



Fall Newsletter 2015

President's Message

I think everyone's optimism for a great year at Henrys quickly faded after their first few times fishing. It was difficult fishing with some anglers reporting zero fish caught after hours of fishing regardless of their experience level. To make matters worse the poor snow pack led to an early and short runoff that adversely impacted water quality in the lake and nursery habitat in the tributaries.

The blue-green algae bloom was so bad in August that the IDFG had to issue public warnings in the local newspapers to limit any contact with the water and to not eat the fish. When I left in early November I still found blue-green algae in several areas around the lake. This paint like goo smells terrible and when dissolved turns the lake water cloudy and gray. We can only hope to have a better water year next year.

Our project work remained strong with several key projects being completed late in the season. A key water gap that impeded fish passage on Howard Creek was made more narrow and hardened up. It was a win-win for both the rancher's grazing cattle and the Yellowstone Cutthroat trout since Howard Creek is a continual source of cold spring water with critical spawning and nursery habit. A big thanks to Cary Myler from the US Fish & Wildlife Service for helping to make this project possible.

IDFG has summarized their findings regarding the pelican study started by Jessica Buelow. Although they don't believe there is any significant impact on the overall fishery they do acknowledge that the pelicans have had an impact the natural reproduction of the Yellowstone Cutthroat trout. The IDFG has also re-confirmed that there is a breeding colony of pelicans at Island Park reservoir which is probably why we are seeing more and more pelicans.

One of our long term directors Larry Mcmillan sold his cabin at the lake and moved to St. George. I want to thank him for his support over the years and wish him and his wife Tanya well.

I would like to welcome two new directors Mary and Parmer Van Fleet. They are life members and have enjoyed Henrys Lake for many years. Their knowledge and experience working with non-profits on conservation issues should really help us. Mary will also manage our project efforts moving forward.

I want to thank John Taft for his participation as Vice President for many years. He will remain an integral part of our management team and continue as a director along with his wife Melody. Richard Hodge one of our directors and life member was elected to replace John last year. Richard brings an incredible level of energy and enthusiasm to the board and along with his wife Lynne will help us greatly.

Our July fundraising event at Meadow Vue ranch was such an overwhelming success that we have already scheduled it for Thursday June 30th next year. A big thank you to all of our generous attendees! It will be our own private night at the ranch with the same band as last year but without the rodeo. Pam Lowery has graciously agreed to provide appetizers for the complimentary happy hour. I hope everyone will join us given our ongoing project funding requirements.

Thank you for your continued support,

Phil Barker
President, Henrys Lake Foundation
web@henryslakefoundation.com

My name is Mary Van Fleet and my husband, Parmer, and I have been homeowners here at Henry's Lake since 1994. I have a science background and a 35 year career in healthcare and management. I have an analytical approach to projects and a love of learning that I bring to the table. I am very enthusiastic about the many current and potential future conservation projects that we are involved in. There has been some good science in Idaho that we will use as a basis to approach many of the current issues we are facing. Other projects that are ongoing for HLF are riparian habitat improvement on feeder streams, invasive species prevention, and water quality monitoring, and we look for opportunities to assist in those efforts.

UTAH CHUBS

There is concern that the Utah Chub population in Henrys Lake is competing with trout for food. In 2014, stable isotope analysis of Henrys Lake fish indicated that there is not a significant overlap of food sources between trout and chubs, meaning competition for the same food sources is minimal. Gillnetting suggests that the population of chubs has fluctuated over time. Continued monitoring of chub populations, and new science that allows better understanding of the age classes of chub present in the Lake will be important information for future actions.

