

## FISH MANAGEMENT PLAN

FOR

HYATT LAKE

### I. Adopted Policies and Objectives

**635-500-709** Hyatt Lake shall be managed for hatchery and natural production under two alternatives from the Warmwater Fish Plan and Oregon's Trout Plan: trout - Basic Yield; bass - Basic Yield. **Adopted 10-10-90; ef. 10-15-90**

### II. Introduction

The wild fish policy and fish management policy of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) directs that fish management plans will be written for all waters of the state. The Oregon Trout Plan and Warmwater Fish Management Plan, give the direction for trout and warmwater management in basin plans as well as in plans for individual rivers and standing water bodies.

The following document is an operational management plan for Hyatt Lake.

### III. Overview

Hyatt Lake is a 957 acre irrigation impoundment located 21 miles East of Ashland (Fig. 1) on the Cascade divide at an elevation of 5,016 feet. The reservoir was built in 1923 to store 16,900 acre-feet of water for irrigation use in the Medford area by the Talent Irrigation District (TID).

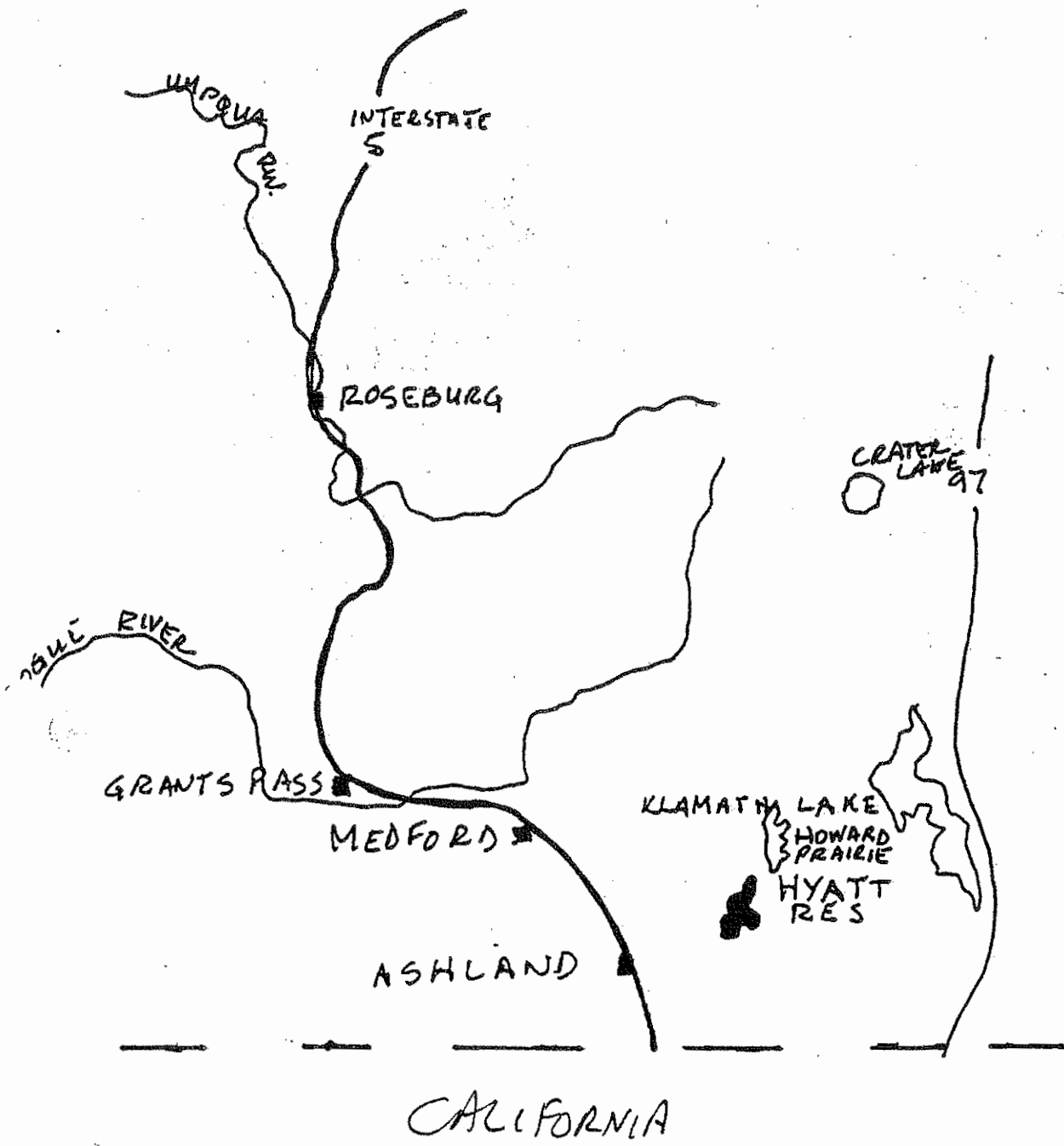


Fig.1 Area map

The lake was created by a 45 foot high dam and released water enters Keene Creek Reservoir approximately four miles downstream. From Keene Creek Reservoir the water is diverted into a TID canal. Hyatt Lake is one of a three-reservoir complex which provides waagter storage for TID. Water enters Hyatt Lake from four tributaries, all of which go dry by late summer. The average annual inflow from these sources is 6,500 acre feet.

Ninety percent of the land immediately surrounding Hyatt Lake is controlled by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR). Other land is owned or controlled by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), TID, and private parties. Recreational facilities at the lake include Hyatt Lake Lodge, Campers Cove Resort and 18 summer homes. The BLM currently operates a campground at the southern end of the lake and recorded about 19,000 user days in 1987. An agreement is being negotiated between BLM and BOR that would grant BLM management authority over all federally owned lands around the lake.

The lake was stocked with warmwater fish from Sauvie Island shortly after completion and was managed for those species until 1960. At that time the irrigation district drew the reservoir to near stream-channel level for installation of fish screens in the dam outlets. The lake was treated with rotenone by the Oregon Game Commission to remove a population of the stunted warmwater fish. The lake was then restocked with bass, bluegill, and rainbow trout. A good trout fishery was established but it declined by the mid-1960's due to competition from golden shiners and warmwater fish. The lake was again treated in 1967 and restocked with rainbow trout.

