

## **LAKE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**Water:** Blue Lake (Lime Belt Region)

**Management Type:** Trout Only

**Location:** Six miles NW of Riverside, N of Omak, Section 6, T35N, R26E

**Size:** 16 acres, 25 feet maximum depth; 240 acre-feet

**Water Source:** Ground water (underground springs), surface water (snow melt)

**Outflow:** None

**Management History:** Blue Lake is a small, but important fishery for Okanogan County. The lake is a year round fishery with statewide gear rules and bag limits for trout. Eastern brook trout, as well as rainbow and cutthroat have been planted over the years. During the winter, people can access the lake via snowmobile to fish through the ice, and there is a WDFW access site located at the lower end with an area for launching car top boats and float tubes.

In year 2000, tiger trout (brook x brown) were planted in an effort to not only provide another trout species for the angler, but hopefully to reduce some of the spiny ray population that had been reported caught. The tiger trout did well, but were less than successful in cropping off the invasive non-trout species.

Within the last few years, reports have been steadily increasing of largemouth bass being caught in lieu of brook trout. Catch rates for the trout have been poor as the incidence of other non-trout species has increased and net surveys in spring 2007 revealed 50% of the catch made up of brown bullheads and largemouth bass. Condition of the brook trout continues to decline in Blue Lake as well due to increasing competition with the spiny rays present.

### **Current Management Objectives:**

Management should focus on a single species trout fishery. A switchover to an opening day lake with selective gear rules and a two fish limit may help to sustain the population longer into the season. Smaller fish plants of native cutthroat could be used to provide a quality selective fishery that could sustain some harvest activity. The addition of a few triploid eastern brook or tiger trout could help to keep any remnant populations of either bullheads or bass in check.

**Fishery Objectives:**

<u>Species</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Category</u>	<u>Fish/hour</u>	<u>Fish/angler</u>	<u>Ave size</u>
Cutthroat	Quality	Selective	2-3	5-6	80% 11"-13" 20% 13"-15"

**Angler use objective (# angler days): 500**

**Stocking Objectives:**

<u>Lake</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>Total Fish</u>	<u>Fish/Acre</u>	<u>Fish/pound</u>	<u>Planting Month</u>
Blue	Cutthroat	3,000	188	100	Sept/Oct

**Management Strategy:**

- Check yearling (1+) survival in spring; should be about 5-6 inches, 2+ fish should be 11"-12", adjust stocking rate and fish size as necessary
- Monitor angling activity and catch rates periodically throughout season
- Consider use of sterile eastern brook or tiger trout for control of spiny rays
- Closely monitor any invasive species and react immediately to control population by all means before treating with rotenone (angling, electroshocking, netting, and regulation changes).