WHITE PELICANS

Populations of White Pelicans are increasing all over Eastern Idaho in recent years. We know that more pelicans eat more fish! Two years ago Henrys Lake participated in a PIT tag study which released tagged fish into the Lake as well as fed some tagged fish directly to Pelicans. The published data from this study indicate that the Pelicans we are observing here at Henrys Lake are most likely coming from breeding colonies on Molly Island at Yellowstone Lake, and to a lesser extent, from breeding colonies at Blackfoot Reservoir. There are no breeding colonies here at Henrys Lake or at Island Park reservoir, so the Pelicans are traveling significant distances just to eat. Researchers attempted to determine to what extent pelicans were consuming Henrys Lake fish (and the same information at other lakes and reservoirs in Eastern Idaho). Preliminary data suggest an approximate 10% consumption of fish going up spawning streams at Henrys over summer months. The HLF provided funding for cameras at the mouths of spawning creeks to monitor pelican numbers. There should be a report very soon that discusses the camera study results in more detail. Once we have more information, we will look at possible mitigation strategies to reduce Pelican trout predation here at Henrys.

RIPARIAN HABITAT IMPROVEMENT

IDFG is currently working with a USFWS grant, with 50% matching funds from HLF to improve riparian areas and replace some electric fencing aimed at improving habitat in spawning streams. Three cattle crossings (one on Howard and two on Duck Creek) have been hardened with these grant monies. The cattle crossing at Howard Creek was deemed a fish passage barrier. This project will provide better access to spawning fish and should improve productivity of this stream. Replacement of electric fencing in many riparian areas with jack fencing will lower ongoing fence maintenance costs. This project is underway.

YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROAT TROUT (YCT) NATURAL REPRODUCTION

With a light snowpack winter, stream flows were low and early in Eastern Idaho. Tributary flows into Henrys Lake were near at record lows. Consequently, the result was low natural reproduction of YCT in Henrys Lake in 2015. New methods of identifying the hatchery and wild fish are being evaluated. Improved methodology may enable IDFG to better estimate and monitor natural reproduction.

Henrys Lake Pelican Update

Dan Garren, IDFG Regional Fisheries Manager

IDFG has been monitoring pelican abundance on Henrys Lake since 2012, when pelican numbers started to increase. As many people are aware, a pelican nesting colony has been established on Island Park Reservoir starting in 2011. Successful fledging and growth of the colony has been documented in most years since that time, and the proximity of these birds has resulted in increased pelican use of Henrys and other nearby waters.

Beginning in 2012 and continuing through 2013, IDFG monitored pelicans using remote cameras placed strategically at key areas throughout the lake (Figure 1). The goal of this project was to estimate when pelicans are present and the relative abundances of pelicans at the various tributaries.

