



Caption: Tina Kingsberry, (USDA Forest Service), Holly Morris, (Fox 5 Morning Show), David Young, Tyrone Hood, Daimen Henderson, Celina Elphage (USDA Forest Service), Pamela Williams (USDA Forest Service), Joaquin Howell, Joaquinna Howell, Jerome Hood, Jamal Kingsberry, and Kelly Young at the 2004 National Fishing and Boating Week kids fishing day in Washington, DC.

FishTales[®]

***A Final Peek at Fisheries, Aquatic Ecology
and Watersheds in the***

USDA FOREST SERVICE

March 7-11, 2005

Dave Cross -

More than one reader noted that last week's edition had no quote in our **Sensory Stimulation** section. My apologies; we have tried to make it up to you with more than our usual single quote – enjoy!

This week I attended the Sportfishing and Boating Partnership Council meeting here in DC. Secretary Norton, Director Steve Williams and Assistant Director Mime Parker PhD, praised the Council for their active participation in development of the strategic plan for the FWS and spoke

of their eagerness to see the Council's recommendations. Director Williams and Assistant Director Parker made it clear that the Service's fisheries program would no longer "wait and see, their plan is to go and tell". They have had over 200 Hill visits in the past week. I continue to be impressed by the positive impact of this FACA committee on the fisheries program of the USFWS. The Council provides an excellent vehicle for their partners to actively participate in Service strategic planning and implementation with accountability.

At this meeting Bill Hograth PhD, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries at NOAA presented NOAA's Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan and spoke of the need for better communication with partners. Council members applauded the efforts of his agency and staff to be present at many of the national boating and fishing events around the country in the past year and how critical it was to keeping an effective dialogue going on the balance of commercial and RecFish needs.

I finished drafts of several responses to Congress regarding our budget and completed the reviews of 40 Hutton scholar applications for the summer of 2005.

Bill Lorenz -

Bill worked at home this week on appeals.

News from Around the Country

- **On Rebuilding Fisheries** - Washington D.C. – In a scientific double whammy, researchers report that fishing pressure is causing fish to evolve to smaller sizes, just as new studies show that larger fish are critical to sustaining populations. In species such as Pacific rockfish, the big, old females not only produce exponentially more eggs than younger, smaller females, but their hearty larvae have a far greater chance of survival. Keeping these big fish in the water increases the chances of strong population numbers in the next generation – which is paramount to the recovery of overfished stocks.

Representing three fisheries science sessions from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) meeting, Steve Berkeley of UC Santa Cruz, Larry Crowder of Duke University, Andy Rosenberg of the University of New Hampshire and a member of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, and Jeremy Jackson of Scripps Institution of Oceanography highlight the latest advances in genetics, biology, and evolutionary science that point to new strategies for maintaining fisheries.

As a former leader in the National Marine Fisheries Service, Andy Rosenberg has faced the difficult realities of implementing new fisheries policies. "Over the last ten years the management struggle has been to begin to bring massive overexploitation under control, and that struggle has had some success – but rebuilding fish-stocks is another matter," says Rosenberg.

"Many scientists and managers are converging on similar issues – something is just not right with how we are doing things," says Steve Berkeley.

Old Fish Never Retire

Fishing disproportionately removes older fish - which are larger and more highly prized. In fact, management often seeks to shift fishing pressure to these older fish in an effort to let younger, fast growing fish reach spawning age.

Researchers have long known that older fish produce exponentially more larvae. A 50 cm Bocaccio rockfish, for example, will produce nearly 200,000 larvae, while an 80 cm fish will produce ten times that - nearly 2 million. These larvae are released into harsh ocean conditions without parental care. For fish, spawning is like entering the lottery, and the older, larger fish have many more lottery tickets. "For northern cod, only one in a million make it to age three," says Jeff Hutchings of Dalhousie University. Similarly, for many species of Pacific rockfish, only a tiny fraction of mothers – about one in a thousand - succeed in contributing to the next generation of fish, according to Daniel Gomez-Uchida of Oregon State University.

But scientists only recently discovered that the larvae of old fish also have better odds of survival. Berkeley started investigating this advantage after observing Pacific rockfish spawning patterns. He noticed that older females spawned early in the season. And when he looked at the next generation of fish, there were years when most of them had birth dates corresponding with these early spawning events. He wondered whether it was just the timing of release that mattered, or whether the older mothers were somehow giving their offspring a leg-up in life.

"I was astounded when I got the results," says Berkeley. "I suspected some difference, but not the overwhelming difference that we saw – survival rates were nearly three times higher, and growth rates were 3.5 times faster for larvae from older mothers."

Berkeley's team discovered that older mothers produce larvae with a larger oil globule, a sack lunch packed by mom that the baby fish relies on if faced with starvation. Early spawning can also give the larvae a boost when it coincides with peaks in zooplankton. By removing the big, old fish, we lose the benefits of their fecundity and superior larvae, and we also shorten the spawning season – all of which reduce the chances of a robust cohort of recruits the next year.

