

Memorandum

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Date: December 15, 1978

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From : Department of Fish and Game

Subject: Indian Creek, Siskiyou County; some notes on the summer steelhead fishery

Indian Creek is a moderate sized tributary to the Klamath River. Minimum stream flow discharges into the latter generally exceed 50 cfs. Indian Creek originates on the east slope of the Siskiyou mountains along the Oregon border and flows southeast 18 miles before joining the Klamath River at Happy Camp. The drainage basin covers square miles and is located entirely within the boundaries of Klamath and Siskiyou National Forests. Most of the drainage with the exception of the headwaters has been extensively logged and the eastern portion of the drainage has been burned. Much of the drainage is mineralized and possesses a number of inactive shaft and placer mines. Up until the 1960's segments of Indian Creek were polluted with heavy metal concentrations from mine drainage. Portions of stream bed are still discolored by mine drainage. Much of the stream bed within the middle reach of Indian Creek has been severely aggraded by past placer mining activity and there are few pools. Heavy equipment working in the stream below Blue Bar Mine has silted the stream for nearly a mile.

Most of the stream frontage downstream from the South Fork is privately owned and numerous homes border the stream. Raw sewage was observed flowing from some homes into the creek and much trash has been discarded into the creek. A mill pond downstream from Luther Gulch discharges into Indian Creek creating chronic water discoloration and perhaps pollution. A paved road parallels the Indian Creek into Oregon.

In response to reports that summer steelhead had been observed in Indian Creek an underwater fish census was performed during the period September 25 through September 28, 1978; by a two man team utilizing skin diving equipment (wet suits, face plate and snorkel).

The stream was surveyed from Tom Gray Gulch to the Happy Camp and the following observations were made:

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<u>Stream Section</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Adult steelhead Observed</u>
I. Happy Camp to mill pond	4 mi	82 adult steelhead and 3 salmon. Most observed above mill pond even though few deep pools.
II. Mill pond to bridge above South Fork.	3 mi	
III. West Branch - Bridge above South Fork to Tom Gray Gulch	4 mi	339 adult steelhead, mostly concentrated in a few pools.
IV. West Branch above Tom Gray Gulch	7 mi	Shallow, not surveyed.
V. East Branch	11 mi	Not surveyed.
VI. South Fork	7 mi	Not surveyed.

Mainstem

Few juvenile steelhead were noted.

Although only a portion of the Indian Creek was surveyed, a total of 421 adult steelhead, presumably (spring run summer steelhead), and 3 salmon were observed in the West Branch and mainstem. Considering the poor quality of the habitat (scarcity of pools and poor water quality), the stream appears to support a surprisingly large population of summer steelhead. (Additional populations may exist in the East Branch and South Fork, consequently both should be surveyed.)

I doubt this - at least not now.

Surveillance of the creek by public health and water agencies would be desirable and as well as elimination of mill pond discharges.

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