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RUEDI FISHING

The quotation to which you refer came from the Forest Service report on the recreation plans. Our Washington correspondent wrote the front page story based on information from the report, questions which she asked various individuals, and other sources.

When I wrote my story that appeared inside, I did not go into the fishing situation to any extent.

Planted fish thrive in fluctuating reservoirs, but they do not reproduce well. At least, that is the case for most species, so far as I have been able to learn from reading. This means that the Colorado Game and Fish Department and the Federal Bureau of Sport Fisheries must stock the reservoir each year. I believe the Forest Service will ride herd on them to be sure they do stock the reservoir.

The fluctuation will not be as great as first indicated. In the first place, the reservoir has been designed to hold water from good years such as 1952 for use in bad years such as in 1956. This operation plan will keep considerable water in the reservoir from year to year under most conditions.

The reservoir will be much the same as many of the lakes on Grand Mesa. It will be larger, and fluctuation will be greater, but Ruedi will still be similar to Grand Mesa lakes, most of which are also storage reservoirs.

Fishermen who prefer stream fishing, of course, disdain any lake or reservoir fishing. To them, no lake fishing is any good. They deplore loss of the stretch of the Fryingpan through Ruedi Valley.
The reservoir will be full or nearly full during the period of greatest fishing in July and August. The main draw down will be September through December. Main inflow will be April through June.

The Game and Fish Department has been experimenting with species better adapted to fluctuating reservoirs, and experiments have shown that more brush should be left in the reservoir area for fish. Both may improve lake fishing.

The operating principles for the project provide for the protection of fishing both above and below the reservoir. I have not checked the stream flow records for the stretch immediately below the dam, but I know that the principal effect the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project will have on the Fryingpan above the reservoir is to reduce the spring snowmelt runoff. The project will divert during the spring runoff but will be closed down most of the rest of the year except in high water years such as 1952 or 1957. The flow of the Fryingpan past Norrie and of the North Fork will be the same as now in July, August, and through the fall and winter most years.

The operating principles provide for more water than is usually in the stream in July, August and September. This means that the diversions will be shut off, and the Fryingpan and its tributaries will be flowing as they do now.

I made a thorough study of this twice, once for Howard McNullin, and again when Mrs. Biggs was protesting the reservoir last fall.

The operating principles provide for a set schedule of releases below the reservoir. Tributaries between Ruedi Dam and Basalt will not be tapped and will continue to flow as now.

I suspect that the recreation uses of Ruedi will force the state and federal agencies to maintain the best fishing possible under the circumstances. The stream fisherman will never believe lake fishing is as good as angling in a stream, but fishing in Ruedi should be on a par with most lakes accessible to the general public. No lake accessible by car will ever compare, in the opinion of many, with the high mountain lakes reached by packing or hiking.

Another factor of the immediate future is that little water will be used from Ruedi for several years. Shale, expanded irrigation, and municipal uses will not develop overnight. This is no consolation to those opposing reservoirs and who would rather keep streams in their present state for
their descendants, but the uses for water in the reservoir will appear slowly over the next several decades. Ninety percent of the water fights are over water for use 10 to 100 years from now. This includes Ruedi.

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