

AZ Region 1 Lakes, White Mountains

Subject: Conversation with AZGF, Jan 2023

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I spoke today with Ryan Follmuth, the biologist working in Region 1 lakes. He seemed very well informed and approachable. Here are a few things he said that may be of interest to the club:

Carnero Lake remains a problem mainly due to low water levels. He said the state now owns 75% of the water rights here, but the recent drought conditions don't fill the lake sufficiently. BUT, they are not abandoning Carnero and with the good snow pack they are seeing, may stock the lake this spring. I asked if they could partner with the USFS and possibly dredge out some deeper water. He said that would be difficult...

He said the best growth of the lakes they manage is in Becker, Luna, Big, and Nelson. It sounds like there are a lot of large fish in Luna, and that spring fishing for rainbow and cuts there should be really good. Because they are so productive, only smaller sized fish are being stocked here. Becker probably has tiger trout over 5 pounds, larger than the recent state record. He said anglers are not targeting these fish by working streamers in nearshore waters, but rather fishing small midges in deeper parts of the lake where tigers are less common.

Woods Canyon and Willow Springs are not productive, and rainbows actually lose size once stocked. Tigers eat fish and are probably going to grow large provided smaller fish are available (stocked). They are moving to stock larger fish in these lakes.

The state has been stocking Bonneville cuts from its hatcheries, but that program has ended and they now stock whatever strains are available from out of state hatcheries. Most cuts now being stocked are Rio Grandes.

The AZGF website has a very good description of how they plan to manage the lakes and streams we fish along with baseline info including fish species, stocking rates and timing, insect and vegetation, productivity, and temps and depths. Go to Az Game and Fish Dept, Fishing, Fisheries Lake Management Plans.