ever reduce the angling pressures on Henry's Lake to the 50 or less boats we saw on the lake during the decade of the 50's - but we can sure try.

Idaho Department of Fish and Game officials have said they can't change our regulations until the new regs are printed for 1992-93. Perhaps that is true. Perhaps the IDFG didn't have the foresight to include a paragraph in their two year regs that permitted changes in the second year. A paragraph that the State of Montana included in their regs.

Montana stipulates that changes "might" be necessary in the second year of its regulation period and an addendum sheet will be available through license vendors. "In order to have a complete set of the current regulations", the Montana fishing regulation booklet says, "and in order to remain in compliance with the law, sportsmen must obtain the fishing regulations addendum sheets".

How simple it would be to solve the problems at Henry's Lake, if the IDFG had the foresight to include such a stipulation in its fishing regulations.

Marv Taylor

Historical Notes The Floating Islands of Henry's Lake

Fact no fable, the first records of the floating islands come from the photographs taken by W.H. Jackson, from the Hayden Survey in 1872.

The mysterious islands were spoken of frequently by trappers and Indians who visited the area. The photographer described the northern portion of Island Park as: Henry's Lake, a shallow body of water about 2 by 3 miles in diameter, full of small scattered islands, and the source of the Henry's Fork. It is well stocked with the most excellent trout.

The islands were in actuality large accumulations of logs and debris. Some of the islands were covered with grass and some even sprouted small trees. Folk lore tells of trappers, awakening to find themselves adrift.

In 1924, a new dam allowed water storage for the lower Snake River valley farming interest. The islands were dynamited that same year, and removed by government officials, ending the mystery of Henry's Lake.

Taken from the **Snake River Echoes**

Grant Hamilton

Season Ender 1990

This article is **MY** own observations of the final three months of fishing, guiding, and observing fishermen on Henry's Lake. This is as accurate as I can get as a fishing bum!!

I began getting concerned about the fishing on Henry's in mid June when I figured that over 40,000 fish had been harvested during the first four weeks of the season. I figure that between 80,000 to 100,000 fish were taken from the lake. That has not been good for the population of fish there. That would mean that in the last two years over 200,000 fish have been harvested while 256,000 were harvested from 1980 through 1988. We have noticed that in the catch rate during the last half of this season.

August started out fair but dropped off drastically as my guests and I spent 63 hours catching 36 fish. It was as frustrating a week as I have ever spent on the lake. We had great hopes for the lake as it cooled and we did find pockets of fish, but away from these isolated pockets of fish, fishing remained poor. For example - during early September we took fish just off the shore at the old Henry's Lake Lodge and off Hope Creek, late September we found them off Timber Creek and the Stump Hole. During October it was in the shallow water off the north shore. It seemed that we had to be in four feet of water or less to take fish. The middle of the lake stayed dead for the last half of the season. Question - are there enough fish in the lake to populate all areas?

Brook trout. Where are they? We started taking brook trout in early September for about two weeks and then very few for the rest of the season. The only two areas which produced brooks for me were Hope Creek and Henry's Lake Lodge. I did take some very large ones but very few of them during October.

The Department of Fish and Game just completed their collection of brook trout spawn. They were able to collect their quota of eggs and had enough spawners left over to release 124 spawners in Howard Creek.

This past season we had to contend with a lot of floating algae which we called "crud". It made the lake resemble pea soup and it came in late August and stayed to the end of the season. At times I felt that this caused the middle of the lake to be slow. On those days when the wind drifted it to one of the sides, the middle still did not produce fish.

The size of the fish pleased me as many of the fish taken were over 22 inches during this time. Why were they averaging this large? I felt that during the first three months many of the three-year-old fish were harvested. This meant that we were taking a lot of four and five-year-olds late in the season. We also saw an increasing number of two-year-olds taken. The lake should always start the season with a good number of three-year-olds as the two-year-olds do not enter the catch until late in the year and will begin their third year like gangbusters.

Now if the harvest rate continues as it has the past two years, we will start each year with good numbers of three-year-olds, but we will have less and less of the trophy numbers of the four and five-year-olds. During October we had days where we saw from 5 to 15 fish over six pounds harvested.

I would like to see a one fish per day limit enacted on the lake to save some of the early season harvest. I feel this would increase the catch rate during the last half of the season and would also save more four and five-year-olds in future seasons.

On the whole, this year has been my worst on Henry's since 1980. Either I have lost some of my fishing talent or there are less fish in the lake. Hopefully the future will prove me wrong if nothing is done.

Bill Schless

Short Casts

LEE GARLAND of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has purchased a life membership for every member of his family. These memberships are for Brittany Ann Garland, Jack Garland, Janalee Garland, Lee Garland, Ted Garland, Steve Schardein, Steve Lee Schardein, Hillary Joy Garland, Hudson St. Clare Garland, Bailey Morgan Garland, Joy Garland.

Lee Garland has contributed a total of \$1,100 to the Foundation in life memberships.

YOUNGSTER'S LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP . . . Again in 1991, John and Pat O'Neall of Hatchechubbee, Alabama, will offer a lifetime membership to a youngster eighteen years old or younger as part of the annual silent auction at "Foundation Day" in the summer. The successful bidder on each auction item puts a name in the hat. Drawing for the lifetime membership is held at the conclusion of the auction.

This will mark the third year that this membership has been offered to a lucky youngster. The 1989 winner was Jennifer Patrick of Idaho. The 1990 winner was Michael Alves of California.

HENRY'S LAKE froze over on the night of November 6, 1990. Since then it has been unseasonable warm, but the lake remains frozen over.

FOUNDATION MEMBERS, Bill and Jeannie Fullen of "Cowboy Express, Inc.", Nampa, Idaho have contributed a valuable and gorgeous sterling silver plate western belt buckle to next year's auction. The belt buckle is engraved "Henry's Lake Foundation - 1991". This will be a featured auction item during our 10th anniversary meeting. The Foundation is most appreciative to Bill and Jeannie for this special donation.





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 (send all membership dues/donations to Secretary-Treasurer)

The Henry's Lake Foundation invites you to join and support our non-profit, tax exempt corporation formed to preserve, protect, and enhance the great trout fishery of Henry's Lake. Just fill in the information below and send your tax deductible contribution or membership dues to:

Henry's Lake Foundation
 c/oSecretary-Treasurer
 Polly Holbrook
 15200 Northwest Burlington Court
 Portland, OR 97231

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