

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS  
FISHERIES DIVISION  
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA

PROJECT NUMBER:  
JOB NUMBER:

F-46-R-5  
I-C

PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS  
STATE TITLE: S&I COLDWATER STREAMS  
JOB TITLE: UPPER CLARK FORK TROUT RESTORATION  
PERIOD COVERED: JULY 1, 1991 TO JUNE 30, 1992

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1. Maintain instream flows at present conditions.

The 1991 Montana legislative session mandated that the Clark Fork instream flow request be tabled. A moratorium on the issuance of new water use permits was also imposed. Under these regulations instream flow levels cannot change except naturally. The winter of 1991-92 was extremely dry with very low snowpack. Subsequent spring and summer precipitation resulted in very low stream levels.

2. Determine why trout numbers are low and why the juvenile segment is absent from the trout population.

This objective was the subject of extensive fieldwork including outmigrant sampling of juveniles descending spawning tributaries, electrofishing to locate juvenile trout concentrations, and laboratory analysis by contracted agencies. No results are yet available.

3. Use data collected in fish population studies and studies conducted by other agencies to direct cleanup efforts for maximum benefits to the river fishery.

Activities directed toward this objective centered on channel changes and reconstruction in the area of the Warm Springs Ponds. The upper portion of the Mill-Willow Bypass channel was redesigned and is being constructed to replace the existing ditch with a meandering, more natural, configuration. Plans for reconstruction of the Mill-Willow Bypass downstream of the existing effort are underway. In addition a segment of the channel in the below Pond 1 area is scheduled for reconstruction in the near future. FWP input has been critical to the design and implementation of these projects which will ultimately provide several miles of vastly improved habitat for spawning, rearing and adult resident trout.

4. Work with other agencies to see that data are collected which will supplement fisheries data.

During the reporting period cooperative efforts were made with USFS, SCS, ASCS, DHES and EPA. In addition entities including university and private sector were involved in activities pertinent to this objective. The activities included planning, data collection and analysis.

5. Encourage citizen participation in river cleanup.

This objective was met by an active program of public involvement. Communication and coordination of relevant issues were achieved with the Clark Fork Coalition, George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Anaconda Sportsmens Club, Skyline Sportsmen, Deer Lodge Valley Conservation District, Montana Wildlife Federation and various civic groups. Citizen involvement has been a significant factor in the restoration of Upper Clark Fork fisheries.

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Date: September 24, 1992

Project No. 3212