

The Henry's Fork Foundation, Inc.

December 1991

FOUNDATION HIRES EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Henry's Fork Foundation hired its first executive director in October after seven years of volunteer leadership. Janice Brown, an Island Park resident for the past nine years, was selected for the position based on her experience governing non-profit, conservation organizations and her knowledge of the Henry's Fork basin and its issues.

The Foundation Board made the decision to seek staff assistance when it became clear that the tasks of managing the organization and fulfilling its mission could no longer be strictly voluntary. Communication needs, long-range planning and monitoring of watershed issues are among the responsibilities of the new executive director working in concert with the 12-member board. Also, the staffed, year-around office will provide improved informational and support services to all Foundation members. The phone numbers are (208) 558-9041 and 558-9042 (FAX).

Our New Executive Director

Janice Brown has lived in Eastern Idaho for 15 years and has owned Lucky Dog Retreat, a small guest lodge in Island Park, since 1984. She was the first Interpretive Specialist at Harriman State Park (1982-84) and was responsible for developing its publications and

visitor programs. As Governor Evans' assistant for natural resources from 1985-86, Ms. Brown worked closely with state resource agencies with respect to forest plan reviews, the Mesa Falls land exchange and numerous river/watershed issues.

Ms. Brown holds a B.S. in Resource Recreation Management from Oregon State University's School of Forestry. Her specialty was in environmental education/interpretation, where much of her interest in naturalist work was cultivated. For the past several summers, she accompanied area visitors as a naturalist guide to Yellowstone National Park and Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. She was recently recognized by the U.S. Forest Service with the 1991 Regional Forester's Environmental Education Leadership Award for 13 years of training educators about the environment.

Jan Brown's background in leading conservation organizations will greatly assist the Foundation in clearly defining and reaching its goals. She was on the board of the Idaho Conservation League for five years, serving two years as its chairman. Her five years on the Greater Yellowstone Coalition board has provided excellent contacts within the three-state region which will help further the Foundation's cause.



INSIDE:

- "The Henry's Fork Basin: A Resource History" - Page 4
- Messages from the Executive Director and Fundraising Chairman - Pages 2 & 3
- Recognitions - Page 6
- Calendar - Page 6
- Don't miss your new HFF Decal enclosed with this issue!!!

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is only early December, yet the snowpack appears as deep as it "normally" is by February. Island Park is storing water the old-fashioned way -- in deep snowpacks that should linger into June. While Nature has provided ample snowfall so far this season, I wonder how the extensive removal of trees from the plateau and caldera floor will affect its spring runoff. Although the salvage timber program of the Targhee National Forest is nearing its conclusion, no one really knows to what extent the watershed has been affected by 25 years of clearcutting.

Fortunately, the U.S. Forest Service is seeking to answer this question. The Targhee National Forest is facing a major revision of its ten-year land management plan, one that will require a return to sustained-yield forestry as required by law. Assessing the current condition of the forest resource, a part of the planning process, means taking a serious look at the Henry's Fork basin. Last month Forest Supervisor James Caswell approached his regional office to initiate an integrated, inter-disciplinary study of this watershed and its aquatic resources.

This fall, over 60 Foundation members responded to our mail alert and wrote personalized letters to Caswell and Regional Forester Gray Reynolds supporting an integrated research effort on the Henry's Fork. I believe this outpouring of support moved the Targhee to take this initial step towards improved watershed understanding. This letter-writing effort demonstrated how effective the Foundation can be once we are organized and directed in our objectives. Many thanks to those of you who took the time to write.

There is a long way to go before basin-wide research is a reality -- and before wild trout fisheries can be sustained by healthy stream habitats throughout the watershed. Nonetheless, the Henry's Fork Foundation can influence the direction and speed of these efforts, especially as we grow in size and stature. I look forward to representing the Foundation as we continue to make a genuine difference in the Henry's Fork watershed. Please read Don Byers' fundraising appeal on the next page and make a generous contribution to help the Foundation move ahead in 1992.

Janice M. Brown

The NEWSLETTER of THE HENRY'S FORK FOUNDATION, INC. is published quarterly in March, June, September and December. The June issue features an annual report and list of contributors.

