

# A History Of Evergreen Lake

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In 1914 Charles Vail, who worked with the municipal water staff to plan a dam and lake for recreation—fishing, boating, ice skating and golf. The intent was to make Bear Creek Canyon "one of the outstanding tourist resorts in the Front Range" within a mile of the Troutdale Hotel."

**Evergreen Lake** covers some of the land homesteaded by Julius and Mary Ann Dedisse who migrated from Nancy, France in the early 1860s. The lush meadow of wild flowers and native grasses produced 150 tons of hay each season. Evergreeners competed with teams from Golden, Idaho Springs and the Troutdale staff on a baseball field in the meadow. Denver acquired most of the 420-acre Jerome (son of Julius) Dedisse Ranch by condemnation in 1919. After the dam was constructed to form the lake in 1928, Sidles deeded the golf course to Denver with the contingency that it always remains a golf course. The Dedisse family retained a two-acre site that became Lakepoint Center. Electricity from the dam (and later water treatment for residential taps) was managed by Colorado Central Power until 1962 when Public Service Company acquired the facilities. A long and complex series of negotiations ended with acquisition of water treatment facilities by Evergreen Metropolitan District. The dam was strengthened in 1980. From 1986 to 1990, 640,000 cubic feet of sediment was dredged from the lake to provide 880-acre feet of water storage. Denver leased the property to Evergreen Metro District who leased it to Evergreen Parks and Recreation in 1982. Jefferson County Open Space funded nearly half of the \$1 million planning and construction costs for the new Lakehouse in 1992 for EPRD to own and manage on land leased from Denver. EPRD has developed a wonderful trail around the lake. Today's state/county plan for Hwy 73/74 improvements (at the light) includes extending the trail under the intersection bridge for pedestrians to enter "Main Street."

Evergreen Lake is the "Crown Jewel" of Denver's Mountain Park system and the most appreciated land use by locals. As drivers descend Evergreen Parkway toward Main Street, the lake sublimely introduces the "Heart of Evergreen." The original sod-roofed log Lakehouse was constructed in 1932-33 by the Civil Conservation Corps. The first Evergreen Ice Carnival was organized in 1939.



*Ice Carnival at Evergreen, circa 1939*