

HISTORY OF RIGHT 63-149
South Boise Water Co
by Barry Eschen.

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Since its beginning as the Denver and Idaho Land Co. irrigation ditch, Loggers Creek has provided water for multiple uses—irrigation, water power, log transport, aesthetics and wildlife.

Enlarging and replacing the Denver and Idaho Ditch, the Isaacs ditch was completed in 1864 to provide waterpower for a flourmill located near what is now the southeast corner of Boise Avenue and Protest Rd. The Isaacs brothers sold to William Morris in 1865. In 1878 William Morris died and William Ridenbaugh inherited Morris Mills. William Ridenbaugh added a sawmill, deepened and re-worked the ditch to handle logs and by 1884 was bringing logs down the Boise River into Loggers Creek and down the ditch to the mill. In about 1890 he added a hydro-electric plant to the complex. In 1900 Alexander Rossi bought a 51% interest in the sawmill and converted it from waterpower to steam power, but continued to use the ditch to move logs to the sawmill. The sawmill closed in 1915, when all operations were moved to the Barber Mill. (History, pp. 48-51) The flourmill burned, probably in 1905.

Ridenbaugh named his power company Electric Power Company, Ltd. The company continued to provide hydropower from the site until it was combined into Oregon Light and Power in 1901. Oregon Light and Power was one of the companies united in 1916 to form Idaho Power. In 1916 Idaho Power completed a power-transmission link from the Twin Falls area to Boise via Grandview and Swan Falls. Idaho Power then closed small plants in the Boise area, such as the Electric Power Co. plant. (Legacy, pp. 25, 26, 45) The major flow entering the ditch was then returned to the Boise River (History p. 51), forming Lower Loggers Creek beginning at what is now called Larkey Dam, but a portion of the water continued to flow to the mill site in what was called the Ridenbaugh-Rossi Ditch.

William Ridenbaugh invested in multiple enterprises and his name appeared in many places, potentially causing confusion. The Isaacs ditch became the Ridenbaugh ditch then the Ridenbaugh-Rossi ditch. In common use it has been called Loggers Creek but now this name is used for the upper portion—Upper Loggers Creek-- (above Larkey Dam) and the return to the Boise River—Lower Loggers Creek. The portion of the original Loggers Creek that goes west from the current Larkey Dam is called the Rossi Mill Ditch, the Mill Ditch or sometimes the Ridenbaugh-Rossi Mill Ditch. This is not to be confused with the Ridenbaugh Canal, which diverts water from the Boise River further upstream and proceeds along the bench along Federal Way. In 1887 The Capitol Electric Light, Motor and Gas Co. built another hydro plant slightly to the west of the Electric Power Co. site near what is now the Park View Apartments. It used water from the Ridenbaugh canal and had a reservoir on the bench. (Legacy, p. 16) This plant closed in 1912 and the water stayed in the Ridenbaugh Canal, which was extended to the west, and the reservoir was developed as farmland. (History, p.104)

The court in Farmers' Co-operative Ditch Co. vs. Riverside Irrigation Dist., Ltd. (the Stewart Decree) recognized right No. 17 for 13290 inches for manufacturing and general power purposes (now 63-149 for 265.8 cfs for power and manufacturing). There has been an accomplished transfer of use from power and manufacturing to aesthetic and wildlife that began very early in ditch's history.

The earliest aesthetic use of Loggers Creek is undocumented. James Monroe Johnson built a house about 1908 on land that is now part of The Island in River Run, a current shareholder. (Barbara Little) In 1921 the Mode family built the Mode Country Club at the edge of Loggers Creek for use by their store employees and others. In 1929 they added a golf course along the creek, probably on land that is now part of The Springs subdivision, which is a stockholder in South Boise Water. (Arrowrock Historical Group) The original country club building burned in 1940. Fritz and Pat Bock purchased the site and built a home on it, which also burned. They re-built and later sold to Bob and Alice Tullis, who still live on the site and are shareholders of South Boise Water. Other early residents along Loggers Creek included Fred Wigle (prior to 1934), the Rose family, Edna and George Myers and the Pecoras. Many homes were added along Loggers Creek in the period beginning in 1960. Marty and Wanda Nelson built in 1962; Irene Acheson, in about 1964; and Ken Nelson in 1967. Loggers Creek is now lined with homes and businesses that enjoy the location next to clean running water. Fish and Game has stocked Brown trout and students from BSU monitor the fish in certain reaches on a yearly basis.

In 1917 five farmers established The South Boise Water Company to manage an irrigation system that obtained water from the Ridenbaugh-Rossi Mill Ditch. Over the next several years more farmers and residential lot owners using the Mill Ditch for water joined the system and transferred the title to their laterals to the company. The Denver and Idaho Land Co. maintained a separate right but its water was diverted through the same system to the Land Company's headgate near Protest Ave. Although the South Boise Water Company owned the water rights and the laterals, it had to pay a fee to use the Mill ditch. In 1951 the Company purchased from Martha Reece the Ridenbaugh-Rossi Mill ditch and the wing dam in the Boise River.

The original headworks for Loggers Creek were modified in the early 1880's to include a log pond. These were periodically modified and repaired, including a major refurbishing of the wing dam by John Priest in the 1940's. In 1974 to prevent flooding, three whistle tubes were placed in the riverbank at the head of Loggers Creek and a levee built over them. South Boise Water Co. paid \$525 toward this effort. The whistle tubes were corrugated steel pipes 36 inches in diameter and 20 feet long. Water flow was regulated by raising and lowering plywood sheets over the upstream openings of the pipes.

In 1978 River Run Development Company and South Boise Water Company improved the headworks by replacing the whistle tubes with a concrete bank structure with three wheel gates (Chronic dam). In 1989 River Run Development Co., South Boise Water Co and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game extended the head of Loggers Creek

upstream 5/8 mi. and built a new bank weir, Chatburn Weir, to control water flow into Loggers Creek. Further downstream they added the Berm Gate where Loggers Creek passes through a levee. This serves as a control during flooding when water comes over the riverbank in the vicinity of the Chatburn Weir. The Development Co., the Water Co. and the Department executed the Loggers Creek Agreement (Three-Party Agreement), which provided for financing, regulation, and water supply of the project. This formally recognized the wildlife use of Loggers Creek.

The use of water for right 63-149 has been continuous since 1865. It initially provided power for a flour mill. Then came a sawmill and log transport. Then, electric power generation. The sawmill converted to steam and then closed and the flourmill burned in about 1905. However, power generation continued until 1916. By 1921 documented aesthetic use occurred with the Mode Country Club, and formal recognition of wildlife use occurred in 1989. Home construction along Loggers Creek started by about 1908 and accelerated in the 1960's until the present when only a couple of potential sites are left.

Sources

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