Articles, letters, opinions and photographs from the membership are welcomed. All correspondence should be directed to P.O. Box 61, Island Park, Idaho 83429. Telephone numbers of the Foundation are 208-558-9041 or 558-9042 (FAX).

This newsletter is printed on recycled paper.

GREETINGS FROM OUR FUNDRAISING CHAIRMAN

In April of this year we wrote each of you members to outline objectives of the Henry's Fork Foundation. Since that time we have moved to implement the objectives by doing the following:

- Jan Brown is our Executive Director, and we feel very fortunate to have her. Among her many strong attributes for this job is her acquaintance with virtually all the parties in the government agencies and the other environmental groups who are dealing with the issue of protecting the drainage basin of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River.

- We are monitoring current attempts to place hydropower plants on the Henry's Fork and providing input as needed.

- Although the Targhee National Forest is responding to our demands by forming a task force to coordinate watershed research, we should remem-

ber that the logging continues. The timber interests are a powerful force that is applying as much or more pressure on the Forest Service to remove trees as we are to stop the destruction. The best thing we can do is make sure we are in a strong financial condition to deal with this issue. To that end, we have isolated \$20,000 of the cash reserve of the Foundation in case we need it to become part of a lawsuit over this issue.

- We plan to address the issue of ongoing research in the immediate future. The success of that program will depend, in large part, on our ability to fund the research.

You might have guessed from the above where this dissertation is going. We need continue financial support to assure ourselves of being able to meet our objectives.

In fiscal 1990-91 we collected \$19,669 in contributions, and we earned \$1,870 in interest. Operating expenses were

\$13,169 leaving us \$8,370. When added to the prior cash balance, we ended the fiscal year with \$42,314 in the bank.

Our projected budget for calendar year 1992 is \$100,000 which includes all salaries, operating expenses and \$20,000 for research and habitat improvements.

If each member will contribute \$15 now, we can raise over \$8,000 to continue the Foundation's efforts to protect the Henry's Fork and to assist us in expanding our horizons to deal with the entire basin of this great river. Remember, your special donation is tax deductible, so write the check before the end of the year.

The enclosed decal is our way of saying "Thank You" for your past support. The trout has been reproduced from the original art work produced for the Foundation by Rene' Harrop. Display it on the inside of your vehicle window. Additional decals are available from the Foundation for \$10 each.

DON BYERS

Reprint of Sunday, Nov. 24 Post Register

VARIETY OF FACTORS BLAMED FOR RIVER'S ILLS

Kevin Richert
Post Register

ISLAND PARK— The snow has come and the fly fishermen have left. Winter is bringing to a close a tough fishing season on the fabled Henry's Fork of the Snake River.

By many accounts, fewer anglers tried their luck on the river during the summer, and those that came caught fewer fish. Fewer fishermen and fewer fish means fewer dollars for Island Park's tourism-based economy.

After fishing ends this month, the fish Fork may face their toughest season. According to some who study the river, some who draw their living from it, winter is a critical time for Island Park's most famous attraction: the wild rainbow trout of the Henry's Fork.

And the last few winters have been rough.

In the process, the Henry's Fork may have lost one or two generations of rainbow trout. A combination of factors may be to blame. Obviously, people here hope it's only a short-term loss.

Even if the problems on the Henry's Fork are temporary, businesses in Island Park have certainly felt the effects.

"Most people say (the fishing) isn't as good, or they've heard it isn't as good," said Mike Lawson, owner of a fly fishing shop at Last Chance.

Lawson closed his shop for the winter Oct. 15. Now, his busy season begins — traveling to trade shows and fly fishing seminars across the country. The workshops and shows have helped his business, since sales at the shop have dropped by 10 percent a year the last cou-

ple of summers.

The fishing season seems like a paradox. While fishing was slow this year, anglers caught more big fish than Lawson has seen in 15 years in the business.

"We haven't seen the percentage of fish in the 12- to 16-inch range that there used to be," he said.

