

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-5

Title of Job Appraisal of Public Lands

Job No. I

Name Classification of Public Lands

Period Covered May 1, 1956 to April 30, 1957

Abstract:

In 1956 public land survey was conducted on 243 tracts in Lincoln, Sanders, Flathead, Mineral and Missoula Counties to determine their desirability as fishing access. Of these tracts, 81 percent were recommended for withholding from sale. Natural drying up of streams was the main reason for not recommending the remaining tracts for retention from sale as fishing access.

To date, under this project, 91,000 acres have been requested for retention from sale through the Bureau of Land Management and 139,000 acres through the State Board of Land Commissioners.

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.
- 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:

Lincoln, Sanders, Flathead, Mineral and Missoula Counties were completed in the public land survey this year. Public land in 243 tracts was examined in these counties. One hundred ninety-seven tracts (81 percent) were recommended for retention from sale. This percentage is much higher than in previous years, due likely, to the greater abundance of water in this area. Lack of water due mainly to streams drying up naturally was the main reason for rejection.

To date project reports have been sent to the Bureau of Land Management requesting retention from sale of about 91,000 acres and to the State Board of Land Commissioners requesting retention from sale of about 139,000 acres.

A map showing the area included in this project is attached. Shown on the map is the area completed to date and the area yet to be completed.

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.

Work has been started with the Montana Fish and Game Department Land Agent in the acquisition of tracts for fishing access and as access to some of the public tracts. It is recommended that this work continue as rapidly as time permits.

Prepared by Clinton G. Bishop

Approved by George D. Holton
George D. Holton

Date August 30, 1957

MONTANA

