

FISHERIES DIVISION
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA

PROJECT NUMBER: F-46-R-7
JOB #: VI-D

PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS
STATE TITLE: STATEWIDE SURVEY AND INVENTORIES
JOB TITLE: STREAMBANK PERMITTING AND SURVEYS
PERIOD COVERED: July 1, 1993 to June 30, 1994

ABSTRACT

Seven contractors were hired to conduct stream project inspections during the report period. Contractors inspected 240 projects and attended 10 conservation district meetings. To complete this work contractors logged 559 hours and traveled 8,220 miles. Average cost per inspection was \$61.63 compared to \$56.84 in FY 1992. The Lewis and Clark Conservation District was awarded a \$2,000 contract to conduct a survey and inventory of the Big Blackfoot River. The Montana Association of Conservation Districts was awarded \$500 to print 2000 copies of a Guide to Stream Permitting brochure.

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1. To assist Regions 1-5 and 8 with contracts for streambank permitting activities. Seven contractors completed 240 project inspections.
2. Provide assistance to conservation districts for streambank inventories and stream corridor management. One inventory was funded for the Blackfoot River corridor and funding was provided to print copies of a Guide to Stream Permitting.

BACKGROUND AND 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 streams. Fisheries personnel participate in the review process of both acts in order to protect fish habitat.

Field review activities consume considerable time of fisheries managers and biologists. The majority of the 310 and SPA projects are located in Regions 1-5 and Region 8. These regions were given

assistance by employing contractors to conduct 310 and SPA inspections.

Personal services contracts were negotiated and entered into with firms and individuals qualified to represent the DFWP on stream permitting activities. Each contract was limited to \$5,000 or less. The Regional Fishery Manager was designated as the liaison with the contractor in each region. The fishery manager receives notification of proposed projects from conservation districts and determines which projects will 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 contacted to determine if they wished to apply for funds to conduct stream corridor surveys or inventories, or to develop educational materials. Proposals were solicited from each conservation district.

FINDINGS

During the 1994 Fiscal Year seven contractors completed 240 inspections and attended 10 conservation district meetings. Total cost was \$14,792 -- an average of \$61.63 per project. Contract costs are similar to what DFWP would have spent had we conducted the work ourselves.

The following table summarizes the program for each contractor.

Contractor	Region(s)	Projects (Meetings)	Hours	Miles	Cost/ Project or Meeting
Johnson	1	89(8)	194 ^a	3290	40.56
Land & Water	2	29	132	2402	135.31
Interfluve/Five Rivers	3	52	81	1154	47.38
Earl Love	3	23	51	323	110.30
Ecological Resources	3,4,8	3	9	150	93.00
Haverkamp	5	44(2)	92 ^a	901	35.97

^aEstimated at 2 hours per project or meeting.

Most of the variation in cost per inspection is related to

geographic variations in contract rates and travel times required to conduct inspections.

The Lewis and Clark Conservation District conducted an aerial photo inventory of the Blackfoot River and will be doing a land ownership records search. This project will be used to promote best land management practices along the river. The Montana Association of Conservation Districts was awarded \$500 to print 2000 additional copies of a Guide to Stream Permitting. This guide has been a big help to individuals requiring permits.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This project should be continued. Using independent contractors to conduct 310 and 124 inspections provides area biologists and managers with the opportunity to spend more time on other high priority projects. Biologists are able to maintain contact with the agricultural community since contractors do not conduct all inspections nor attend all conservation district meetings. The stream corridor assistance program provides information that helps determine candidate locations for future restoration efforts and is a valuable educational tool.

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