That may sound strange, but it ties right into Jack Griffith's theory about the Henry's Fork. The Idaho State University stream ecology professor believes young trout have had trouble surviving the last few winters on the river.

Unlike adults, young trout need cover to survive the winter. Without it, they die of stress and starvation. And a series of biological

Continued on page 8

THE HENRY'S FORK BASIN: A RESOURCE HISTORY

There is a new booklet out on the history of Harriman State Park which describes a familiar tension with respect to managing the outstanding resources along the Henry's Fork. From the beginning of the century -- and likely before that -- even the wealthiest people believed they could have it all -- scenic beauty, abundant fish and wildlife, productive rangeland and exclusive use. The Harrimans found it impossible to make a profit at ranching in this harsh climate and still preserve the wildlife habitat required to sustain their hunting and fishing interests. They sought exclusive use of the now-famous stretch through the Railroad Ranch, yet ultimately made it a waterfowl sanctuary, even relinquishing their own hunting rights rather than risk over-harvest by the general public.

The same issues keep flowing down the Henry's Fork almost as regularly as the spring snowmelt. The stakes are getting higher as more people arrive to experience one of the last best places on earth. The ability of the resource to sustain all of the desired uses is wearing very thin. No wonder the politics of the basin are becoming polarized and the people increasingly passionate about their land and waters. The people of the watershed are beginning to realize what the Harrimans did earlier this century -- that we just can't have it all. To acquaint many members of the Henry's Fork Foundation with resource issues facing the Henry's Fork basin, the following historical perspective is provided.

The science of ecology helps us understand that everything is connected to everything else. Yet, when the salvage timber program on the Targhee

National Forest was contemplated in the 1960s, few considered the web of interrelationships that would be affected. A mill was constructed in St. Anthony expressly to handle the expected volume of beetle-killed, lodgepole pine -- with an understanding that 25 years of timber supply would be provided. Common wisdom reasoned that the trees would be "wasted" if allowed to die and fall, or worse yet, a dangerous fire hazard would develop. Secure jobs would be provided and it appeared that the tax base would be augmented by the share of timber receipts that return to the county. Who could argue against the merits of such a program?

Even with the writing of the Forest Plan beginning in 1979, attitudes were not about to change. Provision of firewood was said to be the number one issue of public concern, with sawtimber not far behind. Of course, we all wanted our hunting and fishing privileges retained on the forest, as well as developed campsites, open roads, summer homes, grazing allotments, etc. Mitigation measures were promised to assure us that the effects of intensive logging would not harm those other forest values. And even better, the Forest Service would monitor sensitive species in case some showed effects when the forest was lost around them. Promises were made, the Plan became law and the salvage program continued.

Meanwhile, the late 1970s and early 1980s saw an explosion of interest in fly fishing and specifically, fishing the Henry's Fork. Island Park -- once the weekend playground of Eastern Idaho and the Wasatch Front -- was becoming the summer home of retirees. Uncon-

trolled subdivision of private land into postage-stamp lots led to water quality problems of staggering proportions. As early as 1970, numerous crisis areas were identified for central sewers because of subsurface contamination from septic tanks. At last report, the year-round population of the Island Park area swells from about 300 to 8000 on any given summer day.

During the mid-1980s, at least five years of drought conditions impacted the region, including the year of the Yellowstone fires. Snowpacks were well below normal, resulting in reduced winter flows below dams storing water for irrigation. Prior water rights having legal priority, the Henry's Fork was left with what now are recognized as inadequate flows given sub-zero winter temperatures and needs of aquatic life, particularly juvenile trout. Icing conditions affected the ability of ever-increasing numbers of trumpeter swans to feed, and in early February of 1989, 100 swans succumbed.

Back in what was left of the forest, elk numbers began to fall drastically. Citing inadequate vegetative cover and lack of security due to the intensive road network, the Idaho Fish and Game



called for regulatory changes to protect the remaining mature bull elk. In the Fall of 1991, a spike-only hunt was instituted, resulting in fewer hunters in the upper drainage and lower hunter success. Moose tags were also reduced, in part due to heavy winter losses during the cold, drought years. In monitoring studies, goshawks were found to be on the decline as they require standing, dead trees for nesting. Studies also revealed far more bald eagle nests than previously known, now up to 13 in the Island Park area. Federal law protects this endangered species, so no timber harvest may take place in the buffer area surrounding each located nest.

