

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS  
FISHERIES DIVISION

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS  
PROJECT NO.: F-46-R-7 STUDY TITLE: SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF COLDWATER  
STREAMS  
STUDY: I  
JOB NUMBER: C (3212)  
JOB TITLE: UPPER CLARK FORK TROUT RESTORATION  
PROJECT PERIOD: JULY 1, 1993 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1994

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1. Maintain instream flows at present conditions.

The 1991 Montana legislative session imposed a moratorium on the issuance of most types of new water use permits. A basin wide planning process was developed and participation in this effort is ongoing.

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

Limited efforts to determine tributary stream production of juvenile salmonids were carried out. Much of this information is a part of the data generated under the Natural Resource Damage suit filed by Montana and therefore unavailable.

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.

Major efforts were directed to this objective in the reporting period. Reconstruction activities in the Warm Springs Ponds area continued to be less responsive to fisheries and aquatic ecosystem welfare than requested. An extremely productive natural meander in the area immediately below the ponds was destroyed and replaced by a significantly inferior, shorter channel. Sediment releases have resulted in abnormally high accumulations of fine materials on the streambed, further damaging aquatic ecosystem health.

Relocation of fish endangered by stream channel dewatering and abandonment due to construction was extensive in fall 1993 and spring/summer 1994. No exact counts were made but the total of fish relocated was between 1500 and 2000.

In cooperation with local anglers groups, fishing regulations were changed in the uppermost Clark Fork area to catch and release artificial lures only. This change was made to reflect increased vulnerability of large downmigrant fish from the treatment pond system into the stream below. Aquatic habitat in the stream is not adequate to protect these large trout from overharvest in the absence of restrictive regulations.

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

Time devoted to this objective was substantial. Intensive activities associated with Cercla at the Warm Springs area as well as ongoing Natural Resource Damage activities were major efforts in this reporting period.

5. Encourage citizen participation in river cleanup.

Interactions with citizens both in organized groups and individually were vigorously pursued in 1993-94. Contentious issues in the basin resulted in the need for regular citizen involvement.

(pm/d:c-3212.wh)