In 1977 the lake was treated a third time to eliminate competition from brown bullheads. Since the 1977 treatment, Hyatt has been a productive trout lake until recently when survival and growth of rainbow fingerlings declined. Bullhead catfish are again extremely abundant.

A proposal by ODFW to treat the lake in 1988 was dropped due to strong public opposition. Opponents attempted to collect surplus brown bullheads by netting but the project was abandoned when about 32,000 bullheads were removed from a trapnet the first day. The bullhead population in the lake was estimated at 7.5 million.

Early in 1989, a Hyatt Lake Management Advisory Committee was created. Included were landowners, agency personnel, sportsmen's club members, legislators and other interested individuals. The group agreed that the lake should again be chemically treated to eliminate bullheads in order to pursue trout, warmwater fishes, or a combination of warmwater and trout. No management direction other than brown bullheads appeared feasible to the committee in the absence of treatment.

#### IV. Fish Resources and Habitats.

Terrain around Hyatt Lake is gently sloping and covered with a mix of ponderosa pine, douglas fir, and white fir. A one-acre grove of trees was flooded when the lake was formed resulting in an area of snags and stumps, known as "The Orchard". It provides excellent habitat for bass and trout. Maximum lake depth is 36 feet with most less than 25 feet deep (Fig.2).

The annual water drawdown causes the most severe habitat limitation by reducing food production and habitat space. Winters are cold and the lake is usually covered with ice and snow, however winter loss is not a problem. Hyatt lake was chemically treated 12 October 1989. The impoundment had been drawn down to 3,000 acre feet.

#### V. Fishery Management

The lake has been annually stocked with an average of 200,000 fingerling rainbow trout (3 to 4 inches in length). These fish reach 10-12 inches by the following spring.

In recent years survival and growth of fingerling rainbow has been poor. Electro-fishing and gillnet studies have shown the lake to be overpopulated with 4-7 inch brown bullheads. Because of poor trout production, angling pressure has dropped. A boat count on the opening day of trout season in 1988 showed 15 boats on Hyatt Lake while over 300 boats were observed on nearby Howard Prairie Reservoir.

The adult largemouth bass population is providing a fairly popular fishery and fish in excess of five pounds are not unusual. However, juvenile bass production appears poor, perhaps due to excessive competition from brown bullheads.

