

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
FISHERIES DIVISION

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

State: MONTANA Element 1: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
Project No: F-78-R-1 Job No: 3511
Project Title: STATEWIDE FISHERIES Job Title: UPPER BIGHORN RIVER
Title: MANAGEMENT PROGRAM INVESTIGATIONS
Project Period: July 1, 1994 - June 30, 1995

OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

Activity 1 - Survey and Inventory

Objective: To survey and monitor the characteristics and trends of fish populations, angler harvest and preferences, and to assess habitat conditions in selected waters.

During summer and fall, we completed fish population estimates at two sections, representing the upper 32 miles of the Bighorn River. Early runoff precluded redd surveys scheduled with Trout Unlimited and two high schools. We established WETP cross sections in three side channels within 8 miles of the afterbay to monitor changes in available fish habitat with flow releases. We continued to maintain a thermograph just downstream from Afterbay Dam.

A creel survey designed to calibrate car counters at Lind and Bighorn FAS's is described under Job No: 3591. We summarized data from the angler opinion survey conducted during 1992-93.

Activity 2 - Fish Population Management

Objective: To implement fish stocking programs and/or fish eradication actions to maintain fish populations at levels consistent with habitat conditions and other limiting factors.

No actions completed or planned.

Activity 3 - Technical Guidance

Objective: To review projects by government agencies and private parties which have the potential to affect fisheries resources; provide technical advice or decisions to mitigate effects on these resources; and provide landowners and other private parties with technical advice and information to sustain and enhance fisheries resources.

We responded to many phone calls and written requests from the public regarding fishing and issues on the upper Bighorn River. We pursued acquisition, development and protection of FAS's along the river, and dealt with complaints and site abuses.

We held the annual Bighorn Basin Interagency Coordination Meeting in Billings during March; corresponded with the National Park Service about future management of the Afterbay and Lind access sites; discussed Crow Reservation fisheries with the USFWS, river flows with the USBR, redd surveys with Trout Unlimited, and fish population trends with the Bighorn Alliance.

Activity 4 - Aquatic Education

Objective: To enhance the public's understanding, awareness and support of the state's fishery and aquatic resources and to assist young people to develop angling skills and to appreciate the aquatic environment.

We presented the latest fisheries information and/or proposed fishing regulation changes to local sports clubs as well as the Bighorn Fly fishers (Sheridan, Wyoming) and Gardiner Flyfishing Club. We spoke with the flyfishing club and two classes at Central High School. We provided information for the media and the Fisherman Log Newsletter, and are planning an international Public Outreach Symposium in Bozeman (June) through the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

SUMMARY

We progressed in all objectives except Fish Population Management which was not applicable to this job. Under Survey and Inventory, we will have to reestablish the WETP cross sections altered by runoff.

FINAL BUDGET STATUS

<u>Amount Budgeted</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>Balance of Funds</u>
\$53,018.00	\$51,967.26	\$1,050.74

Regional Supervisor _____