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**MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS
FISHERIES DIVISION**

JOB PROGRESS REPORT

State: MONTANA Element 1: FISHERIES MANAGEMENT
Project No: F-78-R-1 Job No: 3561
Project Title: STATEWIDE FISHERIES Job Title: SOUTH CENTRAL MONTANA
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM WARMWATER FISHERIES
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.

We sampled Bighorn Lake and Cooney Reservoir during spring and fall. We also tracked walleye spawning in three tributaries feeding Cooney Reservoir. We sampled 19 other waters, 13 of which are private warmwater ponds where some public access is allowed.

We monitored dissolved oxygen levels and temperatures in Arapooish Pond, which is subject to winter kill.

We continued summarizing information gathered during the cooperative creel survey of Bighorn Lake conducted in 1992.

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.

Bighorn Lake was stocked with 4,000,000 walleye fry and 200,000 fingerlings. Cooney Reservoir received 100,000 fingerlings. We stocked 19 other lakes/ponds, included five new waters with largemouth bass.

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 warmwater fishing and fisheries issues in southcentral Montana, particularly about building, stocking, and managing private ponds. We also prepared many EA's for pond permits.

We attended three conservation district meetings, addressed 16 310 applications, and at least two violations. We reviewed flow allocations as part of the Musselshell Basin Commission and reviewed two applications for walleye tournaments for Bighorn Lake.

We continued to coordinate with the Big Horn County Parks Board in aerating Arapooish Pond. We contributed toward the construction of a pier and a boat ramp at Lake Elmo, and helped the Billings Fishing Club place habitat structures in the lake.

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. During spring and fall, we had three elementary school classes observe our sampling and fish handling at Lake Elmo, as well as three classes at Lake Josephine. We also participated in two kids' fishing days at Lake Josephine. We provided information to the media and Fisherman Log Newsletter.

SUMMARY

We progressed in all objectives.

FINAL BUDGET STATUS

<u>Amount Budgeted</u>	<u>Amount Spent</u>	<u>Balance of Funds</u>
\$45,347.00	\$1,766.90	\$10,122.21

Regional Supervisor_____