

CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST FISHERIES PROGRAM 2004 ANNUAL REPORT

C-T Forest Fish Bios



James Capurso

C-T National Forest
Fisheries Biologist,

Lee Mabey

Henry's Fork
Fisheries Biologist,

Louis Berg

Soda Sprgs/Montpelier
Fisheries Biologist,

Ted Kellogg

C-T Forest Fisheries
Biological Technician

Featured External Partners



US Bureau of Reclamation



Trout Unlimited



US Fish and Wildlife Service



Idaho Dept Fish & Game



Natural Resource
Conservation Service



Bear Lake Regional
Commission

Fish Screen Construction Begins on Thomas Fork Irrigation Diversions

Three full-spanning diversion structures on the Thomas Fork of the Bear River have been killing fish... a lot of fish. In fact, according to a study by the University of Wyoming, one particular diversion alone has lured more than half of the downstream-migrating Bonneville cutthroat trout to their death in Thomas Fork Valley agricultural fields. The 3 major diversions on the river are the Taylor Diversion near Geneva, Thomas Fork Diversion near Raymond, and Esche Diversion near Border Junction.

A grassroots restoration project is currently retrofitting the 3 diversions with fish screens and bypass channels so fish can safely migrate upstream and downstream past the diversion structures. Project partners include U.S. Forest Service, Trout Unlimited, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Bear Lake Regional Commission, Natural Resource Conservation Service, IDFG, and the water users of the Thomas Fork Valley.



Local contractor Bryce Boehme prepares the foundation for the Thomas Fork Diversion screen and bypass flume chamber

Most project construction funds have been spent within the local economy, with construction workers, heavy machinery, equipment, and materials coming from nearby communities.

This fall, a concrete chamber for the fish screen and bypass flume was poured for the Taylor Diversion and the bypass channels were excavated for the Taylor and Thomas Fork Diversions. All work on the Taylor and Thomas Fork diversions will be completed in time for the 2005 irrigation season. Construction on the Esche Diversion will occur in the late summer of 2005.



The cement walls and floor at the Taylor Diversion inlet will serve as the fish screen and bypass flume chamber.

Forest Fisheries Staff, Trout Unlimited, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have hosted annual Thomas Fork Water Users Workshops in Geneva since 2002. These workshops help irrigators understand the needs of fish that use the Thomas Fork in light of irrigation needs. Future workshops will also review the operation and maintenance of the new fish screens.

Sawtell Creek Gets an Extreme Makeover

The Sawtell Creek Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project continued in 2004 with habitat improvements and the second piscicide treatment. In 2003, Sawtell Creek was selected as the next target stream to replace non-native fish populations with native Yellowstone cutthroat trout to secure the long term viability of native cutthroat trout populations in the Henrys Fork Drainage. A first piscicide treatment occurred that year.

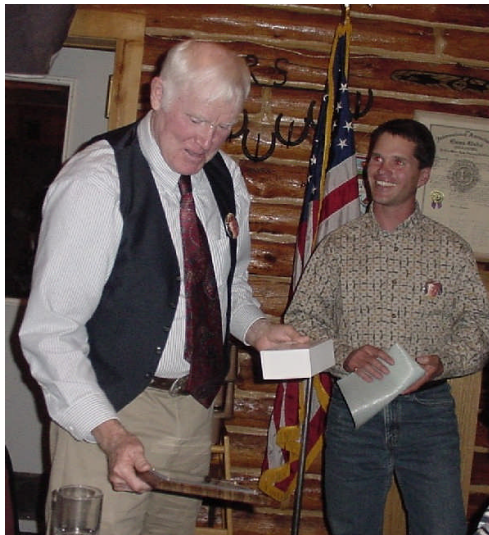
In the fall of 2004, water storage reservoirs near the bottom of the drainage were altered to improve their ability to rear fish. Channelized segments of Sawtell Creek were restored to their natural channels. The second of two piscicide treatments occurred to complete the elimination of brook trout from the drainage. Effectiveness monitoring indicated the chemical treatments were completely successful. Physical habitat improvements will be completed and Yellowstone cutthroat trout will be reintroduced in 2005. Project partners include NRCS, IDFG, Henrys Fork Foundation, and the Mickelsen 7-Ranch.



