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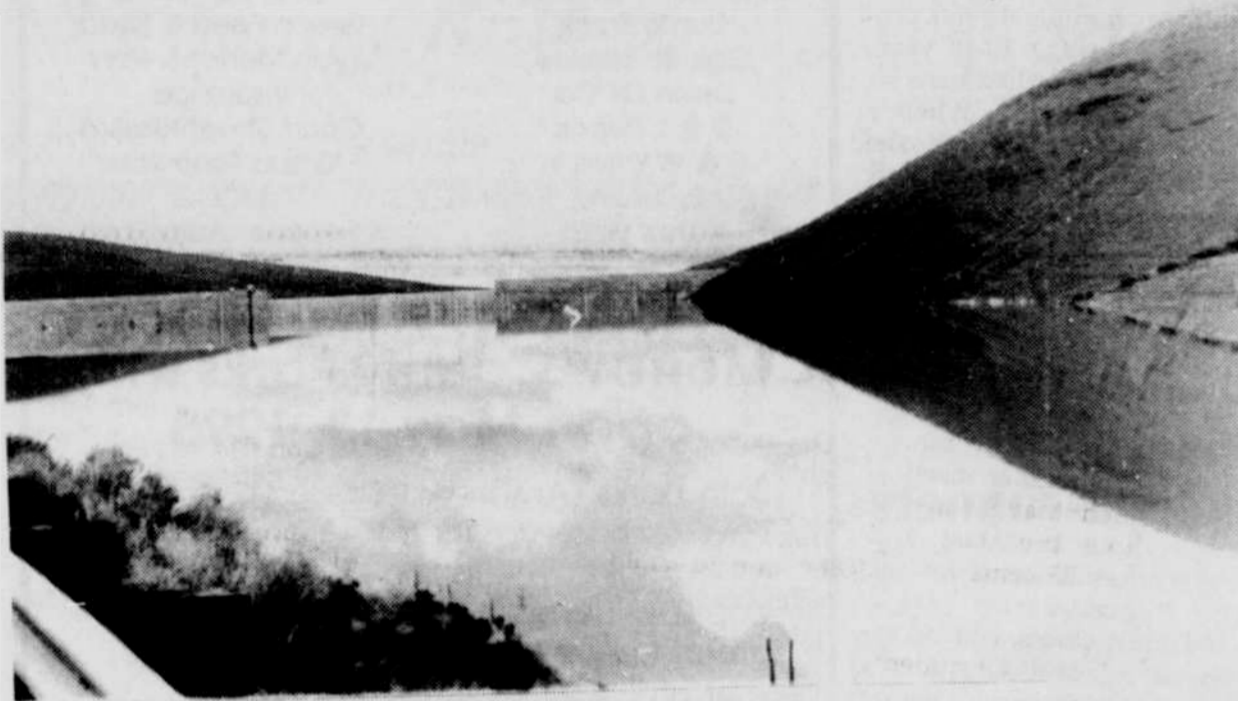


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Rain, runoff raise Willow Creek Lake



Willow Creek Lake getting full

Heavy snow runoff and rainfall that swept through northeastern Oregon late last week have caused increased water flows into Willow Creek Reservoir. Water regulators from the Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, increased water releases from Willow Creek dam Monday to maintain safe flash flood control storage levels.

Water releases of about 180 cubic feet per second (cfs) last Friday caused some flooding of access bridges along Willow Creek. With runoff increasing and more rain forecasted by Tuesday, increased releases are necessary, said a news release from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Many of those bridges may again be inundated, they said.

Inflows to the reservoir reached a high of more than 400 cfs Saturday, May 6, and were nearly that high on Sunday. Those inflows decreased to about 300 cfs Monday, but inflow still exceeds outflow. The Corps planned to hold the release volume at about 300 cfs Monday while monitoring weather patterns very closely to reduce releases as soon as possible. If more rain falls, however, water releases of the current level could continue, said the news release.

