

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

STATE: MONTANA

PROJECT NUMBER:  
JOB NUMBER:

F-46-R-6  
VI F

PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS  
STATE TITLE: STATEWIDE SURVEY AND INVENTORY  
JOB TITLE: JULY 1, 1992 TO JUNE 30, 1993

**ABSTRACT**

Four new Fishing Access Sites were secured during the report period. These sites are:

- 1) "Tarkio" - On Clark Fork River at bottom of Alberton Gorge,
- 2) "Lime Spur" - On Jefferson River between Cardwell and Sappington,
- 3) "River Bend" - On Blackfoot River between Roundup and Johnsrud,
- 4) "Joliet" - On Rock Creek immediately downstream from Joliet.

Site Protection functions continued through the completion of another Application for Federal Assistance (AFA) which funded the improvement of 35 sites (FY 92-93 funds). Montana Environmental Policy Act compliance was completed for a total of 35 projects. A motorboat access AFA was produced for three (3) sites and another was initiated on four additional motorboat projects.

**OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT**

1. Coordinate fishing access site acquisition, development and maintenance statewide. This task was completed and data is included.
2. Coordinate Fisheries Division activities funded by Dingell-Johnson motorboat access funds. This task was completed and data is included.
3. Assist Fisheries Management Bureau Chief with management plans, fishing contest applications and other tasks as assigned. This task was completed and data is included.

## PROCEDURES

The Fishing Access Site program now manages a total of 312 sites dispersed around the state. These sites offer extremely varied angling opportunities and are considered essential in providing much of the state's fishing pressure.

In 1988, the administration of the Fishing Access Site system was transferred from the Parks Division to the Fisheries Division. A coordinator position was created to direct the program. The main goal of this position is to efficiently manage the program. The new strategy to be employed in accomplishing the upgrade of the program is the use of Federal D.J. funds.

In addition to the Fishing Access Site responsibilities, the expansion of the Sport Fish Restoration program includes a 12.5% earmarking of federal dollars which can only be used to develop motorboat access consistent with fisheries objectives.

The combined site protection and motorboat FY 92-93 biennial appropriation was approximately \$1.6 million.

## FINDINGS

The first objective is to coordinate FAS acquisition, development and maintenance statewide.

- 1) The acquisition function of this program had previously been described in a Draft Policy and Procedures document. The acquisition procedure has been further refined during this report period. In previous years, a Lands Priority Committee Meeting was held quarterly. Due to the number of potential negotiations and their difficult nature, the Priority Meetings are now held every two months.

Generally, the priorities that are selected for attempted acquisition are sites that move the program closer to completion of the float fishing system or those sites that provide access to high quality fisheries.

- 2) The development function of this program is handled through establishing priorities for site upgrades. Additionally, Applications for Federal Assistance (now, Project Agreements) must be completed to fund this work. Compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) and H.B. 495 must be accomplished. These improvement projects are referred to as "Site Protection" within the MDFWP.

The Montana Legislature appropriated \$1.1 million for site protection during FY 92-93. Applications for Federal Assistance have been completed for 35 projects from this funding source. MEPA documents were produced for all of the site protection projects.

- 3) The coordination of the maintenance function for this program is still working on establishing maintenance standards. The interest in cooperative partnerships became a reality during this report period.

An elaborate four-way agreement was completed on Big Casino Reservoir at Lewistown. The parties involved included Fergus County, the City of Lewistown, a private landowner (Woody Leininger) and the Department. This agreement provided for the development of public access to a reservoir, provided handicapped facilities and transferred the Operation and Maintenance responsibility to Fergus County.

The second objective is to coordinate D.J. motorboat access funds.

The funds appropriated for this function (FY 92-93) were divided between the Parks Division (operators of water-based parks) and the Fisheries Division. The funds available for the Fisheries Division are approximately \$500,000. An Application for Federal Assistance was written for three (3) sites totaling \$120,389. These projects were Bigfork, Bynum Reservoir and Captain Clark.

Montana Environmental Policy Act compliance was secured for these projects.

The third objective of this position is to perform tasks for the Fisheries Management Bureau Chief as assigned.

During this report period, no major work assignments were made.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this project be continued since much of the intended work is yet to be accomplished.

Prepared by: Bruce J. Rehwinkel

Date: September 16, 1993

Project No: 3833