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MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

FISHERIES DIVISION
JOB PROGRESS REPORT

STATE: MONTANA PROJECT TITLE: STATEWIDE FISHERIES INVESTIGATIONS
PROJECT NO: F-46-R-1 STUDY TITLE: SURVEY AND INVENTORY OF COLDWATER STREAMS
JOB NO: I-i JOB TITLE: MID-YELLOWSTONE DRAINAGE INVESTIGATIONS
PROJECT PERIOD: July 1, 1987 THROUGH June 30, 1988

JOB OBJECTIVES AND DEGREE OF ATTAINMENT

1.) To maintain the reaches streambanks and channels in their present or improved condition.

Projects affecting stream habitat were dealt with through the Montana Stream Protection Act of 1963 (SPA) and the Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975 (310). During FY 1988, 25 SPA's and 61 310's were processed for the mid-Yellowstone River Drainage. In addition, approximately 20 310 violations were investigated.

2.) To ensure, within hydrologic constraints, that flows in streams supporting fisheries do not fall below minimums identified during the Yellowstone River instream reservation process.

Minimum instream flows determined in the Yellowstone River instream process were protected through review of 20 new water use permit applications during FY 1988.

3.) To maintain water quality at or above 1975-85 average levels as measured at U.S. Geological Survey water quality monitoring stations.

Two water discharge permit applications and three renewals were reviewed. Garbage dump sites discovered on the banks of the Clarks Fork River (2) and a side channel of the Yellowstone River (1) were reported to the Water Quality Bureau.

4.) To maintain fish populations and habitat in streams affected by resource development activity at levels at least as good as present status.

The impacts of a new exploratory adit on the east side of the Stillwater river drainage were monitored. The potential impacts of mine development in the East boulder Drainage were reviewed, and a study was proposed. Monitoring continued on the effects of sheep grazing along Meatrack Creek. Meetings were held with the Gallatin National Forest to discuss proposed timber sales and plans for roads.

5.) To reduce impacts on river stability and fish habitat caused by yearly maintenance at headgate structures.

Irrigation projects affecting river stability and fish habitat were dealt with through the Montana Streambed and Land Preservation Act of 1975, and two ten-year plans for annual maintenance of headgates were prepared as mandated under House Bill 661.

6.) To maintain a minimum of 123,000 angler days per year within the mid-Yellowstone drainage. (State funded)

Progress was made towards development of a management plan for the Stillwater Drainage, and fisheries information necessary for the development of a mid-Yellowstone River management plan was collected.

7.) To redistribute fishing pressure and minimize overcrowding through the purchase of additional access sites in key areas. (These areas include Rock Creek between Roberts and Joliet; Yellowstone River at Big Timber, between Columbus and Reedpoint and between Columbus and Laurel; and on the East and West Rosebud drainages.) (State funded).

No progress was achieved during this report period. A number of land parcels were investigated but no purchases were completed. Boat launching facilities were developed at Laurel.

8.) To maintain riparian and floodplain areas in their natural condition.

Maintaining riparian and floodplain areas in their natural condition was encouraged through review and comments pertaining to several subdivision proposals.

9.) To complete cutthroat trout inventory in one drainage of the mid-Yellowstone reach each year beginning in 1989. (State funded)

Cutthroat inventory work was completed in the Lower Deer Creek drainage (one year ahead of schedule) to offset a heavy workload anticipated for spring 1989.

10.) To complete inventory of cutthroat trout in the three forks of the Boulder drainage, east fork 1990, west fork 1991 and Main Boulder 1992.

Objective 10 is scheduled to be addressed at a later date.

11.) To increase public awareness of the diversity of opportunities and hazards of water-based recreation on mid-Yellowstone. (State funded)

No progress was achieved during this report period.

12.) To improve level of understanding among anglers regarding management policies and options, and encourage their participation in the decision-making process.

A series of public meetings concerning the development of a Stillwater drainage fisheries management plan were held at 5 locations. These meetings were intended to improve the level of angler understanding of management objectives and to gather angler comments. The draft plan is scheduled to be circulated in October 1988.

13.) To protect and maintain rainbow spawning areas in the upper Stillwater River in their present condition.

Several counts were made of rainbow trout using spawning areas in the upper Stillwater River. The Stillwater Mining Company sediment monitoring program is reviewed each year.

14.) To maintain cutthroat population numbers in Meatrack Creek at or above 1984 levels.

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks assists U.S. Forest Service in reviewing water quality and turbidity monitoring of grazing impacts in Meatrack Creek.

SUMMARY

Objective 7 was not accomplished because no new sites were purchased during the report period. A number of land parcels were investigated and negotiations are progressing on several other parcels. Objective 10 was not scheduled to be addressed during FY89. Objective 11 was not accomplished because of a shortage of funding to cover the cost of the project. EPP proposals to fund the project have been submitted three consecutive years without success. Progress on all other objectives was achieved.