Improvements on the Sawtell Creek water storage reservoirs included replacing the outlet works so the pond water levels are more deep and stable (above). Segments of Sawtell Creek, dried by past irrigation practices, were re-watered for the first time in decades in 2004 (below).



Ted Kellogg Hangs Up His FS Waders



Ted Kellogg receives a roasting from Jim Fredericks, Idaho Department of Fish and Game Regional Fisheries Manager, at his retirement party.

At the end of May 2004, Ted Kellogg, Caribou-Targhee National Forest Fisheries Biological Technician, hung his Forest Service waders out to dry for the last time. At his retirement party at the Relay Station Restaurant near St. Anthony, he was roasted by many of his friends and colleagues. His primary retirement gift, a float boat, has received intensive use throughout the first summer of retirement.

Ted Kellogg was responsible for supervising the Forest Fisheries Crews during their fish distribution and habitat surveys during the last 5 years of extensive survey efforts. He maintained crew effectiveness and quality of work. Under his supervision, the fish crews surveyed and produced reports for every stream on the Forest. Ted's absence leaves a gaping hole in the Forest Fisheries Program.

Great Turnout for 2004 Free Fishing Day Events

The Caribou-Targhee National Forest hosted 3 Free Fishing Day Celebrations throughout Southeast Idaho in June 2004. Free Fishing Day is an opportunity to share the value of our fisheries resources and instill proper sport ethics in children. The Free Fishing Day Events were held at Mill Pond in Island Park, the Little Lemhi Boy Scout Camp near the South Fork Snake River, and Kelly Park Pond in Soda Springs. Nearly 250 children and their parents participated in the events.



Kids' prizes were contributed by local and national merchants, including Dave's Tackle and Sports, Alco Discount Stores, Jama Villa, All Seasons Angler, Big 5 Sporting Goods, All American Sports, Cal Ranch Stores, Chota Outdoor Gear, Fishboy, FlyLogic, Fred Meyers, General Plastics, Hydes Drift Boats, Idaho Sporting Goods, K-Mart, Shopko, Sportsmans Warehouse, Target, and Walmart. At the end of the day, every kid went home with prizes in their arms and smiles on their faces. Look for next year's C-T National Forest Free Fishing Day Events on June 11, 2005.



Free Fishing Day Activities at Mill Pond, Island Park (top), Little Lemhi Boy Scout Camp, Palisades (middle), and Kelly Park Upper Pond in Soda Springs (bottom and left).

Garden Creek Restoration Project Nearly Complete

The interagency effort to restore Garden Creek as it flows through Conant Valley Ranch continued in 2004. The intent of the project is to re-establish connectivity between the resident Garden Creek Yellowstone cutthroat trout population on the Forest and the cutthroat trout in the river, increasing the long term viability of the Garden Creek fish population. Past irrigation and livestock activities on the ranch eliminated the structure and function of the stream channel, isolating the Yellowstone cutthroat trout population in upper Garden Creek.

This year, the remainder of the stream channel was excavated through Conant Valley Ranch. A small irrigation reservoir on Garden Creek was removed and a new point of diversion and fish screen were established for the pivot sprinkler system installed last year. A fence was constructed around the entire new stream channel to protect it from livestock on the ranch.



The newly excavated channel for Garden Creek meanders through Conant Valley Ranch between the Forest and the South Fork. A newly installed 4-pole fence protects the stream from livestock.



A self-cleaning, fish-screened irrigation pump inlet was placed on the bottom of the new Garden Creek stream channel, within the old pond bed location.

