

MONTANA STATE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
FEDERAL AID IN FISH RESTORATION SECTION
HELENA, MONTANA

JOB COMPLETION REPORT
INVESTIGATIONS PROJECTS

State of Montana

Project No. F-10-R-4

Job No. I-A

Title of Job: Appraisal of Public Lands

Abstract:

Preliminary aerial survey of public land tracts in four counties was made last spring. Project personnel were then reassigned to other projects for the season.

Objectives:

To appraise the public lands both under lease and not under lease for their value as public access to fishing waters of the State. These appraisals to be presented to the State Board of Land Commissioners and the Bureau of Land Management for such action by them as is appropriate to insure preservation of public access.

Techniques Used:

Each tract of public land on or near water is visited and appraisals are made as follows:

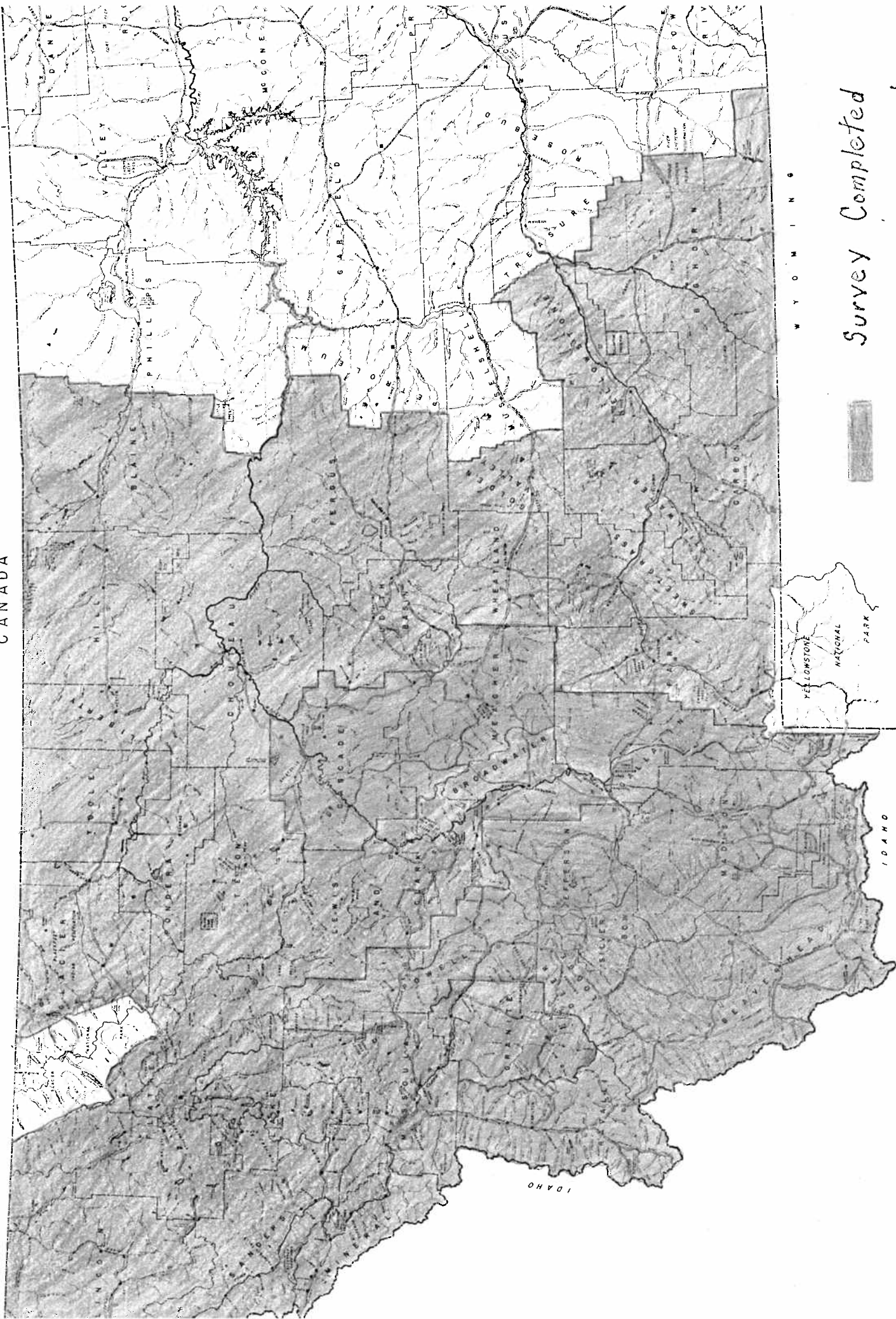
- a. Present land use;
- b. The present and potential value in general terms of the body of water for fishing and recreation;
- c. Value of the land as public access to the water;
- d. Present status of access to the water over each public land tract; and,
- e. Possible conflict of present land use with that proposed for public access.

Appraisal reports and recommendations were written and presented to the State Board of Land Commissioners and the Bureau of Land Management. Close contact was maintained by the project leader with the State Board of Land Commissioners and the Bureau of Land Management that their action on the appraisals and recommendations may be followed.

Findings:

The public land survey this year was started with an aerial survey of public lands in Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland and Golden Valley Counties. This was in

CANADA



Survey Completed

To be Surveyed

the nature of an experiment to see how effective aerial survey can be in land appraisal for fishing and recreation. It was planned to recheck these tracts from the ground to evaluate aerial survey by comparison with ground survey. The ground survey has not been made to date due to the project leader being assigned to work for the summer on F-15-D-2 and the project assistant being assigned to the State's Noxon Rapids project.

A map showing the area to be included in this project is attached. This shows the area already covered in addition to that to be covered in the future. The area not included on the map has been left out because of scarcity of water of a nature suitable for fish. Counties yet to be covered are those with less public land on water involved. Many of the remaining counties have a high percentage of National Forest land.

Recommendations:

The public land survey provides information to the State Land Board and the Bureau of Land Management on values of public land tracts for fishing and recreation. The Commissioner of State Lands attaches our report of fishery value to the file card of each land tract. By agreement with the Land Board, recommended lands are to be withheld from sale. The Bureau of Land Management keeps record of our recommendations and considers them along with other information they may have on lands for which sale applications have been received.

It is recommended that the aerial check of last spring be evaluated from ground survey and if found effective, should be used in completing the surveys. Some information can be gained from the district biologists on tracts they know in their area. It is hoped that through these sources that one more year after this will complete the survey.

This year the Montana Fish and Game Department hired a full-time land agent. Lands so far surveyed and recommended for retention will be turned over to him for further action, such as secondary withdrawal or easement to further insure access to these tracts for the public.

Summary:

Preliminary aerial survey of public land tracts in four counties was made last spring. Project personnel were then reassigned to other projects for the season.

Data and Reports.

The original records and reports are filed in the Helena office.

Prepared by Clinton G. Bishop

APPROVED BY Charles K. Phenicie

Date April 24, 1956