

REPORT OF WATER COMMISSIONER

WATER DIVISION IV; DISTRICT 14

WATER YEAR 2007

**TODD COVOLO
LYMAN, WYOMING**

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The Henry's Fork is administered by the Upper Colorado River Compact. This report includes Utah and Wyoming issues and references.

This year started out with excellent snow on the users' fields with individual reports up to two feet of snow. This gave a great spring start to the growing season; everything turned green and looked very promising for a good hay crop. Cool, dry spring into summer hit and regulation started. The rule of thumb for this year was shut ditch after ditch off all over the Henry's Fork basin. The entire Henry's Fork basin went into regulation for most of the summer and into the fall. During the growing season the Henry's Fork basin did not receive much moisture or a storm that really helped bring and keep flow up. The fields yielded low hay production throughout the Henry's Fork basin.

Due to the poor run-off and low snowpack, Burnt Fork was called into regulation on May 19. The east branch of Burnt Fork was receiving all the water down into the Perkins Ditch drying up both sides of the creek and causing interference of other users getting the water they deserved in priority. This creek stayed in regulation until all Utah users shut off on October 15. Burnt Fork once again had many issues and problems, the biggest being the low flow of water.

Beaver Creek was also a creek that was regulated for the Nelson Ditch with a 1908 water priority, which ran out quickly. Storage water deliveries from Hoop Lake began on May 26, keeping the creek in regulation until July 24. From this date through the end of August it was under administrative regulation with a priority date of 1889.

West Beaver Creek went into regulation the middle of July until the end of August. The creek was down into the 1899 priority for most of the summer. This stream was not regulated as part of the Beaver Creek regulation with priorities on this stream already being below 1908.

The Henry's Fork went into regulation the middle of June and lasted until October. This is an unusual call for regulation, thus showing how dry and low the snowpack was in the entire basin. The regulation on Henry's Fork was not easy due to the difficulty of getting to the headgates and some headgates taking up to five times their allowed water. This year the top end of Henry's Fork was regulated with little to no water at the top of Henry's Fork. The call was made by People's Canal with an 1899 right. This right was rarely filled after the call with the rest of the basin being regulated to rights senior to 1899.

Depth of Regulation	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Beaver Creek										
Depth of Regulation (priority)	1889*	1908	1889*	1908	1899*	1899*	1899*	N/R	1908	1899*
Date when that priority was hit	8-1	7-20	7-10	7-16	8-1	10-1	8-10	N/R	6-21	7-10
Burnt Fork										
Depth of Regulation (priority)	1902	1909	1899	1902	1895	1899	1899	1901	1899	1882
Date when that priority was hit	7-21	8-20	7-5	7-5	7-20	10-1	9-14	10-1	10-1	7-11
Lower Henry's Fork										
Depth of Regulation (priority)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1899	N/A	1899	N/R	1899	1899**
Date when that priority was hit	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7-20	N/A	7-20	N/R	9-1	7-1

N/R – Not Regulated

E – Estimated

N/A – Not Available

Stock – Stockwater

Futile

* This priority is on West Beaver Creek tributary.

** The Lower Henry's Fork call went unusually all the way to the upper end of the main stem.

Reservoir Carryover Percentage	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Hoop Lake (4026.5 AF)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	20	5	71	5	18
Beaver Meadows (2461 AF)	0	0	0	0	0	20	0	45	0	5
Island Lake (778 AF)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Total Carryover Amount divided by Permitted Total Capacity on about September 30. E – Estimated N/A – Not Available
(Previous years' reports in error for year 1998.)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- I was able to get through another drought year on the Henry's Fork.
- I was able to learn the top to bottom regulation of the Henry's Fork basin.
- Finally got some data from the Burnt Fork during Island Lake delivery.
- Was able to get users on Birch Creek to understand and follow their water right without going into regulation.
- Asked Island Lake users and demonstrated the need for a measuring device on the reservoir.
- Had to visit with many users on the system the importance of leaving their headgate alone once regulation was called for.
- Went over the New Hickey water rights on West Beaver Creek and made sure they were right.
- Spray-painted the Burnt Fork at the split on the bottom end near the Utah-Wyoming border to keep users from rolling rocks.

PROBLEM AREAS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The control of water on Burnt Fork at the split is a problem that needs to be managed by the Water Commissioner and the owner of the property to ensure proper splitting of the water down each of the branches. As long as the owner and the Commissioner can get along, the current way of regulating the creek is fine. There is no need for anyone else making adjustment to the split of the creek. Then there is no need for an expensive and high maintenance structure to keep the flow of water going down the right branch. Once again in 2007 the split of the creek was messed with this spring sending all the water down the west branch into the Perkins headgate. This problem will need ideas from all users and administrators to get this problem fixed.

On Burnt Fork the need to get the measuring device at the point of diversion for Island Lake and for Thompson Creek reservoir supply is a must. This needs to get done this next year before

PROPERTY OWNER CHANGES
- ONLY AS *HELPER WITH
THE COMMISSIONER
IS MAKING
CHANGES.

delivery of water rights. The States of Utah and Wyoming are also working together on this problem. The users need to step up and put the measuring device on and fix their structural problems on their point of diversion.

Many Wyoming users are always running their headgate wide open way past their water right. This causes the creeks to go into regulation and unnecessary work. This practice needs to stop immediately even if this allows extra water to go down into the Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

The users need to remember the need to have a locking headgate and properly maintained measuring device. This is an ongoing need due to high water every year eroding the hard work of the users on the creeks. This is a problem on Henry's Fork that is going to be addressed when the creek goes into regulation in the future.

Communications on the creeks are good. However, the need for each ranch to maintain one spokesperson for a daily contact person is a must during regulation.

CONCLUSION

This water year was a poor year for water run-off and a poor year for crop yields. I feel that all users had little water to work with and all users were treated fairly when regulation was called upon. I hope that next year Mother Nature yields a much higher water run-off from the high mountains in the Henry's Fork basin.