In the spring of 2005, a large culvert will be installed by the Idaho Transportation Department at the Highway 26 crossing of Garden Creek and native vegetation will be planted along the stream corridor. Annual water use coordination meetings between Conant Valley Ranch, Trout Unlimited, and the Forest will help incorporate consideration of fish needs into daily water use on the ranch.

This project is a partnership between Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Trout Unlimited, Conant Valley Ranch, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Idaho Transportation Department, Bureau of Land Management, and others. It is a feature project of the Trout Unlimited South Fork Home Rivers Initiative.

Road-Related Sediment is Reduced at Clear Creek



Before the project, the small culvert at Clear Creek would plug and road run-off would erode the fill, delivering sediment to the stream.

In late summer, Fisheries and Hydrology personnel from Soda Springs Ranger District directed the correction of the perennially failing Clear Creek culvert located under the Brockman Road (FS Road 77). The old small culvert continually clogged and the crossing location was a low spot, encouraging erosion and direct drainage into Clear Creek. Clear Creek, a tributary of McCoy Creek, is considered by the C-T Forest as a Yellowstone cutthroat trout stronghold stream.

The intent of the project was to decrease sediment delivery to Clear Creek and increase the capacity of the crossing. The existing 36" diameter culvert was replaced with a 60" diameter culvert. The larger culvert was partially embedded in the stream channel to simulate a natural stream bottom. Drainage was improved near the crossing to direct road surface water away from the stream and into vegetation. Beaver dam building activities were discouraged with the placement of fencing upstream of the culvert inlet. The construction area was planted with native grass seed.



The project included the placement of a larger culvert, and improvement of road drainage.

Burns Creek: Making the Best Better

A major premise of restoration ecology is to restore and protect the best habitat first and extend restoration efforts out from there. Such is the case with C-T Forest efforts to restore Yellowstone cutthroat trout populations in the South Fork of the Snake River.

Burns Creek, one of the Forest's most important Yellowstone cutthroat trout stronghold streams, is relatively pristine but has been experiencing impacts from trespass cattle, legal trail use, and increasing illegal trail development. The Palisades District Trail Crew, in partnership with State Parks and Rec built trail bridges at eroding fords, and

improved existing trail segments. A fence was constructed to exclude cattle from upper Burns drainage. Next spring, illegal trails in the riparian area will be eliminated.



Explosives were used to improve a segment of Burns Creek Trail prior to eliminating illegal riparian trail development in lower Burns Creek.

Projects Improve Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Habitat

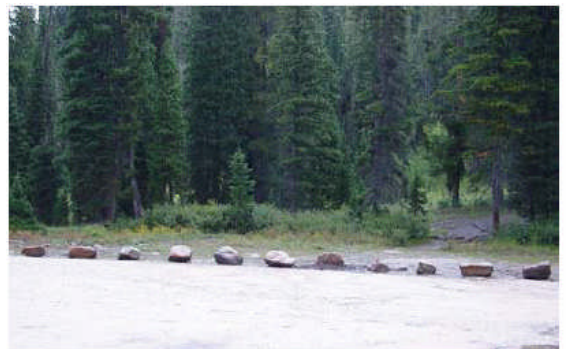
Fish distribution surveys performed over the last 5 years by the Forest on the Montpelier Ranger District have identified formally undocumented Bonneville cutthroat trout stronghold streams and restoration opportunities. Bonneville cutthroat populations were documented in Emigration, Maple, and Sugar creeks in the Bear River Mountain Range.

Emigration Creek was surveyed by the Forest fish distribution survey crew in 2000. Bonneville cutthroat trout were the only fish species observed in the stream. In summer 2004, some sediment sources identified during the survey were addressed by replacing a trail ford with a bridge and defining parking areas with boulders to keep motor vehicles out of the stream and riparian area. An additional bridge will be installed next year to complete the project.

