

DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

FISHERIES DIVISION
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: Montana PROJECT TITLE: Water Leasing Fund
PROJECT NO: F-46-R-5 (6)
JOB NO: VII-C (3829)
PROJECT PERIOD: July 1, 1992 to June 30, 1993

ABSTRACT

A water leasing study was authorized by the 1989 Legislature. Water leasing is a complex and somewhat controversial program. The study is moving ahead. Two leases were completed during FY 1992.

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

The specific job objective is to implement the provisions of SB 425 of the 1991 Legislature which amended the original water leasing study bill (HB 707) which authorized a pilot water leasing study to test the feasibility of leasing existing diversionary water rights and to acquire water leases for instream flow enhancement purposes. SB 425 appropriated for the biennium ending June 30, 1993 to DFWP \$22,500 from the federal special revenue fund and \$7500 from the state special revenue fund to lease existing water rights as provided for in HB 707. These funds will be used to pay for the leasing of diversionary water rights that may be obtained through the water leasing program.

Two leases were completed during FY 92. Several more were being negotiated.

FINDINGS

The leasing program is beginning to bear fruit. Two leases were signed in FY 92 and others were being negotiated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that this project be continued. Interest in water leasing has increased tremendously. In the coming year these funds will be put to good use.

Prepared by Chris Hunter Date 9-10-93