### MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS DRAFT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE:

Montana

**GRANT TITLE:** 

Fisheries Management Program

**GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER:** 

F-113-R-6

**REPORT PERIOD:** 

July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006 (State FY 2006)

The following report covers all objectives funded through the Grant Agreement. The objectives are stated, and a brief summary of work accomplished is included. More detailed reports on most field projects are maintained in the Helena Fisheries Division library.

### PROJECT 1: FISHERIES SURVEY AND INVENTORY

Reasonable spring precipitation and runoff facilitated an increase in river/stream/lake inventories and spawning monitoring. Despite the increase in monitoring activities, there also continued to be a rise in habitat monitoring. We conducted more creel surveys, reviewed and issued more stream permits, and worked with more landowners on stream protection projects than anticipated. With continued drought, we stocked fewer waters than expected and we reviewed/prepared fewer environmental assessments. See the attached tables that quantify work proposed at the beginning of the grant period, along with accomplishments through the end of this report year.

## Activity 1: Survey and Inventory – Region Surveys Objectives:

- To survey and monitor the characteristics, status and trends of fish populations and angler use and harvest on selected streams and lakes.
- To annually assess and monitor habitat conditions in selected waters.
- To identify opportunities to improve aquatic habitats along with native and sport fish production.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

These objectives were met. More detailed information regarding survey and inventory accomplishments is included in the attached Survey and Inventory Table. Reports for area projects are on file at FWP in Helena.

A total of 49 rivers and 177 tributary streams were surveyed statewide during the report period. Many of the surveys were a continuation of long-term quantitative population estimates. Additionally, 284 lakes, reservoirs and ponds were surveyed to assure continuation of quality fishery resources. Together, there was a significant increase in work accomplished as compared to the anticipated effort for the year.

More locations were sampled to determine spawning success, fry survival, and recruitment than was anticipated (206 sites sampled compared to 139 sites anticipated). Improved spring precipitation and runoff may account for the increase. Samples taken since whirling disease was first discovered in Montana waters show more than 167 waters (up from 60 three years ago and 146 last year) test positive for the parasite. These locations are generally in southwestern and central Montana, although whirling disease has begun to expand in northwestern and south central Montana. Sport fisheries in many of Montana's major rivers could be impacted by whirling disease in the future and research is ongoing to find methods for mitigating the potential problems associated with trout recruitment.

Measures of habitat quality were gathered statewide on rivers, lakes and streams. Much of the monitoring of substrate and stream flow is being done in relation to bull trout and Westslope cutthroat trout research in western Montana. Continuing drought conditions since 2000 have required additional stream flow monitoring in order to implement the statewide drought management policy. This policy provides for the emergency closure of streams to angling when water flow and temperature reach critical levels for fish survival. Survey and inventory work has shown that protecting fish from angling pressure during severe drought conditions can have a beneficial impact on fish populations.

# Activity 2. Angler Surveys and Data Management Support Objectives:

- To monitor angler use and distribution, annual harvest rates, and angler opinions.
- To develop and manage fisheries data systems for the Fisheries Division, and conduct surveys of angler use, angler preference, and economic valuation of Montana's fisheries resources.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

These objectives were met and there were no variances in work or timing. Work was performed statewide as planned, and as per the Grant and Grant Agreement.

Roving creel crews were assigned to Rock Creek, the Missouri River, Cooney Reservoir and Tongue River Reservoir. These surveys generally require two years to complete. Detailed reports are maintained in the Helena Fisheries Division Library. Creel results are used to develop management plans and regulations.

The 2005 Statewide Angler Use Mail Survey was completed. The reports were written, printed and will be distributed in December 2006. The 2007 Statewide Angling Use survey was begun. The survey estimates angler use on individual bodies of water as well as angler satisfaction. Also included again this year were questions on angler crowding and the quality of the experience. Estimates are defined by a number of factors such as: residency, season, drainage, region, stream or lake, and warm or cold water species. A couple of new questions were added to this year's survey, which included an attempt to estimate the angler's knowledge of the state's fish health guidelines and to determine how many anglers are consuming fish from those waters with warnings posted. The design was such that follow-up questionnaires may be sent to those anglers that had consumed fish.