"Without the oldest females," says Larry Crowder of Duke University, "populations lose their best hope for the success of future generations - the resiliency that can compensate for overfishing."

"Rockfish can live to be 100 years old," says Berkeley. "People understand that you can cut down a 100 year old tree in five minutes, but that it takes 100 years to grow a new one. Old fish are the same way, they accumulate over decades, even centuries, and in a flash they're gone – we can remove them much faster than they can rebuild."

Evolution in Our Lifetimes

Having fewer and smaller fish may not bother the average consumer just yet, but creates a "Darwinian debt" for future generations. Researchers say that the evolutionary effect of fishing has been a blind spot for managers – overlooked, downplayed, ignored because of the complexity, or just not on the radar screen. "The truly worrisome aspect is that repairing evolutionary damage is vastly more difficult than causing it," says Ulf Dieckmann. "The debt we build up is increasing at a sky-high interest rate."

While many think of evolution as a slow, historical process, research by Jeff Hutchings (Dalhousie University), David Conover (Stony Brook University), Mikko Heino (Institute of Marine Research in Norway), Ulf Dieckmann (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria) and others shows that by taking out the big fish, we are actually driving selection for smaller fish that mature earlier. Studies show fishing pressures can significantly change the genetic composition of fish populations in as little as 20 to 50 years.

"We see it in the models, in the lab, and in the real world – smaller fish and fewer of them," says Heino, a co-organizer of one of the AAAS fisheries sessions. "Since these changes are genetic," adds Hutchings, "they are not readily reversible – we'll be stuck with them for a long time. No one wants that – fishermen or conservationists."

Scientists now have evidence that the age of sexual maturation in several populations of cod has been reduced by a quarter, and for plaice (a type of flatfish) nearly a third. "These examples are probably just the tip of the iceberg," says Heino. "We've detected fisheries-induced evolution in almost every species we've studied."

Researchers are also documenting the links between size and other traits that are key to long-term survival. In experiments with Atlantic silversides, size-selective fishing altered production by a factor of two in just four generations of fish. "And by selectively harvesting the largest fish, we end up changing the whole biology – not only growth rates, but egg size, fecundity, feeding behavior... even the number of vertebrae – we're changing an entire suite of traits," says Conover. "The scary part is that when we stopped size-selective harvest, the biology didn't change back...it was permanent."

"Resource managers and decision-makers need to be aware that fishing can cause genetic changes - changes to characteristics that are vitally important to the continuity of the population," says Hutchings.

Overfishing Can Reach a Point of No Return

Cod off the coast of Newfoundland - once one of the largest populations in the world – has suffered a 99% decline since the 1960s. Hutchings latest work shows that the changes in size and age at maturity caused by just 30-50 years of fishing have reduced the chance of cod's recovery by 25-30%. Hutchings' findings confirm the importance of keeping old fish in the sea and may explain the failure of closures to bring about a rebound in the cod population.

Researchers suspect that this evolutionary change is happening with other stocks too. "We have this belief, that we can knock down fish populations to exceedingly low levels and they can bounce back rapidly," says Hutchings. "Not to say that it can't happen. But little or no recovery appears to be the general pattern. Unfortunately, it appears to be the exception that drives policy."

Genetic and ecological studies led by Ralph Larson of San Francisco State University point to an additional problem with current management. Larson's work shows that simply keeping enough spawners in the sea isn't enough to prevent populations from crashing – first you need the big fish, but you also need big fish throughout their geographic range. Each year only a subset of rockfish spawn successfully, and it's impossible to predict where these "winners" will be from year to year. "If we want to have more consistent levels of replenishment from year to year– rather than a boom and bust cycle – we have to protect spawners throughout their range," he says.

Solutions

While the scientists acknowledge that there is no quick and easy way to integrate the true complexity of fish population dynamics into management, they all point to the need to preserve large, old fish and maintain the balance of age classes in the population.

"If the new studies are widely applicable to other species, then it isn't a question of doing a better job, it is a question of doing a different job. The old management tools will not work to protect age structure or genetic diversity, or prevent local depletions – we'll have to use new tools to achieve new objectives," says Berkeley.

Crowder calls for new strategies that address cumulative impacts on fish populations and protect entire segments of struggling populations. "We have to move toward true ecosystem based management," he explains. "Commercial and recreational fishing have reduced top predators to a remnant of their former abundances, but pollution and nutrients from the land also drive fish, crabs, and shrimp to suboptimal habitat, making it even harder for these populations to recover – it's in fact a triple whammy."

