

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

FISHERIES DIVISION  
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS  
PROJECT NO: F-46-R-4 STUDY TITLE: SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF COLDWATER STREAMS  
JOB NO: I-i JOB TITLE: MID-YELLOWSTONE DRAINAGE INVESTIGATIONS  
PROJECT PERIOD: JULY 1, 1901 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1991

JOB OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1.) To maintain the reaches streambanks and channels in their present or improved condition.

Projects affecting stream habitat were dealt with through the Montana Stream Protection Act of 1963 and the Montana Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975.

2.) To ensure, within hydrologic constraints, that flows in streams supporting fisheries do not fall below minimums identified during the Yellowstone River instream reservation process.

Minimum instream flows determined in the Yellowstone River instream process were protected through Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks review of new water use permit applications.

3.) To maintain water quality at or above 1975-85 average levels as measured at U.S. Geological Survey water quality monitoring stations.

Maintaining water quality was dealt with through Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks review and comment on water discharge permit applications and renewals.

4.) To maintain fish populations and habitat in streams affected by resource development activity at levels at least as good as present status.

Timber sale plans, grazing allotment management plans, environmental assessments, and environmental impact statements are reviewed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to maintain fish populations and protect stream habitat. Progress was made towards the development of a management plan for the Boulder River.

- 5.) To reduce impacts on river stability and fish habitat caused by yearly maintenance at headgate structures.

Irrigation projects affecting river stability and fish habitat were dealt with through the Montana Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975 and HB 661 of 1987.

- 6.) To maintain a minimum of 123,000 angler days per year within the mid-Yellowstone drainage. (State funded)

Progress was made towards development of a management plan for the Boulder Drainage and fisheries information necessary for the development of a mid-Yellowstone River management plan was collected.

- 7.) To redistribute fishing pressure and minimize overcrowding through the purchase of additional access sites in key areas. (These areas include Rock Creek between Roberts and Joliet; Yellowstone River at Big Timber, between Columbus and Reedpoint and between Columbus and Laurel; and on the East and West Rosebud drainages.)

A number of land parcels were investigated and an access site was purchased on the Yellowstone River near Big Timber. Boat launching facilities are scheduled for development at Big Timber this fall.

- 8.) To maintain riparian and floodplain areas in their natural condition.

Maintaining riparian and floodplain areas in their natural condition was encouraged through Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks review and comments pertaining to subdivision proposals.

- 9.) To complete cutthroat trout inventory in one drainage of the mid-Yellowstone reach each year beginning in 1989. (State funded)

Additional cutthroat inventory work was complete in Lower Deer Creek and in a number of streams in the Boulder Drainage.

- 10.) To complete inventory of cutthroat trout in the three forks of the Boulder Drainage, East Fork 1990, West Fork 1991 and Main Boulder 1992.

Cutthroat inventory work was completed in the East Fork of the Boulder River during 1990.

- 11.) To increase public awareness of the diversity of opportunities and hazards of water-based recreation on mid-Yellowstone. (State funded)

No progress was achieved during this report period.

12.) To improve level of understanding among anglers regarding management policies and options, and encourage their participation in the decision-making process.

Several public meetings concerning the development of a Boulder River Fisheries Management Plan were held and questionnaires were mailed to interested individuals and organizations. These meetings and questionnaires were intended to improve the level of angler understanding of management objectives and to gather angler comments.

13.) To protect and maintain rainbow spawning areas in the upper Stillwater River in their present condition.

Several counts were made of rainbow trout using spawning areas in the upper Stillwater River. The Stillwater Mining Company sediment monitoring program has been reviewed each year by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. In the future, sediments will be monitored every three years.

14.) To maintain cutthroat population numbers in Meatrack Creek at or above 1984 levels.

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks assists U.S.F.S. review water quality and turbidity monitoring of grazing impacts in Meatrack Creek.

#### SUMMARY

Part of Objective 7 was accomplished with the purchase of an access site near Big Timber. A number of land parcels were investigated and negotiations are progressing on several other parcels. Objective II was not accomplished because of a shortage of funding to cover the cost of the project. Several E.P.P. proposals to fund the project have been submitted without success. A private firm that produces the map series "Montana Afloat" was approached to encourage interest in the mid-Yellowstone as a future river section to map. Progress on all other objectives was achieved.

