

11/4/2015

Members of Mount Massive Lakes,

Winter is fast approaching and staff has been busy winterizing our water system, taking care of our 2018 Triploid Rainbow, 2016 Tiger Trout, 2016 Cutthroat Trout, and 2016 Brown Trout eggs, and also tidying up Mount Massive Lakes property. This is a critical part of the year as we want to make sure we have everything secure and ready for the long, cold winter months so we can avoid most, if not all ice problems that may occur until ice off next spring.

As the weather begins to cool down and water temperatures rapidly decrease, we do our last pond fish sampling of the year at the end of October. Over the winter months, the water temperatures are 34 F and fish just eat to maintain their size. We currently feed our rearing ponds every other day and the ponds will begin to freeze over around the Thanksgiving holiday which is when we will stop feeding until ice off next spring.

Our 2016 Triploid Rainbow catchables are currently in Pond 2, New Pond, and Pasture Pond. The fish in Pond 2 are the biggest at 17" long and we have 2,429. In Pasture Pond, we have 3,332 rainbows that are 16" long. Our biggest pond, New Pond, has 9,637 rainbows that are currently 15" long. The size differences are related to pond water temperatures. We rotate our fish according to pond temperatures to maximize fish growth in our short growing season here at MML. We will stock from Pond 2 first and from Pasture Pond second. This will allow us to use two to three good growing months to help the New Pond fish catch up in size. We have a total of 15,398 Rainbow catchables to stock in 2016. In 2010 and 2011 we stocked catchable rainbows that were 30-31 ounces, exceeding our goal of Rainbow Catchable size, 28 ounces. Those fish were 15" long going into their last winter before being stocked the following summer. Comparing our current Triploid Rainbows size to those years, we are averaging slightly larger fish to stock next summer. Every winter, we factor in fish loss to each year class of fish. Coyotes, eagles, and other small mammal predators remove fish from each rearing pond year round, but more heavily during the winter months when other food sources are not available. We account for a 10% unaccounted mortality (fish we don't see removed by predators) each winter. When we include that into our total rainbow catchables to be stocked next summer, we are now at 13,858. This number is below our stocking goal of around 17,000 catchable rainbows. We currently have 5,080 Cutbows which are extra fish we have been raising since 2013.

Our Cutbows are in two ponds this winter. We have 2,597 that are 14" long in Hatchery Pond. We will stock these fish next summer to put our total stocking of catchables closer to our goal of 17,000. We will stock these fish in August, which will allow us three good growing months to catch these fish up with the triploid rainbows stocked earlier in the season. We have 2,483 Cutbows in Rainbow Pond which are 14.5" in length. We will hold these fish for another year to grow them larger and use them to restart our super catchable program in 2017.

Our 2017 Kamloops Rainbows are in Pond 1 and Jones Pond for the winter. We have 21,860 fish and both ponds are the same size, 10" in length. In 2010 and 2011 we stocked catchable rainbows that were 30-31 ounces, exceeding our goal of Rainbow Catchable size, 28 ounces. Those fish were 10.5" long

going into their first winter in rearing ponds. Compared to those years, we are on pace to having similar sized fish. We graded these fish in August to keep the bigger fish, keep uniform size, and inventory how many we keep. At that time, we put our biggest fish, 9", into Jones Pond because of lower water temperature. We put the smaller fish, 8", into Pond 1 to utilize the warmer water temperature to grow these fish to the same size as the Jones Pond fish. Throughout the rest of August and the whole months of September and October, the Pond 1 fish caught up in size with the Jones Pond fish, making our 2017 Rainbow Catchable year class all the same size.

We are hoping for a snowy winter and heavy snowpack to provide us with adequate water flows and water temperatures next summer. Just a reminder that the next BOD meeting is January 23rd, 2015 at 9:30AM, Shaun Mulligan residence, 5925 Zinna Court, Arvada. Please come and share your ideas.