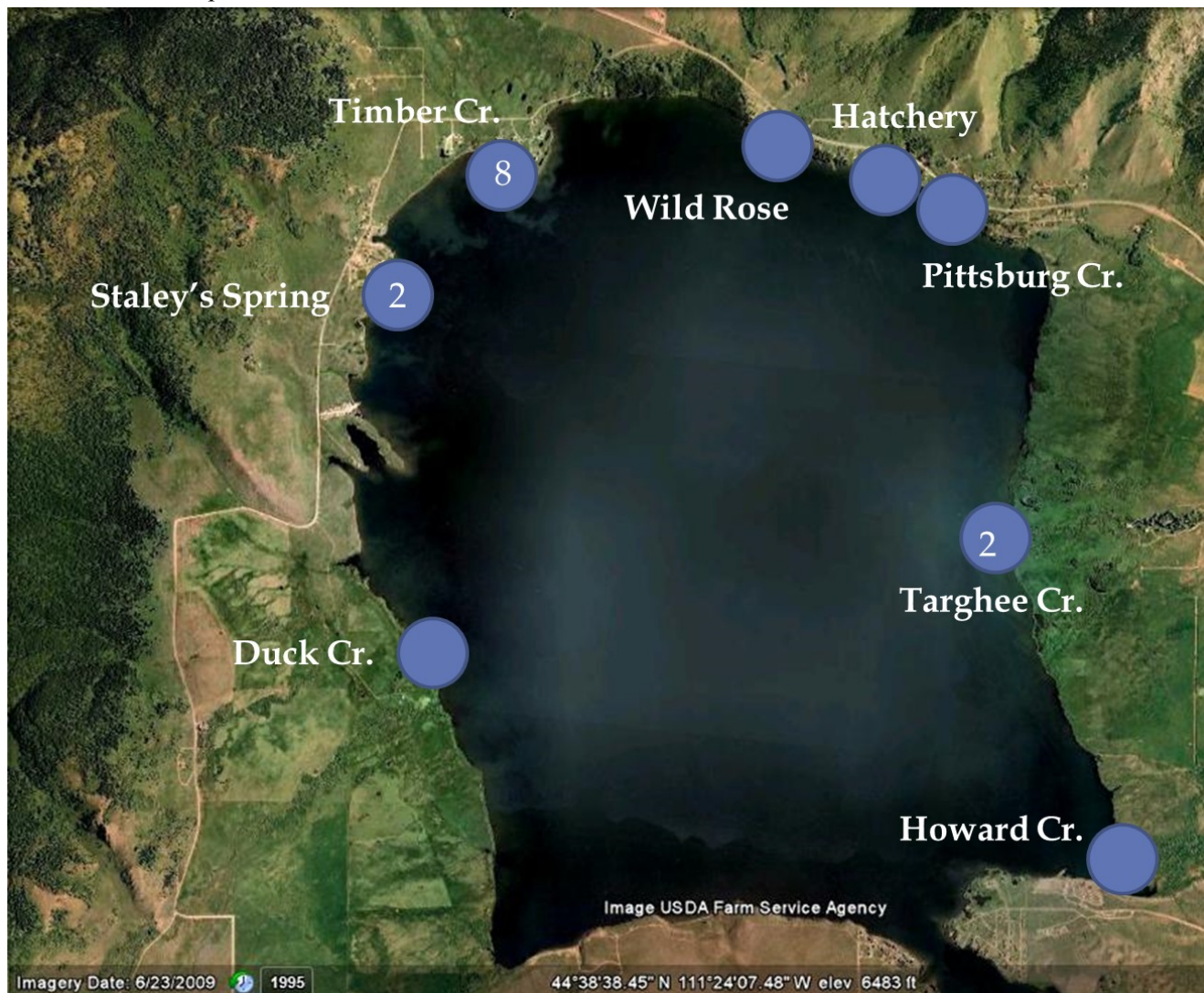


Figure 1. Camera locations for pelican abundance and use surveys. Cameras were located in the same locations in both 2012 and 2013, with the exception of the Hatchery (camera stolen).

Data collected over both years suggests that pelicans are more common on Henrys Lake during the cutthroat spawning period, when adult fish are orienting around the mouths of spawning tributaries in shallow water (Figure 2). Trout are more vulnerable during this time due to their behavior, as they tend to group up in shallow water. It was also apparent that pelicans were likely responsive to shifts in densities of spawning fish, and moved between years to what we assume is higher densities of trout, or more effective foraging conditions (Figure 3). Pelicans directing feeding efforts on spawning congregations of trout prompted a second IDFG study to determine the predation rate on these spawners. IDFG used PIT tags (a small microchip) implanted in trout orienting to the shoreline during the spawn to estimate the percentage of trout that were eaten by pelicans. Researchers estimated that pelicans consumed 10% of the trout tagged along the shoreline during the spawning season. It's important to recognize that this method did not estimate total lakewide predation – it only estimated predation on the spawning population. We expect lakewide predation to be lower than that estimated in this study.

