

Description of the Roney Land & Cattle Company, Inc., Ranch Water Rights from the Susan River

The Roney Land & Cattle Company, Inc., Ranch in Lassen County (Roney Ranch) has 7 water rights from the upper Susan River:

- Caribou Reservoir (Diversion 1) storage, 606 acre-feet per year
- Caribou Reservoir (Diversion 1) release, up to 606 acre-feet per year
- Susan River natural flow of 9.25 cubic feet per second, through one or more of Diversion Numbers 2, 3, 4, and 5
- Four stockponds

All of the water rights except the stockponds are adjudicated, as described in Lassen County Superior Court Decree Number 4573, issued in 1940 (decree). Diversions 1 through 5 are described in the decree, as well as mapped on sheets from the engineering study completed prior to the decree.

Summary of the Basis of Water Rights

Application Number	Name	Riparian Water Right	Pre-1914 Water Right	Adjudicated Water Right (Susan R. Decree)
A001033	Caribou Reservoir Storage		Pre-1914	Adjudicated
C001241	small stockpond	Riparian		
C001242	small stockpond	Riparian		
C001243	small stockpond	Riparian		
C001244	small stockpond	Riparian		
S010375	Caribou Reservoir Applied		Pre-1914	Adjudicated
S018685	Caribou Res. Div. 1 (Release)		Pre-1914	Adjudicated
S018688	Susan River Diversion 2	Riparian	Pre-1914	Adjudicated
S018679	Susan River Diversion 3	Riparian	Pre-1914	Adjudicated
S018682	Susan River Diversion 4	Riparian	Pre-1914	Adjudicated
S018676	Susan River Diversion 5	Riparian	Pre-1914	Adjudicated

Summary of the Water Right Amounts of Storage and Flow

Application Number	Name	Rate	Cubic Feet per Second (CFS)	Rate	Acre-Feet per Year (AF / Yr)
A001033	Caribou Reservoir Storage			606.0	AF / Yr
C001241	small stockpond			0.2	AF / Yr
C001242	small stockpond			0.2	AF / Yr

C001243	small stockpond			0.2	AF / Yr
C001244	small stockpond			0.2	AF / Yr
S010375	Caribou Reservoir Applied				
S018685	Caribou Res. Div. 1 (Release)				
S018688	Susan River Diversion 2	up to 9.25 plus stored water	CFS	Up to 4,400 plus stored water	AF / Yr
S018679	Susan River Diversion 3				
S018682	Susan River Diversion 4				
S018676	Susan River Diversion 5				

The Roney Ranch is about 13 miles north of Westwood, California, in Lassen County, at the upstream, western end of the Susan River. Most of the ranch is irrigated pasture, part is forested. The ranch is just over 1,000 acres total and overlies parts of Sections 2, 3, 10, and 11, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian

The Roney Ranch has been irrigated since 1848, and irrigation has been expanded and developed over time. The place of use is as described in the decree, Schedule 1, for J. A. Bennett:

- 30.7 acres in Lot 1 of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 7.9 acres in Lot 2 of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 38.4 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 2.5 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 37.5 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 0.7 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 11.0 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 26.6 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 37.4 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian

- 36.5 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Northeast Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 2.5 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 6.6 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Southeast Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 20.8 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 10, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 2.5 acres in Lot 3 of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 5.0 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 37.3 acres in Lot 4 of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 38.9 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 32.4 acres in the Northeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 9.1 acres in the Southeast Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 40.0 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Southwest Quarter of Section 2, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 29.5 acres in the Northwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 11, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian
- 7.5 acres in the Southwest Quarter of the Northwest Quarter of Section 11, Township 30 North, Range 9 East, Mount Diablo Base & Meridian

Beneficial Uses

Application Number	Name	Land Irrigated (acres)	Number of Cattle	Domestic	Fire Protection
A001033	Caribou Reservoir Storage				Fire Prot.
C001241	small stockpond		200-500		
C001242	small stockpond		200-500		
C001243	small stockpond		200-500		
C001244	small stockpond		200-500		
S010375	Caribou Reservoir Applied	741.3	200-500	6	Fire Prot.
S018685	Caribou Res. Div. 1 (Release)	(decreed)	200-500	6	
S018688	Susan River Diversion 2	784	200-500	6	
S018679	Susan River Diversion 3	(total)	200-500	6	

S018682	Susan River Diversion 4		200-500	6
S018676	Susan River Diversion 5		200-500	6

The ranch is inaccessible in late Fall and Winter, from November or December through February to mid-March, because of rainfall, snow and flooding from high flows. Irrigation begins when flows are low enough for the pasture to drain. Flows are variable due to uptake by forest trees upstream (diurnal flow).

Diversion 1 is Caribou Reservoir, which is about 5.5 miles west of the Roney Ranch. 606 acre-feet per year may be stored. This diversion has two parts: the storage in the reservoir, and the water released into the Susan River for diversion and use on the ranch. However, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) owns the land at the reservoir, and so far USFS has not allowed any measurement devices to be installed. The Roneys are working with USFS to get permission to install measurement devices but approval is not guaranteed and could take some years. Until then, Wally Roney will continue to estimate the stored and diverted volumes.



Caribou Reservoir Outlet Bulkhead and Gate

Susan River Below Caribou Reservoir, at Second Culvert

The land at Diversion 2 is also owned by USFS, which has not yet given permission for a measurement device to be installed. Even if a device were installed at the diversion, there is inflow into the ditch before it reaches the Roney property. In the Spring, there may be some flow in the ditch even when no water is being diverted to the river. Somehow this has to be estimated, perhaps with a few flows measured on the ranch and compared to what is measured by a device at the point of diversion.



Diversion 2 at Susan River, Looking Toward River

Diversion 2 at Roney Ranch

However, this is a moot point because Diversion 2 is currently dammed and blocked with debris and soil. This diversion still flows during floods, but not during regular irrigation season. Therefore, the diverted flow is zero during the decreed irrigation season, once available flows are below 100 percent of decreed amounts. Diversion 4 now irrigates some of the lands once irrigated by Diversion 2.



Diversion 2 at First Natural Dam

Diversion 2 at Second Natural Dam

Diversion 3 has moved over the decades, to a point about 1,150 feet upstream of the decreed location. In the same way, Diversion 4 has moved to a point about 680 feet upstream of the decreed location. This is consistent with perhaps 25 percent of surface water diversions in California that have been destroyed at some point by flood flows during the winter. These diversions were repaired in the spring, and since they could not be repaired at the same location due to topographic changes, were moved upstream.

Diversions 3 and 4 comply with SB 88 requirements. Each has a Watchman Flume (Winflume designed), rectangular with 2" ramps, accurate to better than +/- 10%. Pressures are recorded hourly, and then are converted to depths and flows for calculation of flows.



Diversion 3 Watchman Flume Installed



Diversion 4 Watchman Flume Installed

Diversion 5 has been destroyed and was not repaired. Instead, Diversion 3 now irrigates the lands originally irrigated by Diversion 5. Early in the Spring, flood flows still leave the river at all of the diversions, plus at areas with low banks, but these flows are not and cannot be controlled.



Diversion 5 Location, Showing No Diversion

The reason that Diversions 2 and 5 have not been repaired is that newly introduced wolf-dog hybrids are killing calves on the ranch. These hybrids are protected under the California Endangered Species Act, so nothing can be done to stop their predation. Instead, several hundred cattle have to be corralled every night and watched during the daytime as they graze. The additional workload leaves less time for all ranching tasks, including irrigation, repair of fences, and road rehabilitation.