



Water Rights Committee Report
Karl Davis, Committee Chairman
karld@bigelkmeadows.org

Written and submitted by: Karl Davis

Date: September 18, 2021

Charter: To protect the water rights that are decreed to Big Elk Meadows.

Committee Members: Karl Davis as Chairman, Members as Victoria Darling, Roy McCutchen, Bill Tolle, Paul Flanagan, Alan Hatfield, and Selina Davis

Irrigation season, September update

Operating our Exchanges. Our primary objective is to run water through the Willow Lake spillway for as long as possible. This has shown to improve the water quality in Mirror Lake where water is pumped into the treatment plant. Because of the timely rain we are still running through its spillway and the bulk of the water to be released is complete. The only water remaining will release from Big Elk Meadows and is the water drained from Sunset Lake. It is quickly draining on its own.

Ish Reservoir Releases. I was able to release 8.8-acre feet for Augmentation water and 11 for return flow. So, we will leave 4-acre feet in Ish this year. The remaining water we owe is being released from Sunset Lake to drain it for a gate repair.

2021 Augmentation Exchange

Ish Augmentation	8.823
Ish Return Flow	10.786
BEM Augmentation	8.600

	28.209

New Contracts. Riverglen has provided us with a new 10-year contract which will begin on January 1, 2022. Osborne Caywood also provided a new contract. Their contract has no expiration. It adjusts every 5 years using a price inflation index.

Meetings with Ray Merry, BEMA Member. I've had two meetings with Ray this month. The two topics were about the **anaerobic condition** (Anoxic water) that develops in our lakes in the summer and the **artesian spring** that runs down the common area between Aspen and Cedar. Ray believes the artesian spring will prove be our best water source. It will require a deeper well and casing near the surface, but it is its own source for water while the others rely on lake water to recharge.

BEM and Pinewood Springs Exchanges. During the past two summers, the state has stopped our Ish exchange to keep the Pinewood Springs exchange in operation. Stopping the exchange means moving the release point for augmentation water from the Ish Reservoir to our lakes. In a typical irrigation season, we need to release water from both points. We are compliant with this order from the state but



also resistant to it because it's not well defined when our exchange should be stopped. Our water engineer is working with our water commissioner to establish this. We might want to eventually go to court to get the proper wording in our decree.

Lower Flume Project. Our lower flume and its surrounding dirt walls cannot handle the tremendous amount of water that flows to it during the Spring runoff. The water carries off the dirt meant to hold back the water and water runs around the flume all summer. Operations is getting bids for the project.

Colorado Rural Water Association. We had a meeting in BEM to kick-off the development effort to create a Source Water Protection Plan. Water Rights were well represented in the meeting. The next meeting is on Sept. 27th and 1:30 PM in the office.