

Speaking

as a

LEANNE
RIVERBATS

river rat..

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THE RECREATIONAL ASPECT:

I came from the Okanagan to Fort St. John in 1965 as a School Administrator. In 1966 I became a riverboater and made my first trip on the Upper Peace River from above Hudson's Hope to Finlay Forks. The scenery was most impressive, and we thoroughly enjoyed our two week family holiday. We met very few people on that trip, for the river itself presented a considerable challenge.

My preference still runs to boating on a river than on a lake, but I must admit Willston Lake has made available the experience I enjoyed in 1966 to thousands more people every year. I have met many of them on the Lake. ~~THE~~ SCENERY IS STILL THERE, AND STILL VERY BEAUTIFUL. The bottom part is flooded, but there is now access for several miles up tributary streams such as the Carbon, Clearwater, Nabesche, Wicked, Ospika and many others. The scenery and the fishing are both great. Yes, we lost an interesting river bed but we gained easier access for many more people. Certainly there was no Yacht Club until the Lake was formed. So, I find it most difficult to accept the view that recreational opportunity has been destroyed.

The same might be said for the recently completed Site One, or Peace Canyon Project. Many people are eagerly anticipating a trip into this famous canyon; a trip which was previously denied to them. Recognizing the recreational and tourist potential of this development, we were able to secure a definite commitment that BC Hydro will fund a boat launch, campsite facilities, and a fish hatchery program. Yes, we did lose some precious dinosaur tracks and some fantastic river bed — and I do not make light of that. Much has been done to preserve historical artifacts and I will do whatever I can to help build a suitable display facility in its proper place in our area.

I am also quite familiar with the area which would be flooded if Site C is built. Again we would lose a scenic river bed, and in this case some valuable farmland as well. However, only the bottom portion of this valley will be flooded, so much of the scenery will remain. Again more area will become accessible to recreational enthusiasts — the lake would create numerous sheltered bays and provide protected arms up the tributaries such as the Moberly, Halfway, Farrell Creek, etc.

By insisting on proper clearing, by ensuring ourselves that recreational access is provided to the Site C Lake, by developing a proper fish enhancement program, and by establishing a wildlife preserve along the south bank, we could be left with a good recreational area for ourselves as well as an attraction for the growing tourist industry. With proper

development plans we can end up with improvements which outweigh the losses in recreational terms. For we would have a clear water lake around 50 miles long and only twice as wide as the present river.

In my mind I can visualize hundreds of boaters from the Peace River Country enjoying the Site C Lake. Anything from canoes to small motor boats to large boats would find the lake

safe. I can also visualize some tourist facilities developed along this lake. I think we can have areas preserved for public use as well as locations designated for commercial enterprises. Looking to the future, I see a Site C Lake as providing a far greater recreational and economic benefits than the present river and agricultural uses could provide.