Fisheries Rules Proposals 2015-2018

Dan Garren, IDFG Regional Fisheries Manager

IDFG has been continuing to work towards simplifying fishing rules, eliminating rules that are biologically unnecessary and providing increased opportunity for anglers where possible. The Upper Snake Region has proposed several new rules this year that follow that direction. In total, there are 16 rules in the Upper Snake that could change at the start of the new year. Some are minor clarifications such as clarifying boundaries (like on the Warm River), while others are more noteworthy (like year-around fishing on new portions of the Henrys Fork). There is only one rule that indirectly affects Henrys Lake, and that is a change in the statewide possession limit for fish. IDFG has proposed moving from the single daily limit currently allowed for possession, and replacing that with a 3x the daily limit (after the third day of the season) for all fish. If this is implemented, it will make fish rules consistent with other statewide bag limits like ducks, grouse, salmon and steelhead. Regional staff will be able to determine the effects of any changes to rules that may occur with a creel survey in 2016 on Henrys. The IDFG Commissioners ultimately have the decision-making authority within the agency, and will be deciding to accept these rules, alter the proposed rules, or veto the proposals at their November 19th meeting in Ketchum. A full list of proposals can be found here: http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/public/about/commission/2015/11_November/5i_Set_2016-2018_Fishing_Seasons_and_Rules.pdf

Henrys Lake Update

Damon Keen, Upper Snake Region-Henrys Lake Fishery, Habitat Biologist

Fishing Season Update We've had some tough fishing much of the summer, but also some pretty good fishing at other times. The catch rates in the first 2.5 months of the season were not good. Tributary flow was as low as we've seen it and lake temperatures were extraordinarily high in mid to late June. This combined with lower cutthroat abundance probably were the most important factors impacting catch rates. Cutthroat numbers are driven both by stocking rates and natural production. Natural production can be boom or bust, dependent on environmental factors. To mitigate we adjust our stocking numbers. However, there still can be years where numbers are below objectives. It's a balancing act to monitor numbers and adjust stocking rates to meet both catch rates and fish size. We are currently looking at other ways to collect natural production data to provide information earlier. Potentially, we could adjust stocking rates sooner than in the past to minimize the down years. Fluctuations in fish numbers are inherent though based on other factors that are beyond our control. There will always be years and/or times of the year that are slower than others.

By the middle of August we started to see some noticeable improvement. In fact, we started to hear of some excellent fishing given both catch rates and fish size. What changed is difficult to assess. Cooler temperatures and some decent moisture probably helped. The catch continued to be pretty good throughout the fall, albeit some spotty reports prevailed. For sure that Henrys adage that bad news travels fast and good news travels slower prevailed. After hearing from many anglers over the years my advice is to make your own stories. Fishing changes from day to day on many waters and Henrys is no exception. Although certainly the catch rates overall this year were lower than our target, the large fish numbers have improved. After several years of exceptional fish numbers but smaller fish, we're again seeing the large fish that Henrys is noted for. Even in the midst of many discussions about slow fishing we get reports such as this email show below.

On another note we had an absolutely fantastic fall. Lots of Brook trout 17-20" average with one big dude at 23. Average size cutthroat seemed to be better overall for us, especially on the north side of the lake. Quite a few Hybrids in the 4-7lb range with a couple going over that mark, I'd say the biggest was around 8-9lbs.

This report was not the norm, but it wasn't unusual either. This email happened to come from a seasoned Henrys fly angler. But we heard good reports from all sorts of anglers. Even in slower than normal fishing years, good fishing can be had. If you didn't fish Henrys based on reports you may have missed out.



Fat brookie with an interesting lower jaw



Beautiful 9 lb 2 oz early season hybrid

2015 Fish Planting-The fall stocking went quite well. We increased the numbers of cutthroat by some 200k fish. We did so in response to lower natural recruitment over the past few years based on our gillnet numbers. All species stocked were larger than normal which may translate to better survival. We were able to stock approximately 50k Gerrard (Kamloops) hybrids and 115k Hayspur hybrids. We'll be evaluating the Gerrard strain over the next several years to determine if they may be a good addition to the Henrys program. We were only able to stock 70k brook trout instead of our 100k objective, but they like the cutthroat and hybrids were stocked at a larger than average size. Overall, it was a good stocking thanks to the efforts of the IDFG Mackay, Nampa, and American Falls hatchery staff. And, a special acknowledgement to the many volunteers that venture into sub-freezing temperatures to help with the Henrys spawn take. We were taking eggs as late as midnight last spring. It takes dedicated folks to make that happen. We have them!

