

Memorandum

To : Bill Thornton

Date February 22, 1985

From : Department of Fish and Game - Region 2

Subject: Habitat Preservation at East Park Reservoir


This memorandum summarizes our discussions of the February 15, 1985 meeting held on site at East Park Lake. Attendance at the meeting included John Hiscox and Bill Thornton (DFG), Paul Barney and Bill Bird (Bureau of REclamation), and Lawrence "Brother" Moore (Cattlemens Association). Subject under discussion was the proposed burning and/or removal of approximately 15 acres of tules at the mouth of Indian Creek along Sikes-Ladoga Road. Removal was proposed by the cattle leasee (Mr. Moore) to increase grazable(?) area for his cattle. Current cattle use of the area is year around and the leased parcel includes about 30 head. The subject area comprises less than 3% of the total cattle lease and is primarily pastureland exposed during water decline in the lake basin.

The proposed removal of tules from the subject area could seriously impact fisheries production for East Park Lake. The Indian Creek tule area and the smaller Stony Creek tule area collectively comprise over 75% of indigenous escapement and nesting cover for centrarchids in the reservoir. Drastic water fluctuation patterns in East Park accentuate the importance of such habitat and any reduction should be discouraged.

Existing grazing conditions in and around the targeted tule area have already degraded the existing shoreline and cove area. Bank sloughing and extensive pot-holing of lake bottom areas has created a myriad of fish entrapment basins during declining water. Long range plans should include the reduction or elimination of grazing from the immediate tule areas.

Possible mitigation or habitat-enhancement projects for the targeted area include the construction of diverse fish and wildlife islands. Rip-rapped islands constructed in proximity to existing tule beds would be beneficial for waterfowl nesting and fisheries production. Rocky structure would provide much needed cover for Ictalurids as well as centrarchids. Islands would create sanctuary for nesting waterfowl and should be planted with several plants and grasses to provide food and cover for fish and wildlife.

Existing access and parking conditions at the Indian Creek tule site are a problem. Extensive public use is made of the area by anglers and birdwatchers. Efforts should be made to provide alternative access and off-road parking. Existing parking consists of a narrow shoulder and a steep bank along Sikes-Ladoga Road. The condition is dangerous and should be corrected.


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Fishery Biologist

cc: Jim Ryan, Richard Beland, Wdn. Wright, ESS
Paul Barney, Bureau of Reclamation

JIH:ds