

Region 5

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
FISHERIES DIVISION

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

State: MONTANA Element 1: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
Project No: F-78-R-2 Job No: 3512
Project Title: STATEWIDE FISHERIES Job Title: MID-YELLOWSTONE
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM DRAINAGE
INVESTIGATIONS
Project Period: July 1, 1995 - June 30, 1996

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 fall 1995, we obtained a fish population estimate from the Yellowstone River near Laurel and did a snorkeling count of rainbow trout in the Allers section of the Boulder River. We ran mark-recapture estimates on one section of Rock Creek and one section of the Stillwater River in the spring of 1996. We collected trout from the Clarks Fork of the Yellowstone River for whirling disease evaluations.

As part of an ongoing inventory of purestrain Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations, we sampled in the West Fork of Rock Creek.

The Columbus crew flew the Boulder and Stillwater Rivers counting brown trout redds during fall and completed spring surveys of rainbow trout redds.

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.

As part of a continuing cooperative eradication project with the USFS, we removed brook trout from the headwaters of Soda Butte Creek. In another ongoing cutthroat enhancement cooperative project involving the BLM and USFS, we removed brown trout from the headwaters of Bad Canyon Creek upstream from a barrier.

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 in the mid-Yellowstone Drainage. We pursued acquisition, development, and protection of FAS's along the river, and dealt with complaints and site abuses. We commented on several Corps of Engineers permit applications and water use applications, as well as USFS allotment plans, wastewater projects, and pipeline proposals.

We collectively attended approximately 22 conservation district meetings and addressed 169 310 applications, as well as about 12 violations and at least a dozen Stream Protection Act applications.

We reviewed the EIS and are tracking the Crown Butte Mine permitting process. We have also been actively involved in evaluating the Crown Butte Mine application to relax water quality standards within streams bordering the proposed mine. We reviewed several EA's involving pipelines crossing the area.

We worked with DNRC and other local agency representatives to present a "Know Your Watershed" Workshop about the Rock Creek Drainage, and with the NRCS and landowners to create spawning areas in spring creeks near the Boulder River. We also cooperated with Urbani and Associates in rehabilitating and developing a spawning channel in a section of East Rosebud Creek.

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.

We gave electrofishing demonstrations and fisheries presentations to students from Columbus, Absarokee and Laurel during spring. We participated in a workshop entitled "Know Your Watershed" for the Rock Creek Drainage during April.

We provided information for the media and Fishing Log Newsletter, and held an international Public Outreach Symposium in Bozeman (June) through the Montana Chapter of the American Fisheries Society.

SUMMARY

We made progress on all objectives.

FINAL BUDGET STATUS

| <u>Amount Budgeted</u> | <u>Amount Spent</u> | <u>Balance of Funds</u> |
|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| \$91,738.00 | \$104,937.33 | \$-13,199.33 |

Regional Supervisor R. Ellis 9/6/96