

# CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST FISHERIES PROGRAM 1999 ANNUAL REPORT

## C-T Forest FishFolks

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Forest Fish Biologist,  
**Lee Mabey**  
Fisheries Biologist,  
**Bill Janowsky**  
Fisheries Biologist,  
**Ted Kellogg**  
Forest Fish BioTech,  
**Alex Gouley**  
Co-op Fish Biologist

## Fish Survey Crew

**Mariah Blackhorse,**  
**Amanda Rugenski,**  
**Laura Thel,**  
**Shaun Anderson,**  
**Sarah Vroom,**  
**Cory Redman,**  
**Heidi Woolstenhulme**

## External Partners



US Bureau of Reclamation



Idaho Dept Fish & Game



Henry's Fork Foundation



US Fish and Wildlife Service



## C-T Forest Fish and Stream Surveys The Exploration Continues

To effectively protect and restore our Forest's fisheries resources, the first item of business is to determine what's out there. To determine the condition of the fish populations and their habitat on the Caribou-Targhee National Forest, the Forest Fish Crew, led by Ted Kellogg, utilized 2 survey methods in 1999; the cutthroat trout distribution and R1/R4 habitat surveys.



Yellowstone cutthroat trout sampled during the cutthroat trout distribution survey in Indian Creek.

The Caribou-Targhee Forest cutthroat trout distribution survey uses electroshocking to capture fish within fixed stream reaches. These fish are identified to species, measured, fin clipped for genetic analysis, and released. Habitat data is also collected at each sample reach. For the past 4 years, this survey method has been used to systematically sample streams throughout the Forest, from north to south. The distribution survey was used on 18 streams on the Forest in 1999, mostly in the South Fork Snake River area. Plans for the Year 2000 include visits to streams on Soda Springs and Montpelier Ranger Districts.

The R1/R4 Survey is a total watershed survey, where instream and riparian habitat data are documented from the mouth of a stream to its headwaters. Rainey Creek was surveyed in 1999 using this survey methodology. We plan to survey Burns and Pine Creeks (other South Fork Snake tributaries) in 2000 using the R1/R4 Survey.

The data from both surveys are currently being entered in databases and summarized in reports. The reports will be distributed to our internal and external partners upon completion. We are already using the data collected last summer for fisheries, timber, recreation, range, and watershed planning efforts.

Both IDFG and Bureau of Reclamation were extremely valuable partners for our 1999 survey season.



Caribou-Targhee Forest Fisheries Crew electroshocking Pine Creek during the cutthroat trout distribution survey.

# Golden Lake/Thurmon Creek Project

## Replacing Nonnative Fish with Native Cutthroat Trout

In October, Capurso, Kellogg, and Mabey assisted IDFG with the Golden Lake/Thurmon Creek native cutthroat trout restoration project in Harriman State Park and the surrounding Forest lands. The objective of this project is to convert the nonnative salmonid community back to native Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

Forest Fisheries personnel worked with Idaho Fish and Game and Henry's Fork Foundation Biologists to salvage enormous rainbow and brook trout from Golden Lake for release in the Henry's Fork. Barriers to upstream fish migration were built downstream of the lake and its inlets. A piscicide, antimycin, was distributed throughout the lake and its inlets to eradicate the remaining nonnative fish in the system.



Capurso salvages a Golden Lake rainbow trout for release in the Henry's Fork.



Ted Kellogg handles a Golden Lake brook trout.

Effectiveness monitoring will continue into the spring. If we observe many surviving nonnative fish, we will likely treat the system with antimycin once again next Fall. If the first treatment was successful, we will begin to transplant native cutthroat trout to recolonize the lake and streams. Preliminary monitoring, including lake gill nets and stream electroshocking by IDFG, Henry's Fork Foundation, and Forest Service Biologists indicate few nonnative trout survivors.

## Fisheries Program Support to Other Forest Programs

A large part of what we do as Fisheries Biologists is assisting other disciplines on the District and Forest levels in project planning. Some of the projects we assisted the Forest with in 1999 include the Forest Travel Plan, numerous recreation projects (coal creek lot, Big Holes trail crossing improvements, sheep driveway improvements), several stream restoration

projects, range reviews and restoration, mining projects, and timber projects (Box Canyon and Squaw/Papoose, East Beaver/Miners, and salvage sales). We prepare cutthroat trout biological assessments for each ground disturbing activity and work closely with USFWS through the consultation process.

# Free Fishing Day Celebration



The sure hands of an experienced angler.

One Saturday last June, Jim Capurso and Ted Kellogg joined Robin Jenkins (Ashton/Island Park Ranger District Recreation Manager) and Jim Wilkinson (Henry's Fork Foundation Aquatic Entomologist) at Mill Pond near Island Park for a Free Fishing Day celebration. We hosted approximately 50 children from throughout Southeast Idaho. While fishing with the children, we taught them fishing techniques, sport ethics, and aquatic biology. Robin Jenkins did most of the event preparation. Robin and Ted received numerous contributions from local merchants, including rods, reels, nets, and tackle as prizes for the children. Most of the children participating in the event went home with prizes and fish. Plans for next year's Free Fishing Day includes additional derbies in more locations across the Forest. If you are interested in participating, contact your local Fisheries Biologist.



A family inspecting their Free Fishing Day catch.



A long catch on a short pier.

# Fish Barrier Fixed on Tygee Creek



Tygee fish passage conduit after placement. The floor of the concrete conduit simulates a natural stream bottom by retaining some bedload. The conduit grade and elevation is the same as Tygee Creek.

Correcting an impassable culvert on Tygee Creek, a tributary to the Henry's Fork River, was one of the initial challenges to the new Forest Fisheries program. We worked directly with the Forest Engineers, assisting them to develop a structure that provides upstream passage to the genetically pure Yellowstone cutthroat trout that inhabit the stream. The perched culvert was replaced with a concrete box conduit, pre-fit with low relief weirs. The weirs were designed to retain stream bedload to simulate a natural streambed within the conduit.

Earlier in the spring, the Forest Fisheries Crew worked with Henry's Fork Foundation Biologists to sample the genetics of the Tygee Creek cutthroat trout population. Because of their genetic purity, this population will likely be a source for reestablishing Yellowstone cutthroat trout in Golden Lake and Thurmon Creek.

## Service, Partnerships, and Accountability

These are 3 concepts the Caribou-Targhee Fisheries Program is being built upon.

During my first few months on the Forest, I developed a strategy in which each district would be provided the best degree of service possible, considering the limited number of Fisheries Biologists on the Forest. Under this plan, Lee Mabey provides professional fisheries input to Island Park/Ashton, Teton Basin, and Westside Ranger Districts, and the Curlew Grasslands. Bill Janowsky provides professional fisheries input to Soda Springs Ranger District and assists Montpelier Ranger District upon request. Alex Gouley, our Fisheries co-op student currently attending Utah State University, will assist where needed. Ted Kellogg serves as Forest Fisheries Technician, supervising crews and collecting the survey data needed to establish credible restoration plans and provide quality project support. I provide District level professional Fisheries service to Dubois,

Palisades, and Montpelier Ranger Districts while serving as Forest Fisheries Program Manager.

We have strong appreciation for all of the partners that helped us achieve what we did in 1999, especially Idaho Dept. Fish & Game, Bureau of Reclamation, Henry's Fork Foundation, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. We continue to invest energy in the development of additional partnerships.

This annual report is an example of another feature we hold with high esteem, accountability. We, as an agency, can do a much better job at communicating and highlighting our successes. This is one tool the Forest Fisheries program will use to do so.

*James Capurso*  
Forest Fisheries Biologist



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