Dick Cassidy, Corps hydrologist, said rapid rises in the reservoir level occurs because Willow Creek has a "flashy basin," and heavy rainfall causes inflows to rise extremely quickly. Cassidy said the

area has experienced rainfall of 108 percent above normal in 1995.

"With current inflows behind the dam continuing to be higher than the outflows, we must operate cautiously, so we are conservative in the way we control the water levels," Cassidy said. "We prefer to be very cautious rather than experience potential uncontrollable floods that could happen if we used up all the flow control space. We must keep an authorized level of flood storage space that is needed to protect downstream areas from flash flooding."

Since Tuesday, May 2, the pool behind Willow Creek has

risen more than 6 feet above normal, due to snow runoff and rain in the region. Corps water regulators increased water releases at Willow Creek Dam from 100 cfs on May 2, to 240 cfs May 3 to maintain safe flood control storage levels. Regulators allowed releases to fluctuate between 150 cfs and 180 cfs from May 4-7.

Water outlet was reduced to 280 cfs Tuesday, May 9, in order to flush away as more water comes into Willow Creek.

The Corps has not been forced to release significant amounts of water to control flooding on Willow Creek since March 1993. That year, 250 cfs were released for several days.



Increased releases from Willow Creek Dam raise creek levels

Stan Kemp Conservation Farmer of Year

Stan Kemp, Lexington, has been named Morrow County Conservation Farmer of the Year by USDA Consolidated Farm Service Administration, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Morrow County Wheat League, according to Judy Rea, Morrow County president.

Kemp has farmed 2,100 acres, most of which is leased land. He has a summer fallow minimum tillage rotation of 1,150 acres one year and 950 the next, with 125 acres in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and 25 acres of grass outside of CRP.

He started farming in June 1947, with less than world shaking yields. In July 1947, he cut a seven-bushel per acre crop. His first variety of wheat was Turkey red, chosen for its drought resistance. He later switched to Gaines, but now says "nothing matches Stephens". He now maintains a 40-bushel average, but harvested 60-bushel wheat two years ago.

The biggest changes Kemp has made in his farming practice are the uses of trashy fallow and changing from the moldboard to the chisel plow. Using Round-Up has cut out two tillage operations, and fertilizing has provided more stubble for surface residue as well as producing a larger crop, he says. The soil is a Ritzville silt loam, and "has its own personality," Kemp noted. He called wind his biggest problem and says he "thinks wind erosion year around."

If the problem spots in the fallow need more stubble, he will spread some, and says, "the easiest way to stop a blow is don't let it start. After a few years of farming, you learn special spots, and handle them with care. I've always done my own field work, so I know where the problem spots are in the field." If he has the stubble, he will disc, but keeps as much as possible while still allowing his deep furrow drills with 14-inch spacing to seed



Stan Kemp

through in the fall.

Kemp considers the "clod factor" as important as trashy fallow in good moisture and wind erosion management. "I try to time my plowing to the soil moisture. You want to get some clods, but not too many, or you'll lose moisture. Speed shatters the ground. If you slow down, you'll have more clods left. This is what I call a personal touch."

Kemp will chisel plow in the spring three weeks after applying Round-Up. About 15 years ago, he designed and built a weeder bar attachment to use on a second pass, and also developed a gauge on the plow that can be seen from the tractor. This allows him to raise the equipment to a shallow depth when going through a delicate ashy spot. With the flat fields vulnerable to wind erosion, Kemp does not farm the west slopes; they are left to natural grass or have been put into CRP.

Kemp's clean fields are seeded to Stephens wheat in November, after the rains. He always works from north to south when he seeds, to minimize wind erosion, and manages rye problems by policing road edges each year.

Normal rainfall on the farm is 7-10 inches. Some natural ditches cutting into his fields have

been reshaped and grassed to accommodate the runoff from the hills above his cropland. A large CRP and natural grass canyon accommodate a guzzler, trees and shrubs put in 20 years ago by the state Game Commission and now maintained by Kemp.