The principal species caught in winter and summer from the data collected from the angler log program are listed below:

Region	Winter	Summer
1 - Northwestern Montana	Yellow perch	Cutthroat trout
2 - Western Montana	Rainbow trout	Cutthroat trout
3 - Southwestern Montana	Rainbow trout	Rainbow trout
4 - North Central Montana	Rainbow trout	Rainbow trout
5 - South Central Montana	Brown trout	Rainbow trout
6 - Northwestern Montana	Yellow perch	Walleye
7- Southwestern Montana	Walleye	Bluegill
Statewide	Yellow perch	Rainbow trout

### Some other accomplishments include:

Maintaining, modifying, or updating databases and computer systems such as: the lake and stream name file and cataloguing system; the hatchery production computer program (projections, production, and plants); fish planting records and query program; private pond database to track and control fish species introductions into drainages around the state; planting requests and updates for the next five years. Work continued on the Fish Analysis Plus (FA+) computer program. An estimate database feature was added that allows the user to store estimates and to compare among or between them. The program has attracted attention from other states and is available by contacting the FWP information services unit in Bozeman, MT.

The angler log program was continued. Data was collected from 208 angler log holders. There are 797 active log holders enrolled in the program. We have log book information dating back from 1964. An annual newsletter was produced and distributed to log holders and to anyone that requested one, and the information was included on the FWP web page. The 2006 newsletter is attached. Information obtained from this program tracks the trends of catch rates and species composition on individual bodies of water for more than 40 years. The program also summarizes the data by Fish, Wildlife & Parks regions, showing how many fish are caught per hour and per day in the summer, winter seasons, and also annually by region.

### Activity 3. Montana Fisheries Information System Support

### Accomplishments & Variances -

No financial support was provided for MFISH in FY06, although it was used extensively for the development of the aquatic components of the Comprehensive Fish and Wildlife Conservation Strategy. Data was used to rank species, map distribution, and determine future actions and recommendations.

### PROJECT 2: TECHNICAL GUIDANCE

### Activity 1. Region Expertise

### Objectives:

- Review hydraulic projects conducted by government agencies that have the potential to affect fisheries resources, and provide technical advice and decisions to mitigate effects of these activities to aquatic resources.
- Provide landowners and other private parties with technical advice and information to sustain and enhance fisheries resources.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

These objectives were met. Fisheries Management efforts in aquatic education are blended into the many duties of regional field personnel. Despite continuing drought conditions, there were more stream projects than anticipated. The only activity that showed a decrease was in the number of agency MEPA/NEPA projects requiring FWP review. This decrease may partially be the result of legislative changes in Montana's environmental policy act that eliminated the requirement for some review. More detailed information regarding technical guidance accomplishments is included in the attached Technical Guidance Table at the end of this report.

Technical guidance efforts statewide focus primarily on the State's two stream protection laws as well as environmental review required under MEPA. A statewide Warm Water Fisheries Management Plan, developed in 1997, serves as guidance for warm water fish activities. Development of water-specific fisheries management plans (i.e. Rock Creek Fisheries Management Plan, in progress but expected to be completed next summer) provides direction for fisheries activities on a local basis.

Miscellaneous permits issued to government agencies under authority of the Stream Protection Act (commonly called 124 permits) totaled 331 statewide, a slight decline from last year but above projected estimates. FWP also issued 119 Stream Protection Act Permits directly to the Montana Department of Transportation. Additionally, FWP reviewed 1,275 privately sponsored projects under the advisory authorities related to the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act (referred to as 310 permits). Conditions outlined in these permits helped minimize or prevent impacts of these projects on aquatic resources. Cooperation of informed private and government entities is an important element of the permitting program.

Statewide, 181 MEPA documents were prepared by department fisheries personnel. The majority of these documents were required for introduction of fish into ponds where the species had not previously existed or been legally stocked. This requirement is intended to curtail the spread of exotic fish species. However, this has caused a substantial workload for managing small fisheries contained in ponds. This is almost a 50% reduction from last year at may be a direct result of legislative changes in MEPA requirements.

Most technical assistance education efforts (75%) are focused in three main areas: news releases, presentations to organizations, and presentations/demonstrations to school age youth. More than 434 group contacts were made statewide in this manner. The FWP Fisheries Division staff

supported the aquatic education programs by providing their time and expertise to the scheduled events. The "Hooked on Fishing, Not on Drugs" program reached more than 4,200 students in 190 classrooms. The Montana Angling Youth (MAY) Club newsletter reaches some 4,500 young club members through free subscriptions. In all, aquatic education programs reach over 35,000 people statewide.

Other efforts include involvement with youth fishing days, workshops, and sampling with volunteers. In recent years the department has increased emphasis on these efforts. Our field personnel have responded quite favorably to this shift and have incorporated volunteers into a variety of field activities when possible.

