

So Far Silver Cr.
El Dorado Co.

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PRESS RELEASE: Water Development Aids Trout Fishing

The trout population and recreational potential of streams of the Sierra Nevada Mountains are often substantially increased by the hydroelectric development of the watershed. A good example is the South Fork of Silver Creek, in El Dorado County, below the Ice House Reservoir, recently developed by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District.

This small stream is typical of many rivers of the Western Sierras. Prior to the construction of Ice House Dam, the flow in the spring of the year was extremely heavy due to the snow runoff. During the summer the flow was nominal but decreased as fall approached. In the fall of the year, the flow was almost non-existent. In fact in dry years such as this, portions of the stream actually went completely dry.

A stream or river can be compared to a chain. A chain will not carry more weight than its weakest link will support. A stream will not support more trout than can exist there at its lowest point. When a stream dries up in the fall, it remains barren until fish migrate into it, or are planted there. Neither are conducive to good trout fishing.

The Ice House Dam now impounds the snow water runoff which formerly created the excessive spring flows. The water is released from the reservoir as needed. Upon the recommendation of the California Department of Fish and Game, a constant year-round minimum release of 5 c.f.s. is made from the reservoir into the stream. This flow is considerably greater than prior minimum flows under natural conditions, even in wet years. There is now sufficient water in the stream at all times to support a good trout population.

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It will take several seasons before the effects are apparent, but in the years to come, the 12 miles of the South Fork of Silver Creek below Ice House Dam, will offer sportsmen some excellent trout fishing--throughout the season.

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