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SPORTS

RECREATION NOTES

OUTDOORS

NORTH SLOPE CLOSURE: North and South Catamount reservoirs on the city's Pikes Peak watershed will be closed to public access most of the summer to accommodate construction work on the dams.

Crystal Creek Reservoir, visible along the Pikes Peak Highway, will not be affected.

The work on the dam spillways is necessary to bring them up to standards set by the state engineer's office. A mid-September completion date has been projected, according to Bill Stookey, superintendent of natural resources for the city parks and recreation department.

"We gave it a lot of thought, and in the interest of public safety, we decided to prohibit access from the Pikes Peak Highway," Stookey said. "There's going to be a lot of construction traffic on the reservoir roadways - dump trucks, cement mixers, that kind of thing - and they could be moving against the established one-way traffic routes."

Hikers conceivably still could walk up from Green Mountain Falls.

Crystal Reservoir, meanwhile, will open April 29, weather permitting. Hours of operation will be similar to last year: April 29-June 2, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with

3/16/95 COLSPGT C6

the exception of May 27-29, when the hours will be 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.; June 2-Sept. 4, 7 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., except July 4, when the area will be closed; Sept. 5-Oct. 31, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Additions to the reservoir include new restrooms, a fish-cleaning station, handicapped-accessible fishing pier and newly hard-packed trails.

ON THIN ICE: Spring has arrived a little early this year on the state's frozen lakes and reservoirs, and with it, the need for ice fishermen to be extra careful. The dangers may be compounded in March, traditionally the wettest month of the year.

"Snow-covered ice presents unseen dangers to ice fishermen," said Dave Spencer, manager of Elevenmile St. "Never consider the ice safe, particularly with the ice thawing so early."

Accordingly, the Colorado Division of Parks and Outdoors Recreation offers suggestions for die-hard ice fishermen:

On unfamiliar lakes, check with someone reliable who knows where there may be thin ice, springs and stream inlets.

When going out on the ice you are encouraged to travel in pairs, let someone know where you're going, wear a life jacket, don't walk close together and be prepared to assist in an ice rescue. Ideally, you should carry a 50-foot rope with a flotation device attached to one end for a rescue attempt.

When judging ice conditions, watch for wet or snow-covered areas. Occasionally drill holes as you proceed across the ice to check its condition.

"Thick ice does not necessarily mean good ice," Spencer said. "You might have six inches of ice, but if it's slushy, you could fall through."

3/16/95 COLSPGT C6

If your partner falls through, immediately notify someone to go for help. As a rescuer, never enter the water to save someone; you will put yourself in danger as well. The person in the water needs to remain calm. Do not expend energy struggling to get out of the water; that will only decrease the time your body can sustain itself in cold water.

"When we arrive at the scene where someone has fallen through the ice, it's not uncommon to have to pull two people out of the water instead of one," Spencer said. "Solo rescue attempts are very dangerous. You should always seek help first."

The strength and direction of the wind are other factors to consider. With open water present, the wind can push on the ice, causing it to break out onto the open water.

RIM RESCHEDULED: Rim Chung, a fly tier who developed the RS II pattern, will be at the Angler's Covey, 917 W. Colorado Ave., on Saturday to demonstrate tying techniques and discuss fishing primarily on the South Platte River. He will be at the shop 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The session will be free. He had been scheduled to appear last month.

MOUNT ELBRUS: Tuesday's meeting of the Pikes Peak group of the Colorado Mountain Club will feature a slide show by Tom and Linda Jagger on climbing Mount Elbrus last summer. The peak, in the Caucasus Mountains east of the Black Sea, at 18,451 feet is considered the highest point in Europe.

The session will begin at 7:30 p.m. in All Souls Unitarian Church, 730 N. Tejon St.

- Karl Licis/Gazette Telegraph

SKIING

SEE FOR YOURSELF: Skiers with access to the Internet can call up a report on Copper Mountain's weather.

3/16/95 COLSPGT C6

Copper plugged in its Weather Cam on March 6. It's the first of its kind at ski areas, and provides a peek of the powder and details current ski and weather conditions.

Resort Sports Network installed the cam on the top of the Snowbridge Square building. Internet surfers will get glimpses of the resort's center village, some popular intermediate ski trails and the skating pond.

"We think the Copper Mountain Weather Cam will influence people making last-minute ski and vacation decisions to come to Copper Mountain."

The URL for the site is: <http://www.resortsportsnet.com/biz/rsn>.

For information, call (207) 772-5000.

SPRING SNOW: The traditional spring dumps have hit Colorado's mountains. Copper has received a foot of snow in the past three days and has a base of more than 56 inches. Ski Cooper, a short drive south, received 8 inches Monday and reports a base of 54.

Copper Mountain and Ski Cooper will host Tour de SKI competitions this weekend. The laid-back competitions give everyone a chance to be a Tommy Moe or Picabo Street for a few minutes. The races will be held at Cooper on Saturday. Call 719-486-3684. Skiers at Copper can race Sunday. Call 800 458-8386.

IT'S GETTING DEEP: Monarch (90 inches) leads the depth race among the areas close to Colorado Springs.

Although the snowpack has begun to settle with more sunlight and warmer temperatures, skiers should have adequate snow past April at many areas.

Arapahoe Basin, with its summit elevation of 13,050 feet, is the highest ski area in the United States. An average of 13 feet of snow falls there in March and April. Last year, the slopes were skiable until mid-June.

3/16/95 COLSPGT C6

AT THE RACES: Eric Anderson and Jake Sherer of Colorado Springs won gold medals at the Junior NASTAR Open last week at Monarch. Competing in the 10-to-12-year-old class, Anderson ripped the gates in 26.63 seconds. Sherer won the boys 16-20 group with a 26.91.

Silver medalists included John Baycura, Jeremy Meyers and Amanda Hennion. Mathew Anderson won a bronze medal. All are from Colorado Springs.

JOHNNY COMES SKIING HOME: The 10th Mountain Division and 99th Infantry will return to Ski Cooper on March 25 to celebrate 53 years of skiing there.

The veterans will race and ski most of the day. Events will include a parachute jump and other demonstrations. Some of the vets will dress in their white camouflage.

The 10th Mountain Division trained on skis at Ski Cooper for battle in World War II.

SWEET DEALS: Beginning in April, lift tickets at Loveland will drop to \$22 for adults, \$10 for kids. From April 10-16, SilverCreek offers lodging, adult lessons and equipment rental all at two-for-one prices.

At Ski Sunlight near Glenwood Springs, lift tickets are \$10 for everyone from April 3-9.

At Steamboat from April 3-16, four nights lodging and a three-day lift ticket can be had for \$198.

- Tim Bergsten /Gazette Telegraph

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3/16/95 COLSPGT C6
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