

SPRING HAS COME TO THE ALMANOR BASIN

Spring has finally arrived to the Almanor basin. The daytime temperatures are reaching into the 70's, daffodils are in bloom, and buds are starting to appear on trees. The lake level continues to rise and should be much higher than the past few years. As of April 6th, the lake's elevation level was reported to be 4486.84. There is a good amount of snow on the mountain tops but the snow fall at lake level is below normal. The bright spot is the rainfall average made up for it. At lake level it was reported to be 122% above average, most of which was sucked into the ground after the past three years of draught. The Super Ditch was running in early April, something we haven't seen in past years except for when there were short periods of rain. Bailey Creek has been running over its banks as well. The golf courses are all open and we should have a great summer.



The Super Ditch on Hwy 36

CAGE PROGRAM

All remaining fish were released from cages the third week in April. At the time of release there were only three cages holding fish which were bigger than normal - 10 to 14 inches. The water was very muddy this season from the PG&E powerhouse which made it difficult to see if there were any fish in the cages.

As shared earlier in winter's e-communications, we only received 30,000 Shasta Trout last year because of the quarantine at Darrah Spring Hatchery where we normally obtain our fish. The hatchery was closed after they discovered Whirling Disease in some of their runs. The fish slated for our cages were among those affected.

Now that the fish have been released, we need to get the cages inspected by a diver to assess damages caused by several strong winter storms. There was more damage this season to cages and covers than we've experienced in the past 28 years. One of the cages was so severely damaged that 5,000 fish escaped into the lake. There was also damage to covers from River Otters that breached at least three cages and ate all the fish. The covers were designed to keep birds out, not hold up 30 lb otters. We also

had a lot of floating debris that had to be removed by volunteers. An inspection will tell if it sank to the bottom of the cages. If it did, the debris will need to be removed.



Some of the floating debris on cages which was removed by volunteers

AFA received a very generous donation from the Chico Area Fly Fisherman's group to help with cage repairs and we sincerely thank them. All donations of any amount are deeply appreciated and help us with our many projects, one being the cage program where we raise and release rainbow trout into the lake annually. The cages are critical to our work and are in much need of repair. If the cages need to be removed from the water to perform repairs, the cost could be higher than expected, as much as \$25,000 not including cage covers which need to be repaired or replaced.

AFA board member John Crotty is looking for help in getting grant money so if you know of any group that might have funds for our repairs please let him know. You can reach John at (530) 284-0861 or quailodgelakealmanor@frontier.com.

DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE 2016 ALLOTMENTS

We were told by the Department of Fish & Wildlife that they were asked to trim their total 2016 catchable trout allotments because of a lack of fish in the hatcheries. It is not clear what they are trying to tell us but it can't be good. How does a hatchery not have enough fish? They further stated Lake Almanor's 2016 allotment will be 25,000 Rainbow Trout for our cage program (a 50% reduction from past years), 60,000 sterile Chinook Salmon fingerlings, 22,000 catchable sterile Rainbow Trout, and 6,000 sterile Brown Trout. Why only 6,000 Brown Trout? Five years ago it was 45,500! Do you see the handwriting on the wall? I sure do! I'm going to make a bold and drastic request that ALL German Brown Trout be released so they can be caught again and again. If fishermen keep removing the Browns from our lake, there will be no Browns to catch.

SOME GOOD NEWS FOR SOME FISHERMEN, MAYBE

[Senate Bill 1081](#) authored by Senator Mike Morrell, 23rd District (R-Rancho Cucamonga), will reduce sport fishing and hunting licenses to a flat-fee of \$5.00 and discount fishing tags by 50% for honorably

discharged California veterans. In addition, disabled or recovering service members will be provided licenses and fishing tags for free.

Status: Passed the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Water on March 29, 2016

[Assembly Bill 1844](#) authored by Assembly Member James Gallagher, 3rd District (R-Plumas), will reduce hunting and fishing licenses by 25% for honorably discharged California veterans, reducing the annual fishing licenses fee from \$47.01 to \$35.26. Veterans with a 50% or greater service-connected disability will be entitled to additional savings, a 50% discount on licenses and fishing report cards. Discounts also apply to lifetime fishing licenses.

Status: Passed the Assembly Committee on Water, Parks and Wildlife on March 29, 2016.

SOME DATES AND THINGS TO REMEMBER

The AFA Family BBQ and Fundraiser was moved up to July this year and will be held Saturday, July 30 from 4 to 9 p.m. (dinner served from 5 to 6 p.m.). The steak dinner price was increased to \$25 this year for walk-ins at the door. Tickets purchased prior to the event remain the same: \$20 - a \$5 savings. The Hot Dog Plate price was increased to \$10. All children who attend will receive a prize worth more than the \$5 increase. For adults, remember the Hot Dog plate includes salad, beans, bread and cookies! Ticket sales will start in June.

The "Fish-For-A-Wish" Fishing Team Tournament is being held on the first Saturday of August again this year at Big Cove Resort. AFA will have registration forms available later.

AFA's newsletter, *The Almanor Fisherman*, is with Feather Publishing right now for printing and we expect to have them in the mail late May.

In closing, if you haven't turned in your membership donation, please consider renewing, you'll have the satisfaction of knowing that you're part of an organization that is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the Lake Almanor Basin Sport Fishing. We are lagging behind last year's membership drive and we really need your support. Your membership donation will help offset cage repair costs. Visit [Almanor Fishing Association](#) on the Internet for the membership application.

I want to thank all the volunteers who helped feed fish throughout fall, winter, and spring. You deserve a big round of applause for all your hard work. Thank you!

The AFA board members and I greatly appreciate your support,

Rich Dengler, President
Almanor Fishing Association

If it concerns fishing, we're concerned!