One approach consistent with ecosystem-based management is ocean zoning. "Some areas might be totally protected, some closed seasonally, some open to commercial fishing, some only open for recreational fishing and so on," says Berkeley. "As far as protecting age structure and maintaining big old fish, I can't come up with anything better than a marine reserve-type approach where you protect a segment of the population from fishing. There may be other approaches

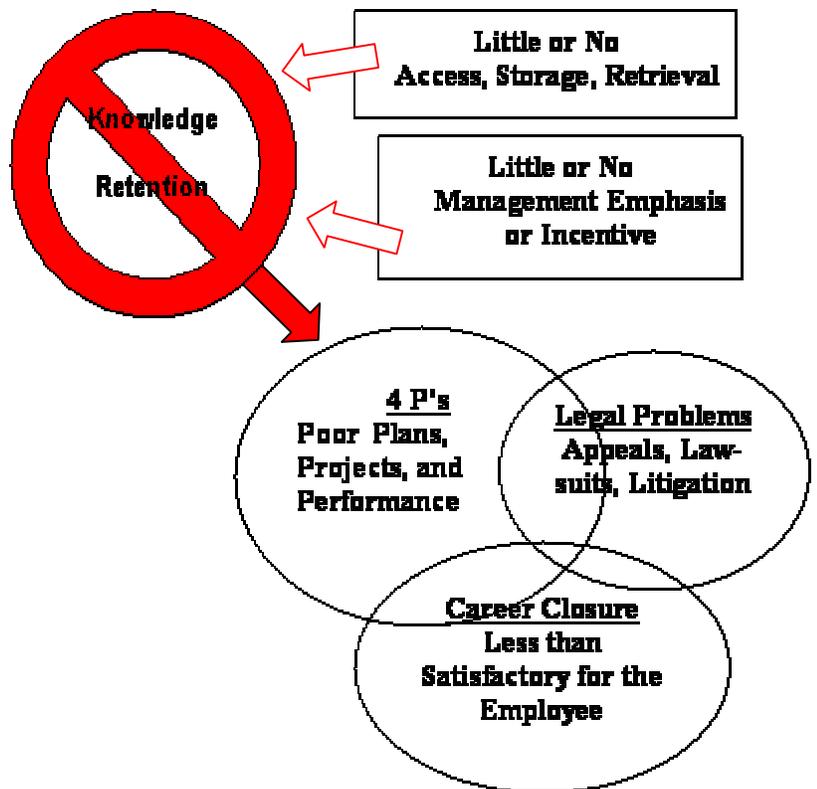
that would work, but I think we know enough to get a good start on a network of marine reserves."

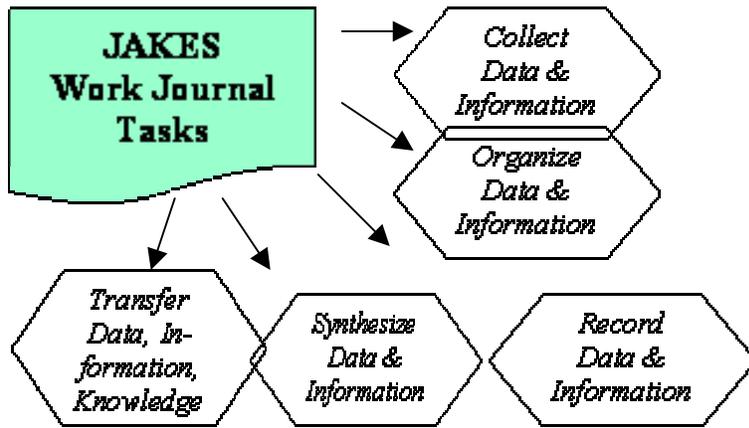
"We need to protect some fish of all ages, genetic diversity and a functioning marine ecosystem if we expect to recover the huge losses we have incurred by overexploitation in the past," says Rosenberg. "We have been ingenious enough to figure out how to overexploit a very big ocean. We must now be ingenious enough to figure out how to deal with the complexity and regain our lost resources."

- **Retaining Job Acquired Knowledge in the Natural Science Disciplines**

A USDA-Forest Service Human Resource Workforce Project (1/05)

Currently and for over the next decade, the USDA-Forest Service workforce will continue to encounter a tremendous number of retirements with reduced compensating hiring of replacements or recruitments within the natural science disciplines. This has a significant potential to widen the "institutional memory and knowledge gap" within the agency. Two primary factors are involved. First, easy access to on-the-job acquired knowledge and experience of natural resource disciplines is either non-existent or unobtainable. Second, little or no management emphasis or incentives are in place to preserve or retain these agency assets. The consequences are major management problems such as (a) flawed or failed projects, plans and programs because little or no learning was documented from previous efforts, (b) more appeals and lawsuits due to weak or poor planning documents, many cases based on the agency's track record stated in (a), so "history is assured to repeat itself", (c) less than a fulfilling conclusion or closure to a professional career upon retirement, perpetuating the feeling, "who cares, it was just a government job." Incentives and techniques designed to retain the knowledge and experience of retiring personnel in the fields of natural resource management could be effective tools to address this ever-increasing agency "brain-drain."





