

Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Newsletter – March 2024

Weather: Winter was slow to arrive, but now it's cold, windy, and moderately snowy. The snowpack is slightly below average at the Deadman SNOTEL measuring station, <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/wcc/home/snowClimateMonitoring/snowpack/basinDataReports/>. We'll need our usual late spring snows to give us sufficient water for our lakes. You can view current weather at www.redfeatherlakes.net. Here's to a wet spring!

Fishing Report: Crystal Springs Trout Farm supplied catchable (85%) and trophy (15%) rainbows, palominos and cutbows for all lakes except Shagwa in 2023. Palominos account for 10% of the rainbows stocked. Aquatics Associates supplied catchable Donaldson rainbows for Shagwa. Aquatics Associates also supplied small browns for Apache, Nokomis, and Erie in addition to a special mix in Nokomis of larger browns, brooks, and tiger trout. Walleyes were stocked in Apache in the fall. A detailed stocking report for 2023 is posted at the office. A stocking report for 2024 will be posted at the office as lakes are stocked. Overall, we experienced a good year of fishing with normal fish growth, good water levels, good water temperatures and good water quality test results.



Nokomis Perch: Perch is still a concern in Nokomis. We are working to reduce the perch population through biological mitigation rather than chemical mitigation. We stocked additional trophy size rainbows and palominos during the past two years. In June 2023, we stocked browns and the special mix detailed in the Fishing Report to control the perch population. It took three to five years of biological mitigation to control the perch population in Apache. We are expecting the same scenario in Nokomis. Members must remove any perch caught from the lake (in fact, any lake).

Water Update: Last year was initially challenging to get and store water – then the rain came! The Poudre basin received about 20" of rain from May – July, truly a banner year! With that we filled everything and largely were able to keep things filled into August when the usual evaporation became more than the inflow of water. We finished the year in good shape for the winter.

Fishing Member Meeting: The Board of Directors hosted a meeting for members in July. We did not have a very large turnout but gathered some excellent input from those members that attended. Using the input from the meeting, the Board decided it was necessary to hear from more of our membership. The Board drafted two surveys; one for ice fishing members and one for regular season members. The ice fishing survey has been distributed this winter. The regular season survey is included with the 2024 membership registration information.

Surveys: The Board will review the ice fishing surveys later this year to determine any tweaks to managing ice fishing. The survey for the regular season (one for each adult member to fill out) is included with the 2024 newsletter. The Board is very interested in hearing from more of our fishing membership, please take the time to fill out the survey. The surveys will be reviewed by the Board to determine if any adjustments to our current rules and regulations need to be adopted. The information will be helpful to our stocking program as well. We'll of course share a summary of these on our web page and in next year's newsletter. **The surveys can be returned with your 2024 membership dues, mailed to the office, or dropped off at the office.**

Lake Patrol – Rules & Violations: All of the 2023 patrol staff will be returning in 2024; Andrew, Dan, Don, and Ericca. Allison will fill in, as necessary. We converted our phone system to a successful on call phone number for the patrol staff in 2023 and will continue in 2024. We issued only one written violation last year to a non-member. A few verbal warnings were issued to fishing members. All watercraft users must wear a Life Jacket (PFD) when on the water. Please remember to leave a note on your dashboard or windshield with your name, any guests(s) names and guest pass number.

Recreational Boating: This past year was the fourth season of our recreational boating program. Our goal of having only boaters who are part of our program and following our rules (especially PFD compliance) has worked beyond expectations. We had 21 recreational boating members (7 more than last year), and 139 boating (same as last year).

Dues: There will be no changes to our dues for 2024. Fish prices and salaries are tracking front range rates of inflation, increasing 5.8% for 2024. See the accompanying dues statement for the details. As a reminder, if you're a regular member, you must pay at least the \$230 inactive dues to keep your membership current.

Office: Our office manager, Allison Harrell, did a great job managing the office, thanks!

- For 2024, we'll issue 2024 stickers to be placed on your green badges. Paying your dues early allows us to get your stickers to you well before the season opens and streamlines our office workload. We appreciate receiving your dues transactions by mail (PO Box 527, RFL, 80545).
- Similarly, it's a huge help to both you and ourselves if you transact guest pass requests well ahead of time. They do not expire, so you can always keep a couple extra on hand.
- We accept credit cards. Note, a service charge will be added to cover credit card fees.
- Office hours; our summer office hours begin May 1st and our fall office hours start the Wednesday after Labor Day. See the days and times we're open on page 4.
- Lost and Found; please be courteous to all our members by turning in lost items to the office with the date and lake where items were found. If you lost an item, please check with the office.

Ice Fishing: Ice fishing will again be available at Ramona and Apache for the 2024/2025 season. Member fees: adult season pass - \$90, child season pass \$20, adult day pass \$25, and child day pass - \$15. Guest passes: escorted adult - \$35, escorted child - \$15, unescorted adult guests are not allowed. Due to limited winter office hours, please buy your passes before Oct 31, 2024, or well in advance by mail. Please put your name(s) and mobile phone number on a piece of paper and place it on your car dashboard when you're out on the ice.



Boat Auction and Fall Boat removal: Last summer we sold 13 boats (of all types) and took 6 undesirable boats to the dump or recycling. Last fall we removed 4 boats from our five boating lakes. Only one of the boats was properly stickered. We again ask that if you want to store your boat at the lake this summer, get it stickered. We'll remove any boats left in the storage areas after October 31 this year, upon which you'll need to pay to bail it out of our boat yard.

Maintenance Projects: Last fall we completed a number of small maintenance projects, upper Mitchell and Elkhorn headgate work, cleaned out the toe drains at all the lakes, cleaned out the culvert east of Apache, and removed willows off the Hiawatha dam.

Lake and Fishing information: On our web page, at www.rfsi.org/lakes.html, we have considerable information about our lakes (history, contour maps, overview information) and fishing (management of the fisheries and the challenges we deal with). For example, here's part of the summary we have about Snake Lake.



While Snake is one of our smaller lakes it's a proven fishery that supports a variety of trout, rainbows, cutbows, palominos, brooks, and browns. With access along the south and east shorelines, it's well suited for bait fishing. We always say, don't let its name deter you from fishing an excellent lake! Unfortunately, this guy liked it.

2024 Calendar:

May 11 Member fishing season opens!
May 25 Guest Fishing opens
July 4 – July 6 Ramona is closed to fishing until 2:00 PM on Saturday, July 6th
October 31 Fishing season closes, boats must be removed from the lakes
Winter Ice fishing on Ramona and Apache is open from mid-December through early March, safe ice permitting

Office Information:

Phone: 970-881-2175
Mail: PO Box 527, Red Feather Lakes CO 80545
E-mail: rfsico@yahoo.com
Web: www.rfsi.org
Hours: May 1 through September 2
8 AM to noon – Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday
4 PM to 8 PM – Friday
September 4 through October 31
8 AM to noon – Wednesday and Saturday
November through April – by appointment only

Board of Directors:

Greg Pickerel 970-556-9814
David Mosnik 970-217-4822
Paul Barker 970-223-7653
David Frydendall 970-484-3457
Mike Calhoon 970-567-7273
Joe Jacklovich 303-819-5254
Roger Svendsen 720-480-3947

The Board thanks you for your continuing support and will do everything possible to make this an enjoyable summer.

Greg Pickerel
President, Red Feather Storage & Irrigation Company