

ANNOUNCE COMPLETION OF DAM AT TOMAHAWK LAKE MEMORIAL PARK

Sawyer Memorial Park for Benefit of Entire Public

The huge concrete and earthen dam which will impound the ultimate 126,000,000 gallons of water to form Tomahawk lake has been completed, it was announced Friday by R. L. Ewing, Deadwood, construction engineer.

The lake is the gift to the Black Hills of the late John Sawyer and his widow, Mrs. Nellie P. Sawyer, pioneers of this region. Mrs. Sawyer donated the land for the lake and surrounding public park, a total of 640 acres. Over 500 acres are included in the park project, the remainder having been leased to the Tomahawk Lake Country club for a golf course.

The lake, which will cover 40 acres when filled, and the park are to be a memorial to the late John Sawyer, a pioneer in timber conservation activities in the Black Hills. In addition to donating the land, the funds for material for the huge dam were donated from the Sawyer estate. Relief labor was employed for construction of the dam, which has a 12-inch concrete core down to bedrock along its entire length.

The last grading on the dam was completed about ten days ago, and a crew of men is at work at present on a supplementary project clearing timber from the site of the lake bed and otherwise improving the grounds.

Administration of the park is entirely in the hands of a board of trustees consisting of B. C. Yates, Guy N. Bjorge and R. E. Driscoll, of Lead, and Charles Hayes and Ray Ewing, of Deadwood.

A stipulation accompanying the gift is that the memorial park is not to be run for profit, and that all facilities and recreations are to be open and free to the public. As an adjacent project, the Tomahawk Lake Country club has been organized and because of the revenue needed for the construction and maintenance of a golf course, membership fees and annual dues will be required of those who play golf. The club has completed the seeding of its fairways, Mr. Ewing said Friday, and the grass greens will be prepared, completing the course next season. Everything in connection with the Sawyer Memorial park and Tomahawk lake, including swimming and boating in the summer, and skating, tobogganing and skiing during the winter, will be open to the public and free of charge.

Ski Slide Ready Soon

A group of interested individuals have been at work on a ski slide which will be finished next Sunday, Mr. Ewing said. The group has also completed the flagging of several cross-country ski runs in the neighborhood of

the lake, generally following along the golf course. Plans are made to clear out several of the larger beaver dams in the upper, or western end of the project along Bear Butte creek and these ponds will be available for skating during the present winter. The new ski slide can be seen on the west side of Highway 85E. The entire park project lies directly on 85E, and is only about six miles from either Lead or Deadwood.

Water has been turned into the dam through a diversion tunnel from Bear Butte creek. Mr. Ewing states that with normal snowfall this winter, there should be a fair sized body of water in the lake bed by next spring. It is estimated, however that two and possibly three years will be required to fill the dam to capacity, largely because of the tremendous saturation of ground in the lakebed that will be necessary before the lake will fill to the spillways.

The project was started on February 1, 1934. Construction work on the large dam was under way continuously since then, until about ten days ago when the last shovelful of earth was placed on the large dam. The lake, when filled, will have a wooded shore line of great scenic beauty, where cabin sites will be available.

Mr. Sawyer was probably the first man to trim and clear young growth in the forest lands along Elk creek. He came here in 1884 and was employed by the Homestake Mining company in the timber department located in the Elk Creek district, about 12 miles south of Lead. He cleared much of the land where the lake will be in order to eliminate the fire hazard, before the forest service was established.

At that time, the Black Hills and Ft. Pierre railroad ran along the valley. Trains burned coal, Mrs. Sawyer stated, so that the fire menace was great and about the time that Mr. Sawyer located on Elk creek a forest fire destroyed quantities of timber near Brownsville and Woodville. In 1890, Mr. Sawyer was commended publicly for his forest conservation by N. E. Hamilton, supervisor of the Black Hills national forest.

Ancestors Pioneers

Mrs. Sawyer came to the Black Hills from Iowa as a bride and has lived

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