

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Inter-Departmental Communication

To: Central Valley Regional Water Pollution
Control Board No. 5
608 - 13th Street
Sacramento 14, California

Att'n: Col. Joseph S. Gorlinski,
Executive Officer

File No.

Date: September 12, 1958

Subject: CONSTRUCTION OF PROPOSED
ICE HOUSE DAM ON SOUTH FORK
SILVER CREEK, EL DORADO COUNTY

From: Department of Fish and Game
Region II - 1001 Jedsmith Drive
Sacramento 19, California

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The Sacramento Municipal Utility District has applied to the Department of Water Resources for approval of plans and specifications for the construction of the Ice House Dam on the South Fork of Silver Creek. The dam will be 147 feet high with a crest length of 1440 feet. It will be constructed of rock-fill with an impervious earth core. Location of the dam and other information are shown on the attached copy of their application.

It has been our experience that such construction can cause serious damage to the stream involved and may limit fishing and recreational use of the stream for many years. This damage usually results from large amounts of silt and sand deposited in the stream during clearing operations, while stripping the bedrock, and when bringing fill material to the dam site. In some cases construction materials, debris, and oil and chemical wastes are deposited into the stream.

We realize it is impossible for a contractor to keep all the silt out of a stream. However, if adequate precautions are taken, a minimum amount of silt will reach the stream, and the resultant damage will be slight and probably last for only one season. Small or moderate amounts of silt usually affect food organisms and small fish in the stream and do not directly affect adult fish. Therefore, a fish population can recover quickly if spawning beds and food producing riffles are not seriously damaged by silt deposits.

Other potential wastes mentioned can kill fish and food organisms directly. If this occurs, and large quantities of silt and debris are deposited on the riffles and spawning gravels, it may take many years for the fish population to recover sufficiently to provide fishing use. Silt and these other wastes, singly or in combination, may make the stream unsuitable for recreational use for two or three years.

The South Fork of Silver Creek below the proposed dam is an important fishing stream. This department annually plants about 2,500 catchable rainbow trout in this stream. Both rainbow and brown trout are present and spawn naturally, and fishing is generally considered good. In 1956 we conducted a survey of angler use in order to prepare for the State Water Rights Board hearings on application

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for water from this stream. It was estimated that 5,600 man-days of recreational use occurred during June, July, and August on the South Fork of Silver Creek from Icehouse to the mouth where it joins Silver Creek. This section is about 12 miles long. Of this total use, we estimated there were 3,800 man-days of angler use and that anglers caught 8,200 rainbow and 2,800 brown trout. The survey did not include May, September, and October. Total recreational use during these months was probably something less than one-half the figure during the summer months.

There are a number of small campgrounds along the stream. Some are maintained by the U. S. Forest Service but most of them are unimproved. The creek is used for swimming and domestic use in the camp areas.

We recommend that construction plans by the contractor (The Bechtel Corporation) be reviewed to determine the probable character and amount of wastes which may be discharged into the stream, and that requirements be set to protect present uses of the stream.

Sincerely yours,

RD
Robert D. Montgomery
Regional Manager

cc: Dept. Water Resources,
Div. Resources Planning
Dept. Public Health,
Bur. Sanitary Engineering
Dept. Fish and Game,
Water Projects Coordinator
Guerdon Ellis, Forest Supervisor,
Eldorado National Forest

LRD/bw

attach.