Maple and Sugar creeks were surveyed by the Forest fish distribution survey crew in 2001. Both streams support pure populations of Bonneville cutthroat trout, but were being impacted by sediment delivery from trails. In these drainages, sedimentation was reduced in 2004 by improving trail drainage, converting old ford stream crossings to bridges, and relocating trail segments out of riparian areas. In Sugar Creek alone, 2.5 miles of trail were relocated out of riparian areas in 2004.



A trail bridge was constructed over Emigration Creek to decrease trail-related sediment delivery to the stream.



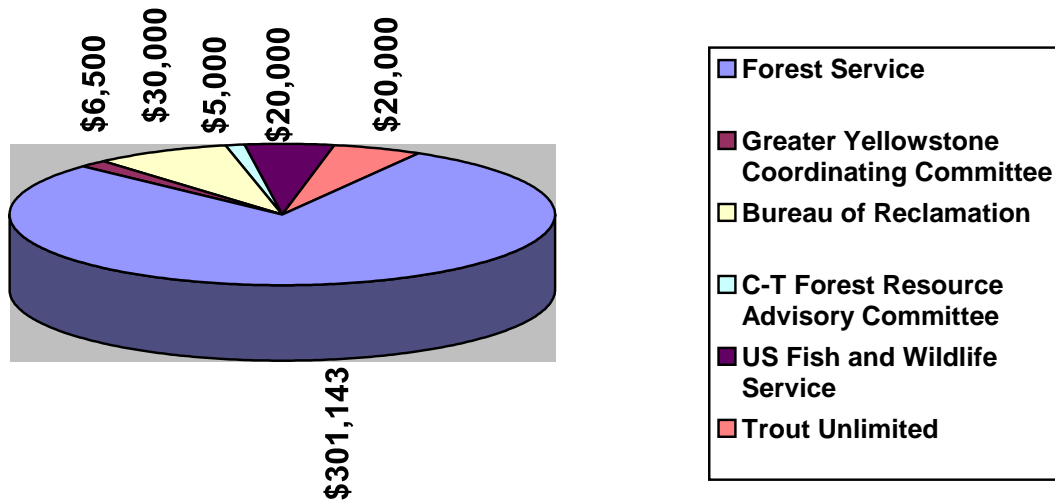
A trailhead parking area near Emigration Creek was delineated with rock to exclude motor vehicles from the riparian area.



Drainage of the Maple and Sugar Creek trails were improved to decrease sediment delivery to the streams. Here, a culvert was installed under Sugar Creek Trail.

These projects are expected to benefit Bonneville cutthroat trout by reducing sediment delivery to the streams. Decreasing sedimentation can increase water quality, fish reproductive success, fish rearing habitat, and fish food supply.

2004 Caribou-Targhee Forest Fisheries Program Funding



What Will They Say About You When you Go?

Throughout my career, I have supervised more than 100 employees in the Fisheries Programs I helped establish throughout the Pacific Northwest, Northern, and Intermountain Regions. Most of them have been temporary Fisheries Technicians that have by now moved onto bigger and better opportunities in the world of Fisheries management. I have never had anyone retire on me before.

I remember sitting there during Ted's retirement party thinking about how perfectly he ended his Federal employment chapter of his life. How beautiful his exit was! He dedicated decades of his life to fisheries conservation and, in culmination of that effort, he led Forest Fisheries Crews to carefully document fish distribution and habitat conditions on every stream on the Forest. I remember getting my hands on the old 1940's U.S. Fish Commission stream surveys of the upper Willamette system and how valued those surveys were to me for baseline condition data when I worked there. I know a young Fisheries Biologist that manages

Forest land in Southeast Idaho decades from now will experience the same sense of excitement as I did with those old 1940 survey reports. Ted served us all with his enthusiasm for fisheries conservation. He left while he was at the top of his game. That's a beautiful thing.

James Capurso

C-T National Forest Fisheries Biologist



Ted Kellogg
C-T Forest Fisheries Bio Tech



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202) 720-2791. To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call (202)720-7327 (voice) or (202)720-1127(TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.