# Activity 2. Habitat Protection Coordination Objective:

 To coordinate the habitat protection program and assure effective implementation of applicable state and federal laws in order to minimize development impacts on aquatic resources statewide.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

Objectives were met with no variances in work or timing; work was performed as described in the grant agreement.

Regional fisheries biologists and a contractor assigned to Montana Department of Transportation Projects reviewed plans for 457 hydraulic projects, including 61 state highway projects, under authority of the Stream Protection Act. The Stream Protection Act regulates government agencies that conduct projects requiring alteration of the bed or banks of streams. Permits were issued with specific stipulations required to prevent damage to streams and fish habitat.

Regional fisheries biologists and contractors hired to assist biologists with stream permitting reviewed plans for approximately 1,275 hydraulic projects under authority of the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act. Permits are issued by county Conservation Districts. The Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act regulates private entities who conduct projects that require alteration of the bed or banks of streams. Biologists and consultants recommended specific conditions required to prevent damage to streams and fish habitat.

This project does not involve construction work by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

### PROJECT 3. FISH POPULATION MANAGEMENT

# Activity 1. Region Fish 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.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

This objective was met. Again this year, slightly fewer cold-water lakes/reservoirs were stocked than originally projected because of low water conditions. More detailed information regarding fish population management accomplishments is included in the attached table.

An important aspect of fish population management conducted by FWP involves fish stocking. As explained on page 28 of the Grant (F-113-R1-6) regional fisheries personnel determine where hatchery-reared fish need to be stocked. The Hatchery Bureau Chief manages the stocking program and compiles the requests into a five-year stocking needs assessment, included in the Statewide Hatchery Operations and Maintenance (F-51-D) Grant. The actual rearing and stocking of fish is conducted by hatchery personnel and is funded under F-51-D.

Cold water species account for about 87% of the stocking. A total of 456 cold water ponds, lakes and reservoirs were stocked. This was a slight decrease from what was anticipated and is attributed to the continuing drought conditions in Montana. Several lakes and ponds were considered too low to stock.

Stocking of warm water fish was accomplished in 78 lakes and reservoirs, statewide. This is close to what was originally projected despite ongoing drought conditions. For regional details see the attached Fish Population Management Table.

The attached table also shows that under this grant, WB funded personnel identified several waters that need to be chemically treated to eradicate introduced fishes. However, as per the grant AFA, no WB funds were used to chemically treat rivers or streams for the purpose of eradicating fishes. Any eradication efforts on rivers or streams were accomplished using state and private funds, following an environmental review under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

### Statewide Fish Health Management

The Fish Health Management Project (FHMP) is located at the Montana FWP Fish Health Lab in Great Falls. This project is responsible for issuing import permits, wild fish transfer permits and transport permits in order to ensure fish health considerations are incorporated into fish transfers into and within Montana.

One of the most important disease control activities conducted by the FHMP is the oversight of fish imports into Montana. An import permit is required for the importation of any fish (any species), except fish intended for use in home or office aquariums. FWP reviews all import requests, whether by State, federal or private entities. Permits are issued for all fish entering the

State whether the import is intended to be stocked into state waters, private ponds, private or government fish hatcheries, or just traveling through Montana in interstate commerce. These requirements are necessary to help prevent exotic diseases/organisms from negatively impacting Montana's sport fisheries.

During FY2006, a total of 78 import permits were issued. This includes permits issued for all fish and fish eggs legally imported into Montana.

Fish managers who move fish from one location in Montana to another must seek approval through a wild fish transfer permit from the FWP Fish Health Committee. The committee reviews all transfer requests and approves transfers based upon fish health concerns, species issues and other considerations. If an environmental assessment is required, the committee ensures it is conducted prior to movement of any fish.

During FY2006, 18 wild fish transfers were approved for five different fish species.

The Fish Health Management Project conducts annual certification inspections at all State and private hatcheries with domestic and wild brood stocks, conducts trouble-shooting diagnostics for all hatcheries, wild fish health investigations, and fish kills. The project is located at the Montana FWP Fish Health Lab in Great Falls, where preparation for fieldwork is conducted, as well as most trouble shooting diagnostics. All certification lab work is conducted for FWP at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Bozeman Fish Health Center under a contract between USFWS and FWP. In addition, much of Montana's whirling disease research-related diagnostics is conducted for FWP through a contract with the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at Washington State University.

### Fish Health Inspections Conducted During FY 2006:

A total of 95 fish health inspections were conducted during FY 2006. This includes all hatchery inspections, fisheries management-related inspections, fish kill investigations and specific research projects, including Westslope cutthroat trout restoration and recovery projects.