And the blue-ribbon fishery once heralded in every fishing magazine in the country? Most observers have noted a steady decline in the numbers of fish in the Henry's Fork, especially in the middle age classes. This corresponds to research conducted under the sponsorship of the Henry's Fork Foundation which points to poor winter survival of juvenile fish due to lack of cover. Adequate cover for young fish -- rock clusters, streambanks, fallen logs -- is in short supply in the Henry's Fork. Low flows often make protective bank cover unavailable and sediment has filled in spaces along the banks and in rock clusters. More research is needed to determine winter habits of Henry's Fork fish and how survival can be enhanced.

As the last decade of the century unfolds, how will the Henry's Fork Foundation respond to the realities of resource limitations and results of human impact? Like the Harrimans, will we adjust our own behaviors in



favor of protecting the resource? There are promising signs that point this direction. Fremont County is considering an ordinance which sets performance zoning standards for Island Park that are oriented to resource protection. As more private land is developed, incentives will work toward clustering structures rather than sprawling them across the landscape. Developments will have to "pay their way" with respect to services such as water, sewers and road maintenance.

The Targhee Forest Plan will be revised by 1994, returning to sustained yield forestry and hopefully re-orienting to more balanced multiple-use -- including recreation, wildlife and watershed management. This year the Idaho Legislature will be considering state "natural" and "recreational" designations for the Henry's Fork and its tributaries, protecting them from a range of development activities including hydropower. Water quality studies are beginning on Henry's Lake to examine all non-point sources of pollution, and there is interest in expanding

water quality studies to the entire basin. Responsible ranchers are becoming more cooperative in protecting riparian zones and are working with the agencies to modify grazing practices on public lands.

All these initiatives provide reassurance that the Henry's Fork will not be abandoned as a resource, despite the reality that it will take time to sort out all the problems and solutions. While many problems could have been avoided through ecological understanding and attitude change, there is yet hope that damage is not beyond repair. Conservationists, sportsmen and concerned residents have made the big difference thus far in demanding agency attention to the declining health of the Henry's Fork. It is the intent of the Henry's Fork Foundation to continue its vigilance until the river and its resources can return to their former vitality. We know we can't have it all -- but through understanding the ecological underpinnings of this basin, we can preserve a great deal for this and future generations.

IN RECOGNITION OF EMERSON S. STURDEVANT

This fall, the Foundation accepted the generous donation of a Smoker-Craft McKenzie boat with all accessories from life member James Sturdevant of San Francisco. The donation was in memory of his father, Emerson Sturdevant, one of the Foundation's first life members. We wish to thank both father and son for their contributions to the Foundation and recognize the elder Sturdevant's accomplishments:

Emerson S. Sturdevant was born in St. Anthony, Idaho, on October 29, 1912. He graduated with honors from the University of Utah in 1934 and subsequently the Georgetown Law School in 1938. He spent most of his professional life in the banking business and served as the Chairman of the Board of the Continental Bank and Trust Company in Salt Lake from 1961 until its merger with Moore Financial Group, Inc. of Boise, Idaho in November 1985. He died on August 2, 1989.

On June 15, 1945, he married Marian Cosgriff. They had four children: Virginia, James, David and Paula. Mr.

Sturdevant and his wife took up fly fishing in the 1940s. He became a member of the North Fork Club in the 1950s and purchased a cabin there in the early 1960s. Mr. and Mrs. Sturdevant pursued their avid interest in dry fly fishing during the summer months spending most of their time in the Island Park and Jackson Hole areas.

Following his wife's death, Mr. Sturdevant became one of the first lifetime members of the Foundation believing it to be a very important element in the protection and development of the environment to protect fly fishing in the Island Park area. In his later years, refusing to be limited by his physical inability to wade the Henry's Fork, Mr. Sturdevant purchased a flat-bottomed McKenzie boat which enabled him to continue to fly fish on the Snake River. His son, Jim, who has succeeded his father as a member of the North Fork Club, hopes that his father's Smoker-Craft McKenzie boat and Mercury outboard motor will be used by the Foundation for research, training and educational purposes to help protect the Henry's Fork of the Snake River and its tributaries in the years to come.