The conservation farm selection committee summed up Kemp's devotion to the land as "a lifetime of stewardship" and said his selection was a well-deserved honor, said the news release.

Kemp serves on the Blow Control District and on the Morrow County Grain Growers board, and is a member of the Elks. He formerly served on the Morrow County Rodeo Board and was a 4-H leader. He enjoys golf and travel, and follows the local basketball team in winter months.

He has three adult children, Sherry Kemp, Pendleton, Steven Kemp, Patterson, WA, and Gary Kemp, who lives in Lexington with his wife Marcia and their two daughters.

A farm tour and potluck barbecue will be held on June 16 at 4 p.m. on the Kemp farm. Community members are invited to attend. For additional information, contact the Oregon Wheat Growers League, 276-7330, or Judy Rea, 422-7445.

School district raises lunch prices

The Morrow County School Board, at its regular meeting Monday night May 8 voted to raise school breakfast and lunch prices 25 cents for the 1995-96 fiscal year.

Breakfast prices will be increased to 75 cents for students and \$1 for adults. Lunch will be raised to \$1.25 for elementary school students; \$1.50 for middle and high school students; and \$2.25 for adults.

The increases were recommended to make the food service program self supporting, said district business manager Shirley Landauer.

Landauer said that the increase will bring the food service within a \$25,000 shortfall. Landauer said that the schools are looking at putting special items that the children enjoy, such as cookies or gelatin dessert, back in the menu and that many cooks have gone back to baking their own breads and rolls and are making more homemade items.

In other business, the board:

- accepted resignations from: Ron Forrar, art teacher, effective end of school year; Mark Dowdy, head girls' basketball coach at HHS; Pam Dowdy, head girls' basketball coach, Heppner Middle School; Kay Proctor, south end bus driver, effective May 15; Bill Baker, assistant custodian, Heppner Elementary School; (a petition signed by 66 persons had earlier been turned into the school district asking for Mark

Dowdy's resignation as head girls basketball coach)

- approved leaves of absence from: Sarah Carlson, extension of unpaid child care leave, science teaching position, HMS, through 1995-96 school year; Pam Minster, unpaid leave for education purposes through the 1995-96 school year;

- approved employment of: Michael Yates, probationary contract for 1995-96 to continue to serve as counselor at Sam Boardman and A.C. Houghton elementary schools; Ellen Slover, special education assistant at SBE.

- learned from superintendent Chuck Starr that an elevator at the lone school could be provided for \$50,000 to \$60,000, instead of the \$100,000 originally believed.

- received a list of the extra duty contracts for the 1994-95 school year and learned that recommendations for extra duty will be at the June meeting.

- approved the purchase of a former church school building

for classrooms for Boardman and Irrigon sixth graders. Starr reported that modular classrooms, originally discussed to house the sixth graders, are difficult to come by and expensive. The district's offer of \$75,000 for the 8,000 square foot building was accepted, substantially less than the assessed value of around \$200,000. Starr said the money for the purchase was already appropriated. The sixth graders and their teachers will go to the building for the first half of the day and then will be transported to Columbia Junior High for lunch and then classes such as music, computers and PE in the afternoon, according to Principal Don Holes.

- discussed the proposed sale of the Lexington baseball field, which is owned by the district. The district maintains the field, which is "very seldom used".

- heard reports on state school funding, maintenance and repair and American with Disabilities Act projects.

Controlled hunt deadline nears

The deadline to apply for big game controlled hunts is next Monday, May 15.

To apply, hunters must get to a license vendor connected to a "Point of Sale" machine. The local POS agent in the Heppner area is the Coast to Coast

store.

Store owner Cliff Green urges those hunters who plan on applying to hunts do so early to avoid a big rush next Monday.

"There are a lot of people who don't know about the deadline," Green said.



Mother's Day
A Special Day
For Special People

Happy Mother's Day from all of us
Morrow County Grain Growers
Lexington 989-8221 1-800-452-7396