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REGION 2

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
FISHERIES DIVISION

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS

PROJECT NO.: F-46-R-6 STUDY TITLE: SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF COLDWATER STREAMS

JOB NUMBER: I-d

JOB TITLE: CLARK FORK/BLACKFOOT RIVER FISHERY INVESTIGATION

PROJECT PERIOD: JULY 1, 1992 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1993

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

The long range objective of the study is to follow inventory procedures developed in earlier studies (Wipperman 1973, Berg 1975, 1981 and 1983) and use the resulting data to prepare recommendations for aquatic resource management on this section of the Clark Fork River. Specific objectives during this report period were:

1. Determine species distribution and abundance and relative condition of fish populations in the Clark Fork River and its tributaries.

2. Measure physical trout habitat parameters in the Clark Fork River and its tributaries and evaluate correlations with trout population characteristics.

3. Maintain trout populations and habitat conditions in the Clark Fork River and its major tributaries at levels at least as good as present status (state funded).

4. Monitor spawning migrations of rainbow, cutthroat, brown and bull trout in tributaries of the Clark Fork River.

5. Monitor out migrations of juvenile trout from tributaries to the main stem of the Clark Fork River and determine the relative importance of various tributaries in providing recruitment to the trout population in the main river.

6. Evaluate whether recruitment is a limiting factor for trout populations in the Clark Fork River and identify factors which may contribute to the scarcity of a brown trout fishery in the Clark Fork River below Missoula.

7. Correlate parameters identified in water quality studies conducted by DFWP and other agencies with relative abundance of the fishery in the Clark Fork River (state funded).

8. Maintain water quality at or above 1984-86 average levels as measured at Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences water quality monitoring stations (state funded).

9. Define fish movement patterns and relative angler harvest and maintain a trout fishery on the Clark Fork River of at least 40,000 man-days per year with an average catch rate of 0.2 fish per hour.

All objectives were accomplished. Data analysis is in progress on the work accomplished, and results will be presented in a comprehensive report for the Clark Fork and Blackfoot River drainages.

Completion of this project is expected to result in a trout fishery sustaining 40,000 angler-days of use per year with a total catch rate of 0.2 fish per hour. Trout habitat and water quality and quantity will be maintained at levels at least as good as present status. Management recommendations will be made and implemented to enhance trout reproduction and recruitment to increase densities of catchable trout.

Prepared by: Rodney K. Berg

Date: August, 1993

LITERATURE CITED

Berg, R. K. 1975. Fish and game planning, Upper Yellowstone and Shields River drainages. Job Comp. Rept., Fed. Aid to Fish and Wildl. Rest. Proj. No. FW-3-R. Job 1-A. 92 pp.

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_____. 1983. Middle Missouri River Planning project. Job Prog. Rept., Fed. Aid to Fish and Wildl. Rest. Proj. No. FW-3-R-11. Job 1-A 30 pp

Wipperman, A. H. 1973. Smith River drainage inventory and planning investigation. Job Comp. Rept., Fed. Aid to Fish and Wildl. Rest. Proj. No. FW-1-R, Job 1a.

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