

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

FISHERIES DIVISION
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA

PROJECT NUMBER: F-46-R-4

JOB NUMBER: VI-D

PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS

STATE TITLE: STATEWIDE SURVEY AND INVENTORIES

JOB TITLE: STREAMBANK PERMITTING AND SURVEYS

PERIOD COVERED: JULY 1, 1990 TO JUNE 30, 1991

ABSTRACT

During this report period, six contractors were hired to represent the Department on field inspections for streambank permitting activities. The contractors inspected 262 projects and attended 21 conservation district meetings. They expended about 683 hours on streambank inspections and meetings and traveled over 11,600 miles. The average cost per contracted project inspection was \$64.66. Funding was provided to 3 conservation district sponsored projects involving development of educational materials and planning that related to stream corridor and habitat improvement.

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1. To assist Regions 1-5 with contracts for streambank permitting activities. Six contracts were established in Regions 1-5.
2. To provide assistance to conservation districts for streambank inventories and stream corridor management. Funding for program assistance was provided to three conservation districts.

PROCEDURES

County conservation districts administer the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (310). The Act requires private individuals, corporations, firms, associations and companies to obtain a permit before commencing with a project to alter or modify the bed or banks of a stream. The Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (DFWP) administers the Stream Protection Act (SPA) which requires all governmental entities to give notice and obtain a permit before commencing with projects that alter or modify the bed or banks of fishing streams. Fisheries personnel participate in the review and recommendation process of both Acts in order to protect fish habitat.

The field review and recommendation activity consumes considerable time of fisheries managers and biologists. The majority of the 310 and SPA projects are located in Regions 1-5, therefore these regions were given assistance by employing contractors to do routine 310 and SPA inspections.

Personal services contracts were negotiated with firms and individuals qualified to represent the DFWP on stream permitting activities. Each contract was limited to \$5,000. The mechanics of the contracts named the Regional Fishery Manager as a liaison with the contractor. The fishery manager receives notification of proposed projects from conservation districts and assigns which projects shall be handled by the contractor. Time and place of field reviews are scheduled by the conservation district. After reviewing the proposed projects, the contractor makes written recommendations to the fishery manager or an assigned fisheries biologist. Fisheries personnel may accept or modify the recommendations before submitting them to the conservation district. Contractors also attend conservation district meetings as requested by either the district or the fishery manager. Contractor involvement with SPA projects are similar except the fishery manager assigns field reviews directly to the contractor.

Conservation districts lack funding to do inventories, surveys or management planning relating to stream corridors. Studies and conservation programs sponsored by districts are usually funded by grants. Districts were solicited to determine programs they wished to develop involving stream corridor surveys, inventories, planning projects or educational materials. Proposed programs were submitted to DFWP for priority review and recommended funding. Regional fishery personnel were asked to review and comment on projects prior to funding. Contracts were prepared for those projects selected to assist with habitat preservation and enhancement of aquatic resources.

FINDINGS

During this report period, 6 contractors inspected 262 projects and attended 21 conservation district meetings. Only 7 of the projects involved SPA. The total cost was \$16,943, or an average of \$64.66 per project. The contractors traveled 11,666 miles and expended 683 hours inspecting projects, attending meetings and traveling. The mileage and hours are similar to what DFWP personnel would have committed toward administration of the program. The 310 projects handled by the contractors represent about 27 percent of the total number of projects processed by conservation districts during this report period.

The following table summarizes stream permitting activities by individual contractors and costs associated with those activities:

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Region Served</u>	<u>Projects</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>Miles Traveled</u>	<u>Cost Per Project</u>
H. Johnson	1	56	146*	3005	\$43.82
Dutton Resources	2	53	151	2374	80.81
Interfluve Inc.	3	34	60	961	61.48
E. Love	3	24	58	982	68.37
Ecological Resources	2,3,4	52	156	3538	95.12
P. Haverkamp	5	<u>43</u>	<u>112*</u>	<u>806</u>	<u>35.54</u>
		262	683	11,666	64.66

* Estimated because contractor worked on a per project basis. Funding was provided to three conservation district sponsored projects for educational materials and habitat planning. Fergus Conservation District produced a video entitled "Big Spring Creek - Improvements of a Past Mismanaged Stream". The video updated a slide program produced by the DFWP about 20 years ago and concentrated on land management activities that have been initiated in the watershed. These activities have improved conditions along the stream corridor and as a result, improved fish habitat. The video will be used as a tool to promote further streambank management on a site specific basis. Through co-operation with the SCS, the Fergus Conservation District is planning a stream corridor management program to assist individual landowners with streamside problems.

The Mile-Hi Conservation District sponsored a stream habitat enhancement planning project on Blacktail Creek in Butte, Montana. This is the second planning project funded through this program on Blacktail Creek. Work was coordinated with the George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Plans for habitat enhancement were developed by a consulting firm which specializes in stream rehabilitation projects. Funding for the on the ground work is expected to come from grants and donated services.

Funds were granted to the Montana Association of Conservation Districts to produce an educational video for conservation district supervisors. The video will explain the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act, the need and purpose of the Act, the permitting process and on the ground action showing the end results of the program. The video was not completed by the end of this report period, however, funds were accrued for use in fiscal year 1992.

The following table lists the above projects and the level of funding committed from this program:

<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Funding</u>
Fergus Cons. District	Big Spring Creek Video	\$4,500
Mile-Hi Cons. District	Blacktail Creek Plan	\$3,000
Montana Association of Conservation Districts	310 Video	\$5,000

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this project be continued. Contracting stream permitting work to qualified independent contractors is anticipated to free up over 700 hours of fishery managers and biologists time. This time can be spent on other priority programs. Those managers and biologists that have utilized the contractors have expressed satisfaction with the program. The contractors do not inspect all 310 projects nor attend all the conservation district meetings. Several of the 310 projects and the conservation districts meetings are handled by DFWP personnel, so association is maintained with the agricultural community. Stream corridor projects dealing with educational materials, surveys, planning and inventories intended to assist landowners should continue. Programs aimed at preservation and enhancement of stream habitat will help DFWP fulfill its objectives of protecting habitat to help maintain angler days for the recreating public.

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