

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

# Memorandum

TO : Files

DATE: April 10, 1981

FROM : R.P. Rick Johnston

SUBJECT: Over flight of Tustumena Lake, Tustumena Glacier Flats, Emma Lake area, and Killey River plus general comments.

On April 03, 1981 I flew by private aircraft in the early evening around the southern shoreline of Tustumena Lake, across Tustumena Glacier Flat and then over the benchlands to the Kiley River.

Tustumena Lake was quite low and the beach could be hiked on either the south or north shore. Several creeks including Nikoli Creek would pose obstacles to travel right at the beach but could be crossed within 1/2 mile up stream from the lake. Clear Creek and Cresant Creeks spilling into Devil's Bay were low and could be easily crossed at the beach.

When crossing over Tustumena River no water flow what so ever was observed. What is a swift braided river much of the summer and fall apparently may dry up altogether in late winter and spring. Some standing water was observed in the dry river channels, however a continous flow was not present.

Do to a mild winter no significant snow cover was present at low elevations most of the 1980-81 winter season and during this flight all elevations below about 800 msl were snowfree.

Tustumena Lake froze over completely only for a very short time in January and remained open most of the winter. At the time of this flight only a relatively narrow (1/2-1 mile) band of ice remained at the lower end of Tustumena Lake, therefore preventing boat travel to open water areas of the lake.

During the previous winter (1979-80) Tustumena Lake froze over for a much longer period of time though it does melt considerably before other lowland lakes. Snow machines, cross-country skiers, and ski planes gain access to the upper end of Tustumena Lake via frozen lake.

During the overflight of Tustumena Glacier Flat approximately 18 moose were observed in one ice free marshy area on the north east corner of the glacial flat

Indian Creek was low and appeared crossable.



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Emma Lake was frozen and snow depth increased drastically with elevation. Snow depth on the benchlands obscured Timberline Lake shoreline.

The Killey River was open below Harvey Lake and no observation was made above that point. The Killey River was low and had several ice bridges and ice jams intermittently between open water areas. Snow cover was minimal.