

Lima Dam is a privately owned irrigation dam on the Red Rock River in the Centennial Valley in southern Beaverhead County. It is owned by the Red Rock River Water and/or Sewer District and operated by the Water Users Irrigation Company.

Lima Dam provides irrigation water to thirty-one shareholding landowners of 16,220 acres. The reservoir has a capacity of 84,000 acre feet. A major rehabilitation of the spillway and outlet works was begun in 1992 and completed in 1994 with most of the funds coming from a DNRC loan.

Southern Beaverhead County has been severely affected by drought for at least the last ^{seven} five years. It has been so dry that a new classification of "exceptional" drought was created to describe the conditions in this area. Run off and stream flows were so low in the Lima Dam's 500 square mile drainage area the water users voted last spring not to release any stored water for irrigation for the 2004 irrigation season. Instead, it was felt we needed to insure a stream flow for stock water in the late summer and early fall. The amount of water used between Lima and Clark Canyon Dam directly affects the inflows to Clark Canyon Dam. In 2004 the East Bench Canal was not even turned on because of low storage in Clark Canyon Dam and low inflows.

Without recharging our streams and reservoirs, we all suffer. Livestock, crops, wildlife, fish and downtown businesses have all been severely affected. Without water, agriculture, recreation and municipalities don't survive.

Last year many ranchers sold part of their cattle herds because of the shortage of grass and available drinking water. Some ranchers moved their cattle to other areas and rented pasture. With no stored water from Lima Dam hay crops were very short or none at all, causing most ranchers to buy hay. Because of drought, elk were in the hay fields in the late summer searching for water and green feed. The Red Rock River was closed to fishing from Lima Dam to Clark Canyon Dam to prevent further stress on the fish.

On December 1, 2004 at the annual meeting of the water users of Lima Dam, the stockholders voted to support a cloud seeding bill. The membership felt it is time that we follow the lead of our neighbors in Idaho to do something to improve the drought situation.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, I am here today to convey the support of the membership of Lima Dam for ^{HOUSE} Bill # 399.

Thank you very much.

Allan C. Martiniell, Chairman
Red Rock River Water / Sewer District, Beaverhead Co