2016 Creel Survey- Every 3 or 4 years we do a major creel survey. Other years we do spot surveys. We are scheduled to complete a major survey next year and plan to do so. We'll be out the entire season, including the ice angling season. We take great care in developing our survey to provide statistically valid data. Our survey dates are randomized to prevent bias, but we usually survey about 10-15 days per month. It is valuable data that provides catch rates, size, species composition, fishing effort and a host of other valuable data sets. We've always had good cooperation from anglers with our survey. We appreciate your help. Please feel free to ask us how it's going throughout the year.

Habitat Projects-In 2015 we had exciting news on the habitat front. We formed a habitat technical team to collaborate on potential projects, with the focus on identifying projects that benefit fish most. We identified an area of focus that has great potential to benefit natural production. This area includes Duck Creek and the tributaries of such, namely Rock Creek. We're working with landowners in these areas to provide the desired results of improving flows and temperature while still meeting the landowner's needs. Although it's early on in this process the future work in these areas may have as much potential as the Targhee and Howard culvert project did several years ago. This valuable habitat work will require grants and matching dollars. The HLF has been a valuable partner in the matching dollars category in the past. We will be soliciting this same support in the future. The importance of the HLF organization and their membership cannot be overstated. The bottom line is that without the HLF and other non-governmental organizations most habitat work would stall.

In 2015, we also completed 3 significant projects: Howard Creek passage project, and 2 Duck Creek cattle crossing projects. The Howard Creek passage project will improve passage for spawning cutthroat. All three projects will reduce sedimentation and provide improved habitat for adult and juvenile cutthroat. We also started the Timber Creek cattle crossing project along with several new fencing projects. Like the other projects the Timber Creek project will reduce sediment and provide improved water quality.



Rock Creek Diversions—Improving points of diversion like this may supply water to Duck Creek in critical low water periods and is a key focus of the newly formed habitat technical team.



Before and after pictures of Duck Creek water gap projects (2 pictures above) and the Howard Creek passage project (2 pictures below).



Invasive Species Update

Bryce Fowler, Fremont Control Weed Control Supervisor

Dear Henrys Lake Foundation Members,

2015 turned out to be a year that will not be forgotten for Henrys Lake. It started out with a boat that was purchased in Wisconsin and was headed to its new home in Alpine Wyoming. When it pulled through our inspection station it was covered with Quagga Mussels. We spent the next four hours cleaning the boat before we turned it over to Wyoming to finish their protocols. The great thing that came from this is the boat owner was very cooperative and helped us decontaminate the boat and other boat owners came through the station and learned what to look for. It was a scary deal knowing that mussels are moving around our area but the education that came from that one boat was priceless.

Fremont County Highway inspection stations inspected 7600 boats and the dockside inspectors did roughly 1500 inspections. We had 37 boats that came from water bodies that were infested with mussels, and 56 boats that had invasive plants on them. State wide there was 63,229 boat inspections done and 22 of those boats were found with mussels on them.

In all, just a small number of boats had invasive species on them. BUT just remember it only takes ONE boat to change our entire ecosystem and everything that we enjoy and love about Henrys Lake and the Island Park area.

The next adventure was the Blue/Green algae bloom that happened. We can thank Mother Nature for that one. Even though Blue/Green algae is not an invasive species it was the way the summer weather played out, with the lack of wind and the warm air, that made the bloom toxic. Usually the wind keeps the lake stirred up enough that it keeps the algae in check. This year it didn't happen and with the warmth and rain came a lot of aquatic vegetation including algae. On a good note, we did water surveying again this year and did not find any invasive or noxious plants. So once again Henrys is the only lake in Idaho that is invasive free.

