

Project Summary

F-12-R-10, Western Montana Fishery Study

Job No. V, Population survey of Rattlesnake Creek, O'Brien Creek, and Flower Creek

Rattlesnake Creek, Flower Creek, and O'Brien Creek are respectively sources of domestic water for the towns of Missoula, Libby, and Troy. As such these streams have been closed to angling for at least ~~txx~~ 30 years and should represent streams in a near "virgin" condition.

Objectives of this study are to determine the fishery of these "virgin" streams in their unfished conditions. When this information has been collected the streams will be opened to angling with permission of the cities involved and the State Board of Health. The populations will then again be measured to determine changes brought about by angling pressure. Of special interest ^{are} ~~is~~ the changes, if any, occurring in the cutthroat trout populations.

To date pre-angling data has been collected for two or three years from each stream. This pre- data is adequate for all streams except Rattlesnake Creek. One stream, O'Brien Creek, was opened to angling starting with the 1962 general fishing season. ~~The O'Brien Creek population~~ has been sampled each fall since ~~1962~~ ^{the opening to angling.}

Efforts will be made to open Rattlesnake Creek and Flower Creek as soon as possible. With the opening of these streams the project can continue to its end within two years. In the interval between now and these proposed openings the project calls for only very limited effort, time, and cost; about 24 man-days per year.

This project was started June 1, 1960 and will continue approximately two years past the opening of Flower and Rattlesnake Creek.