ROGER AND AARON DOUGHTY RECEIVE FOUNDATION AWARDS

In 1990, another father-son combination made significant contributions to the Henry's Fork Foundation. Roger Doughty of Boise arranged for the donation of a truck from Intermountain Gas Co. to assist in fishery research. His son, Aaron, raised \$2000 as an Eagle Scout project and donated the money to purchase a needed snowmobile for winter research and swan recovery efforts. At the 1991 Annual Meeting, Roger was recommended to receive the HFF William Manlove Award and Aaron the HFF Conservation Award. Congratulations and many thanks to both men.



1992 CALENDAR

January 24-25 "Idaho Rivers: Working for Everyone" sponsored by Idaho Rivers United, Boise, Idaho

March 13 Foundation Board of Directors Meeting, Idaho Falls, Idaho

May 6-8 Governor's Conference on Tourism and Outdoor Recreation, Boise, Idaho.

May 29-30 Annual Meeting, Greater Yellowstone Coalition, West Yellowstone, Montana.

July Annual Meeting, Henry's Fork Foundation, Island Park, Idaho (The exact date to be announced)

October 2-3 "Tools and Strategies for the Enhancement and Maintenance of Instream Flow" Jackson, Wyoming.

Idaho Rivers: Working for Everyone

January 24-25, 1992 Red Lion Riverside Hotel Boise, Idaho

Idaho Rivers United invites you to "Idaho Rivers: Working for Everyone", a symposium about the future of Idaho's endangered fisheries and remarkable rivers and streams. Join us and learn about the current debates in water and river management and the emerging issues of watershed protection. Use this special opportunity to meet the people who manage our public waterways.

Friday, Idaho - The Wild Salmon State

- 8:30 Registration
9:00 *Incredible Idaho Salmon* (video)
9:15 Welcome and Opening Address
Idaho Attorney General Larry Echohawk
Ed Chaney, Northwest Resource Information Center
10:45 Session Address
"How Could Endangered Salmon Affect Idaho?"
11:30 Lunch Discussion Groups
1:00 Concurrent Panel Sessions
What Kills the Fish?: A close examination of the human activities which are impacting Idaho's endangered fisheries.
What does Critical Habitat Mean To You?: Industry and agency views on endangered species protection.
3:00 Concurrent Panel Sessions
Economics of Salmon Recovery: Developing a win-win solution.
Measuring River Health Through Aquatic Biodiversity: Theories, techniques, and case studies.
5:30 No Host Bar
6:30

BANQUET AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Idaho Governor Cecil Andrus
Professor David Getches,
University of Colorado School of Law.
Professor Getches is the author of numerous books and articles on western water policy and currently serves as the chairman of the Land and Water Fund of the Rockies.

Saturday, Dams and Water

- 8:30 Congressional View of Northwest Salmon Restoration
9:00 Concurrent Panel Sessions
Citizen Action - Making a Difference: A look at the varied approaches citizens are taking to protect rivers.
Public Water, Private Property? The search for balance.
Protected River Designations: What are they and what types of protection do they provide.
10:45 Concurrent Panel Sessions
Rebuilding Rivers: Responsible mitigation for hydroprojects.
Finding Water for Public Uses: A tool box of strategies for citizens and water managers.
Taking Better Care of The Water: Best management practices in agriculture, mining, timber, and recreation.
12:00 Lunch Discussion Groups
1:45 Concurrent Panel Sessions
Time's Up - Snake River Dam Relicensing: Using the relicensing process to address environmental concerns.
Opportunities for Water Conservation: Water conservation management options for the 90's.
The Middle Snake - Finding Cooperative Solutions: A case study.
3:30 Plenary Panel: The Future of Water Policy Regulation
4:30 Closing

Name _____
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Address _____
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- ___ \$75 General (includes banquet & two lunches)
___ \$35 Henrys Fork Foundation member
___ \$15 Extra banquet ticket ___ \$10 1 day, Sat. or Sun. only

Return ASAP with check (payable to Idaho Rivers United) to: Idaho Rivers Symposium, Box 633, Boise, ID 83701.
For more information call Idaho Rivers United, 208-343-7481.