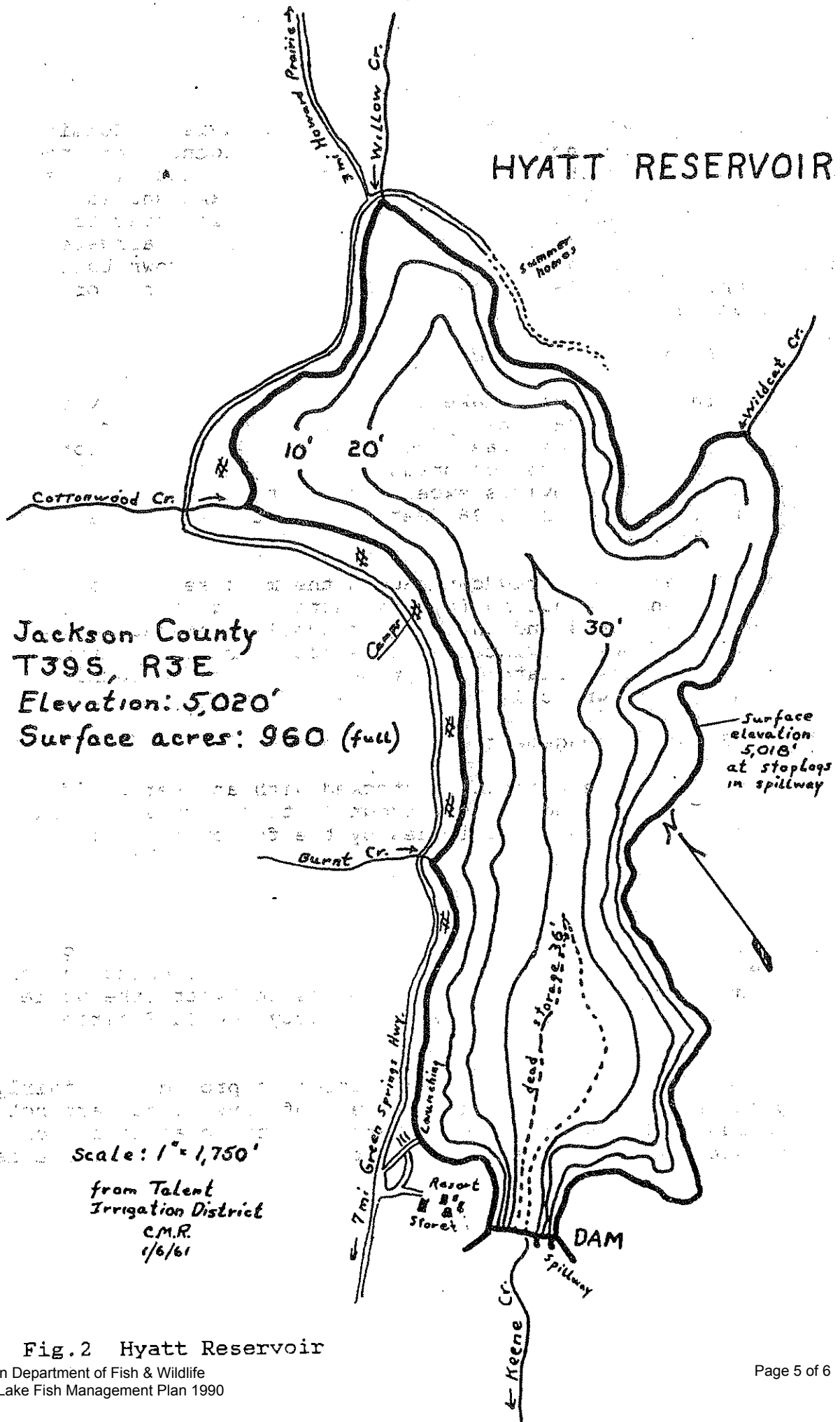


Fig.2 Hyatt Reservoir

Hyatt Lake was open year-round for several years but concern about winter harvest limiting trout catches during the spring and summer precipitated closing the lake during the winter beginning in 1988.

Hyatt Lake has proven capable of providing an excellent trout fishery but unauthorized releases of other fish species has necessitated three chemical treatment projects. The lake can also provide a good warmwater fishery provided a proper balance of species mix and size distribution can be maintained.

#### VI. Implementation

After a management plan has been adopted the program will be implemented as follows:

1. Spring, 1990. Stock with 20,000 legal trout  
Stock with 250,000 fingerling rainbow trout. Stock with fingerling and adult largemouth bass.
2. Annually. Inventory fish populations with gillnets, trapnet, and electrofishing. (Electrofishing may not be done every year).
3. Summer, 1990. Conduct a physical and biological survey of the lake and tributaries.
4. Summer, 1991 or 1992. Conduct a statistical creel sampling program.
5. 1994. Reevaluate the Hyatt management plan.