Next year boat inspections on the highways will be the same as this year as far as I know. But we are trying to run the dock sides until the end of October. This will help us to protect the lake even during the busy fall season. This is a good thing since recreationists have come to expect boat inspections and with the amount of invasive species coming in we think this is the best way to keep Henrys Lake clean.

On the Terrestrial Noxious Weed Control side of things, the work goes on. This year we treated 300 acres of noxious weeds surrounding Henrys Lake. This includes Private and Public lands. Next year we hope to continue to have a lot of projects that involve homeowner associations that will greatly reduce the amount of weeds around the lake.

Once again THANK YOU for all your support and help. And remember we are here to help. If you have any questions PLEASE CALL.
Bryce Fowler, Fremont County
Weed Control Supervisor
Office: 208-624-7442
Cell: 208-709-2181



Blue-green algae along the shoreline in late October

2015 Louis Trager Memorial Award

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Partners Biologist Cary Myler was given the Louis Trager Memorial Award by the Henrys Lake Foundation during the organization's annual dinner and fundraiser, held this year at Meadow Vue Ranch in Island Park. Mr. Myler has worked with the Henrys Lake Foundation since 2008 in an effort to improve the fishery habitat for the Yellowstone Cutthroat trout.

"Cary's work in helping us secure government grant monies that we leverage with our non-profit contributions has been instrumental in helping us fund our highest priority fishery habitat improvement projects over the years", said HLF President Phil Barker during the presentation of the award. "Our work would not have been possible without the commitment that Cary has shown in helping us improve and protect the fishery of Henrys Lake, one of the most important stillwater fisheries in the western United States."

The Louis Trager Memorial Award was created in memory of Henrys Lake Foundation life member Louis Trager whose life and deeds of stewardship exemplified a commitment of time and service in selfless dedication to the preservation and enhancement of the natural habitat of the Henrys Lake Watershed.



Pictured from left to right: Phil Barker and Cary Myler on July 1, 2015 at the Henrys Lake Foundation annual dinner and fundraiser.

Sandy Hayes

1927 - 2014



SANDY HAYES, age 86 of Hemet, Ca, passed away Friday, June 6, 2014 in Temecula, Ca. Born June 15, 1927 in Boston, Ma., she was preceded in death by her husband, Bill Hayes, of 55 yrs in 2002. Sandy is survived by her three children, Linda Fuller (Martyn), Bill Hayes (Dawn), June Brannon (Mel); seven grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren; her sister, Rita Dussault; many nieces, nephews and friends, also her beloved puppy, Molly. She was a resident of Hemet for 30 years and lived her life to the fullest. Sandy loved her family and enjoyed spending time with them. Her favorite hobbies were dancing and shopping, which she did well at both. The family will be having a private gathering in Newport Beach. In lieu of flowers, you may wish to make a donation to "Jacob's House" in Temecula, Ca.

Published in Press-Enterprise on June 22, 2014

Sandy was a long time life member of the Henrys Lake Foundation and very active in the foundation's early years. Our condolences go out to the family and friends.

2015 Fishing Report

Ron Slocum

2015—A mystery year where are the fish?

The following is a list of the good and less than good for fishing Henrys Lake this past season.

Fewer fish!

My personal non-scientific estimate are 30-35% less Yellowstone Cutthroat trout. As an example my first 20 fish caught only 3 were YCT, the rest were very healthy hybrids and brook trout. The hybrids ranged in size from 3.5-6.5 lbs which is encouraging for trophy fish next year. The brookies were fat but not as big as last year. One encouraging note was the October fishing was decent and fishing in general did pick up late in the season.

Fish condition very good

The hybrids were like footballs and in excellent shape. It was not uncommon to see some large cutthroat when you found them. My largest was 5.2 lbs.

