

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

FISHERIES DIVISION
JOB PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: MONTANA PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATION
PROJECT NO: STUDY TITLE: SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF
F 46-R-1 COLDWATER STREAMS
JOB NO: I-b JOB TITLE: WEST CENTRAL MONTANA COLDWATER
STREAMS INVESTIGATIONS
PROJECT PERIOD: July 1, 1987 through June 30, 1988

JOB OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure within legal and hydrologic constraints that flows in trout streams do not fall below 1975-1985 averages.
2. Maintain existing trout populations at or above the current densities in 5 to 10 test streams.
3. Maintain 100% of the region's stream banks and channels in their present or better condition.
4. Maintain water quality at current or improved conditions as reported in the 1986 Montana 305(b) Water Quality Report to the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.
5. Maintain fish populations and habitat in streams affected by resource development at levels at least as good as current status.
6. Implement the Bitterroot River/Painted Rocks water management plan and provide minimum instream flows at Bell Crossing consistent with the plan and water availability.
7. Maintain genetically pure WsCt populations with population structures at least as diverse as presently exists.
8. Develop a voluntary catch and release program for westslope cutthroat trout in rivers and streams to maintain genetically pure populations at least at current levels wherever they exist.
9. Maintain bull trout populations at least at current levels.
10. Increase the number of trout over 14 inches long in the Rock Creek population to at least 200 per mile.
11. Determine if a problem exists between floating and walking anglers on Rock Creek.
12. Maintain the combined number of wild rainbow and brown trout 14 inches and larger in the Darby section of the Bitterroot River at 100 per mile and in the Tucker Section at 160 per mile. Maintain rainbow standing crop of 300, of all sizes, in the Poker Joe section downstream from Stevensville.
13. Determine extent of fry loss to irrigation ditches in key spawning tributaries in the Bitterroot. Determine time period during which ditches pose the greatest threat to migrating fry.
14. Increase the number of rainbows 12 inches and larger in the Johnsrud section of the Blackfoot River to at least 300 per mile.
15. Maintain trout populations at least at current levels in the Blackfoot River upstream from Johnsrud Park.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OBJECTIVE 1: Review of new water use permits and negotiations with irrigators to maintain instream flows completed during the year.

OBJECTIVE 2: Monitored fish populations in stream sections to evaluate changes in trout population densities. Stream fishing closures in Daly and the West Fork of Rock Creek have resulted in population increases of westslope cutthroat trout. Initiated winter/spring catch and release season on Clark Fork, Blackfoot, and Bitterroot Rivers.

OBJECTIVE 3: Stream banks and channels protected through review and comments on 310 and Stream Protection Act permit reviews. Educational programs presented to schools and other agencies.

OBJECTIVE 4: Reviewed mine exploration and operating plans, sewage treatment plant operating permits, prepared fisheries data for Clark Fork River Task Force report.

OBJECTIVE 5: Reviewed timber sales, Forest plans, Forest water monitoring programs, communicated identified weaknesses of monitoring programs to agencies involved, participated in legislative review of forestry practices in Montana, and attended coordination meetings of local Forest land managers. Started identifying winter habitat needs of westslope cutthroat.

OBJECTIVE 6: Continue to work with water users, hire water commissioner, and maintained instream flows at Bell Crossing near 100 cfs during record low flow year of 1987.

OBJECTIVE 7: Exercise caution in new lake or stream plants, reestablished a pure westslope cutthroat population in LaValle Creek following a gasoline spill that eliminated the fish population. Continued evaluation of the fishing closures in Daly and the West Fork of Rock Creek on the native westslope cutthroat trout and bull trout.

OBJECTIVE 8: Cooperatively with other department staff developed voluntary regulations printed on Fishing regulations and started shooting westslope cutthroat video footage.

OBJECTIVE 9: Started fisheries project on Blackfoot River our best Bull trout fishery, changed fishing regulations, maintained contacts on bull trout spawning runs, continued educational efforts.

OBJECTIVE 10: Continued to maintain close contact with anglers using Rock Creek for changes in success which may indicate population changes. Rock Creek on a monitoring mode for fish population evaluation, due for sampling in 1989.

OBJECTIVE 11: Coordination of floater-bank angler public review with the USFS, creel census and angler attitude survey 1988.

OBJECTIVE 12: Maintain contact with local sportsman for changes in attitudes about the fishery. The Bitterroot River is in a monitoring mode for fish population evaluation, due for evaluation in 1988.

OBJECTIVE 13: No activity

OBJECTIVE 14: Planned new fisheries project for the Blackfoot River with assistance from Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

OBJECTIVE 15: Planned new fisheries project for the Blackfoot River with assistance from Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

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DATE: August 18, 1988