Inspection Category 1	Number of Inspections	j
State Fish Hatcheries	42	
Commercial Fish Hatcher	ries 16	
Wild Brood Lakes and St		
Private Ponds	7	
Lakes	5	
Streams	10	
Total Number of FY200	6 Inspections 95	

### PROJECT 4: STATEWIDE PROGRAMS AND COORDINATION

# Activity 1. Federal Aid Coordination and Audit Objectives:

- To establish and maintain management control systems adequate to meet the requirements for participation in and administration of the Montana's Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program.
- To conduct the agency's biennial audit in accordance with the Single Audit Act.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

The objectives were met and there were no variances in work or timing. Work was performed statewide as planned and as per the Grant and Grant agreement, including:

- Maintain eligibility to participate in Federal Aid programs.
- Ensure that project proposals submitted for Federal Aid participation meet applicable program standards.
- Ensure that planned work is accomplished within the Grant Agreement period.
- Annually certify to the number of paid hunting and sport fishing license holders in the state during the most recent period feasible.
- Ensure that Federal Aid reporting requirements are met.

Specific accomplishments included overseeing 21 WB grants, which included 7 regular WB, 1 PR/WB, and 13 WB motorboat access grants.

# Activity 2. Fishing Access Site Coordination Objective:

- To coordinate the acquisition, development, and maintenance of the fishing access site system to provide public access for fishing statewide.
- To coordinate, design, and monitor fishing access facility and maintenance and improvement projects to provide safe and enjoyable fishing and boating opportunities statewide.

### Accomplishments & Variances -

Federal Aid grants currently being administered include:

- O&M F- 95-B-4 Grant. This grant provides funding for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of 60 water-based Fishing Access Sites and 13 State Parks. A separate yearend performance report will be filed for this O&M grant.
- The Echo Lake project, F124-B, has been awarded to a contractor and the Notice to Proceed is effective Sept 5, 2006. This is a 60-day contract and construction is anticipated to be completed by November of this year, providing there are no weather related delays. The project had been scheduled for spring construction of this year but had to be postponed because of high water.
- Federal Aid Project F-119-B was for several boat ramp extensions at various lakes and rivers in the Kalispell area. These projects have now all been completed.

- Woods Bay Boat Ramp and Dock Project, F-54-B, has been completed.
- Daily Lake Boat Ramp Extension Project, F-D-1, has been completed.
- F-62-DB is a dock project for Willow Creek, Eureka, Pishkun, Harrison Lake, and Dredge Cuts FAS's. It also includes a boat ramp extension at Duck Creek FAS on Fort Peck and boat ramp and parking area improvements at Dredge Cuts FAS.

The Harrison Lake dock, which was matched with a private donation, has been delivered and installed.

The improvements at Dredge Cuts have been completed including delivery and installation of the dock.

The boat ramp extension at Duck Creek FAS has been completed.

All the docks have been purchased and delivered to Willow Cr., Eureka, Pishkun Reservoirs. Construction of the concrete skip paths to install and retrieve the docks is still pending. A contractor has been selected and work at Willow Cr, and Pishkun Reservoirs is scheduled for early fall of this year. Due to a conflict in scheduling we missed the window of low water at Eureka Reservoir. We will now have to wait until next summer when water levels have receded sufficiently to do the work at the deep end of the boat ramp.

- F-120-B, the Lewis and Clark FAS project has been completed.
- F-126-B, the Snowden Bridge FAS construction project is scheduled for Spring of 2007. Preliminary survey work is being conducted this fall and engineering plans will be developed over the winter. Bids will be let in February or March.

### Expenditure Recap:

Proposed:

, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Federal Share		Match		Total
Direct Costs	3,083,986.00		1,027,995.00		4,111,981.00
Indirect @ 18.07%	533,113.00		177,705.00		710,818.00
Total	3,617,099.00	75.0%	1,205,700.00	25.0%	4,822,799.00

<sup>\*</sup> Indirect was not charged to equipment

Actual:

		Federal Share		Match		Total
Direct Costs		3,011,510.43		1,376,871.07		4,388,381.50
Indirect		520,490.59		(201,458.96)		
	Total	3,532,001.02	72.0%	1,376,871.07	28.0%	4,908,872

### **Project Personnel**

Karen Zackheim

Management Bureau Chief, Fisheries Division

406-444-3301

Adam Brooks

Federal Aid Program Manager

406-444-3032

### Attachments:

Tables Summarizing Survey and Inventory Accomplishments Fishing Log Newsletter – January 2006 Expenditures Summary

<sup>\*</sup> Additional MFWP regional staff is identified in the original Grant.

# MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS - FISHERIES DIVISION- ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Statewide Fisheries Investigations F-113-R-6 July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006 Grant Title: Grant Number: Report Period:

# SURVEY AND INVENTORY Project 1:

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		36 84 189	100	20 44 10 17	16 7
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	on 1 Actu		31	0 0 0 0	H &
	Region 1 Est A	5 12 15	20 25	8 3 3	
		Population Estimates and Inventory # of rivers surveyed # of small streams surveyed # of lakes/reservoirs/ponds surveyed	Monitoring Spawning # of streams/lakes monitored # streams monitored for fry survival/recruitment	Habitat Monitoring Limnological monitoring Stream bank habitat monitoring Substrate monitoring Stream flow monitoring	Creel Census Creel surveys Mail surveys/creel card surveys

TECHNICAL GUIDANCE
Project 2: TEC

Region 1   Region 2   Est   Actu	2         Region 3         Region 4           ztu         Est         Actu         Est         Actu           9         30         94         70         37           -         -         -         -           70         350         402         80         183           5         20         66         20         33           5         30         6         30         32
Actu  88  - 260 35 216 222 222 222 225 16 11 8 11 11 22 2	Regic
	<u>Actu</u> 88 - 260 35

### FY 2006 GRANT AGREEMENT SUMMARY

### F-113-R6

Montana Statewide Fisheries Management Program Summary of Estimated Costs and Objectives

Project/			Е	Sudgeted FY		FY 2006
Activity Titl	e/Objectives	Page in Grant		2006	E	xpenditures
Project 1. Survey and Inventory						
Activity 1 Region Surveys  1. To survey and monito populations and angler up 2. To annually assess ar 3. To identify opportunities	r the characteristics, statu ise and harvest on selecte nd monitor habitat condition es to improve aquatic hab	ed streams and lakes. Ins in selected waters.	\$	2,020,599	\$	1,800,912
and sport fish production	l.				\$	669,915
rates, and angler opinior 2. To develop and mana Fisheries Division, and c angler preference, and e	and distribution, annual has. ge fisheries data systems conduct surveys of angler conomic valuation of Mor	for the use,	\$	231,348	\$	245,181
fisheries resources.					\$	(13,833)
Information System that with current, accessible social values of Montana 2. Serve these data over state and federal users were served.	d update the MRIS databa will provide the department information on the distribu a's aquatic resources. The Web in a query base	nt and other agencies tion, biological, and diprogram and train	\$	-	\$	-
Project 2. Technical Guidance						
affect fisheries resource mitigate effects on these 2. Provide landowners a	overnment agencies that he s, and provide technical and resources.  Indicate the private parties will be the second of the private parties will be the second of the secon	th technical advice and	\$	1,245,751	\$ \$	1,320,170 (74,419)
		25	\$	96,943	\$	96,404
assure effective impleme federal laws in order to r	itat protection program an entation of applicable state ninimize development imp	d e and	*		\$	539
aquatic resources statev	viae.				*	003

Project 3. Fish Population Management

·					
Activity 1 Region Fish Management	27	\$	409,000	\$	448,302
<ol> <li>To implement fish stocking programs and/or fish eradication actions to maintain fish populations at levels consistent with habitat conditions and other limiting</li> </ol>					
factors.				\$	(39,302)
Project 4. Statewide Program Coordination					
Activity 1 Federal Aid Coordination and Audit	31	\$	27,111	\$	27,813
<ol> <li>To establish and maintain management control systems adequate to meet the requirements for participation in and administration of the Montana's Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Program.</li> <li>To conduct the agency's biennial audit in accordance with the Single Audit Act.</li> </ol>					
Will the engle i team is a				\$	(702)
Activity 2 Fishing Access Site Coordination  1. To coordinate the acquisition, development, and	32	\$	81,229	\$	78,140
maintenance of the fishing access site system to provide public access for fishing statewide.				\$	3,089
		В	udgeted	Ac	ctual FY 06
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (-equipment): 75% Federal + 25% State		\$	4,111,981	\$	3,842,125
Equipment (Actual) Indirect @ projected rate of 18.07%		\$	710,818	\$ \$	174,797 694,272
(Note: Indirect is not included for equipment #3819: \$178,290)  Total Direct plus Indirect costs		\$	4,822,799	\$	4,711,194
Federal Direct		\$	3,083,986	\$	2,881,594
Equipment Federal Indirect		\$	514,925	\$ \$	131,098 <u>520,704</u>
Federal Share (75%) with overhead		\$	3,598,911	\$ \$	3,533,396 (1,394)
Prior Year					
				\$	3,532,001