Continued from page 3

trends have robbed the trout of their cover, says Griffith, who has studied the Henry's Fork for several winters.

Years of drought have led to low winter flows on the Henry's Fork. That's taken away good cover along the stream banks. Record numbers of trumpeter swans and other waterfowl have spent the past few winters at Harriman State Park, stripping the river of aquatic plants young trout use for cover.

This loss might explain the shortage of 12- to 16-inch fish. Large trout may still be abundant; Griffith says, because they don't need cover to get through the winter.

But another problem, as Griffith sees it, is a curious lack of quality research on the fabled Henry's Fork. Researching the Henry's Fork is a full-time job, and no one has had the time or money to do that. And until a few years ago, researchers wouldn't spend any time on the Henry's Fork in the winter.

"I certainly feel that was a mistake," said Griffith, who's seeking a federal grant to continue his winter research on the river. "I was guilty of that for a long time."

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game did some fish counts on the Henry's Fork this summer, for the first time since 1989.

The results won't be available until January, regional fisheries manager Steve Elle said. But fish counts at Harriman were a bust, he said, because there just weren't many fish to

count.

Anglers at Harriman found this out the hard way.

"There have been a few who've fished the area for many years who say it's the worst they've ever seen," Harriman manager Gene Eyraud said. More than a third of the park's 25,000 visitors come to fish the Henry's Fork, but fishing traffic has dropped over the last three summers.

With fewer anglers — and fewer fish — some residents don't seem to know what to blame. Some blame the drought and the winter flows. Some blame the swans. Some blame irrigation and ranching. Some blame fishing pressure.

That frustration was evident recently, when Rich Orme of St. Anthony spoke at a recent state hearing on the Henry's Fork. The rancher and former state legislator said fishing on the river has gone downhill recently, 100 years after ranching began in Island Park.

"I don't know what happened to these cattle that they learned to destroy the fishery, but they did," he said sarcastically.

"I think there's always a search for a scapegoat, and I think that's a very simplistic approach," said Jan Brown, a year-round Island Park resident and recently hired executive director of the Henry's Fork Foundation. "I think the truth is a combination of a number of factors."

This winter, a couple of things could happen that would help trout on the Henry's Fork.

Biologists are trying again to move rare trumpeter swans out of Harriman, and get them to winter elsewhere. Last winter, they moved more than 350 birds and held the park's swan population in check at fewer than 200 birds. The aquatic vegetation has bounced back somewhat since then, although there's just 60 percent of normal plant growth in the river this winter. "It obviously is capable of coming back if you keep the waterfowl off it," said Fish and Game biologist Ruth Shea.

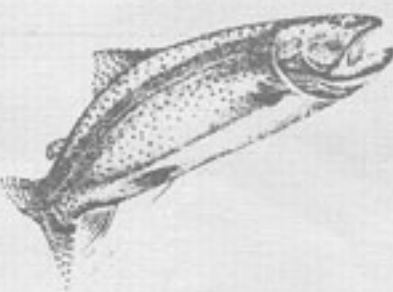
Meanwhile, Brown and others are looking to the skies. The winter has started with a good deal of snow, and they hope the snow keeps coming.

"You can get along a lot better with the irrigators and the Bureau of Reclamation when you've got water coming out your ears," Lawson said.

Merchants in Island Park have a stake in how the trout get through the winter. A big part of their business rides on an ecological roll of the dice.

On a recent slow weekday afternoon, Carol Drake played Yahtzee in her empty grocery store in Island Park and talked about the past summer. The fishing wasn't bad, she said, but business was lousy. Rumors of poor fishing on the Henry's Fork and Henry's Lake kept a lot of customers away.

"We're just waiting for next year," she said. "I wish it was May."



The Henry's Fork Foundation, Inc.

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