Fishing conditions poor

Lots of wind but not enough to stop an extreme bloom of blue green algae. In fact there were postings in the local papers warning of the toxic nature of the blue green algae. Some remnants of the algae remained in the lake all the way through the October season. Low water in the tributaries and in the lake itself summer and fall resulted in very low stream flows into the lake. Most of the serious fly fisherman I talked to this past summer released 40-50% less fish in 2015 compared to 2013 and 2014.

Spawning conditions very poor

Low tributary flow is the main culprit which could be a continued negative news for the upcoming years 2016 and 2017. I understand Fish and Game is trying to better estimate the actual contribution of natural reproduction to the fishery which should contribute to a more accurate analysis of the fish population.

Fish and Game Department

In most years prior to 2013 the plant of fingerling cutthroat was between 1.25 and 1.3 million. In 2013 it was reduced to 755,000. In 2014 it was further reduced to 730,000. The 2015 plant was upped to 955,000 (still in my opinion this was not enough). These circumstances have happened before. The most notable would be the 1980-1981 period that was corrected with 2 million fingerlings planted the following two years.

Food supply for fish

Caddis were down, damsel hatches continued to get better, callibaetis were intermittent, leeches were prevalent as were the density of scuds so all in all still very good and with a wet winter the lake can heal. However my estimate is for a better year in 2016 but not up to previous years.

Pelicans

One additional problem continues to be the pelicans. In talking with Fish and Game members they estimate the pelicans are consuming at least 10% of the spawning adults which could be in the area of 30,000-40,000 fish.

Henrys Lake is still the best fly fishing lake in the West for number and quality of fish. Let's be patient and encourage the Fish and Game on an ongoing basis to increase the plant of fingerlings back to 1.2 to 1.3 million.



Beautifully colored Yellowstone Cutthroat



Nice heavy late season hybrid
(Net is a Wachter Lake Magnum)

2016 Annual Fundraiser

When: Thursday June 30th 5:30—8:30 PM

Location: Meadow Vue Ranch

Menu: Steak, chicken, potatoes, baked beans, salad, cobbler

Auction items: Raffle and live auction items, similar to last year.

Cost: \$27 per person. Reservations are required. Please call 208-558-7411 or email

cody@meadowvueranch.com.

Donations: If any members have an auction item that they would like to donate please contact us. It is always fun to see old fishing tackle and other items that can be enjoyed by others and at the same time raise money for our projects.

Annual Election

Officers of the Henry's Lake Foundation are elected annually. Officers also serve as directors. Please vote your approval with a checkmark on the line next to the officer's and director's names on the included ballot card. Directors are re-elected upon expiration of their 3-year term. New directors are nominated and vetted by the Board prior to each election. If you have any nominations we would love to have them!

2014-15 Donor Honor Roll—Thank you for your generosity!

(Since publication of 2014 Fall Newsletter)

Donations \$500+

John A Herritt

Donations \$200+

Roger and Jonnie Camping

Terry Hogue

Mel Kemp

Len and Virginia Miller

James and David Odell

Chuck and Jeanette Stockon

Donations \$100+

James Aho

Jimmy's All Season Angler

Blair and Anna Anderson

David E. Clark

Mary Dimke

Dick Frencher

Ed and Margret Given

Vern and Peggy Given

Al and Barbara Hobson

Denis Hofflander

Jack and Samantha Kennedy

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Larry and Tanya Mcmillan

Bob Mielbrecht

Frank and Marilyn Moor

Gregory and Tracie Rich

Donald J. Simon

Duane Thorton

Jim and Caroline Wood

Carl Yates

Donations \$50+

Robert B Askey

Noal Bolliger

Gene Gantt

Raymond Hancock

Parmer and Mary Van Fleet

Donations Other

Carl F. Bianchi

Doug Cornett

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Patricia Huber

Bill Lloyd

Gerald and Cheri Waller

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