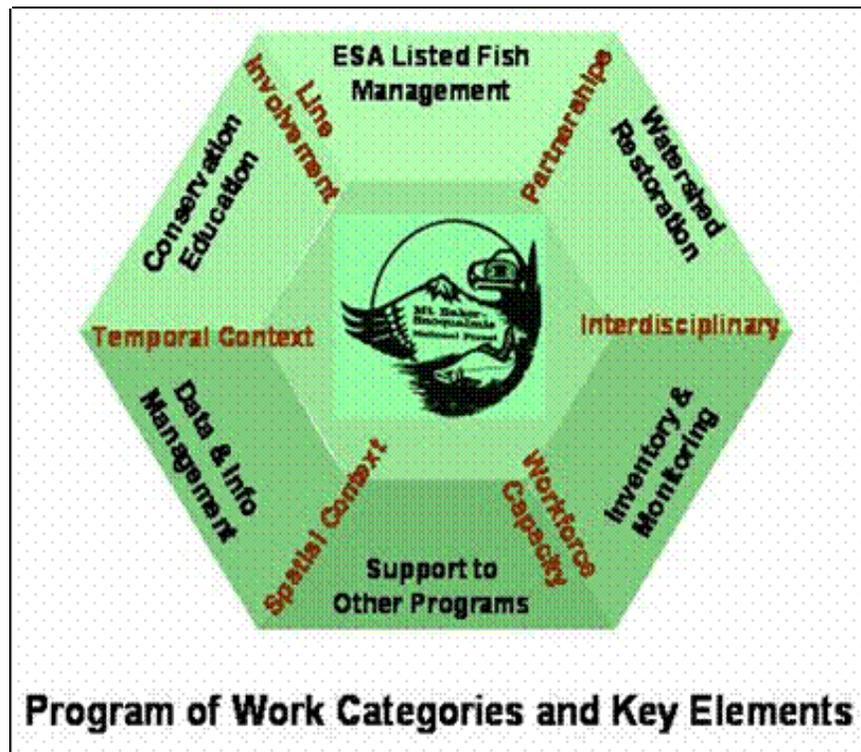
With 25 years as a USDA-Forest Service fish biologist working in national forest lands within the Puget Sound Region, I have accumulated a substantial amount of knowledge on and experience with the region's freshwater

aquatic systems.

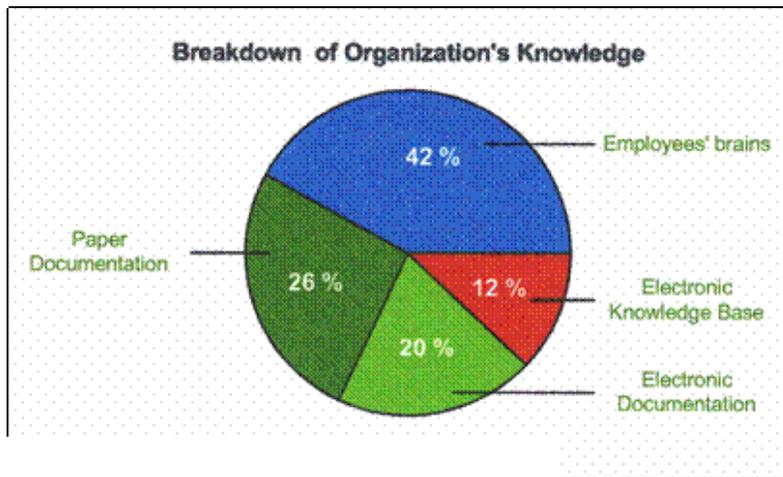
Shortly after my retirement in December 2005, I will have a completed a job acquired knowledge, experience, and skills work journal available for use by the fish biologists in the region.

This project began three years ago with a workforce proposal to my supervisor and human resource department. This work journal project has involved five tasks. Task one was locating and collecting job acquired data and information as described on the previous page. Task two was the organization of the collected data and information according to the program of work areas over four major time periods (1980-89, 1990-94, 1995-2000, 2001-2005).

The diagram to the right displays these program of work areas and key elements. Task three involved the actual recording of the data and information into electronic format. Task four was the synthesis or integration of all this data and information into meaningful and relevant lessons learned and knowledge nugget narratives. Step five involves the transfer of all the contents of the professional work journal into electronic media (primarily DVD format). Accomplishing all these tasks requires at least a 2-3 year time frame. After completing the first three tasks, it's critical that enough time is available for task four. This task is the main feature of the entire project.



Program of Work Categories and Key Elements



This pie chart depicts recent research that found that for most organizations almost 1/2 of its knowledge resides inside employee's brains and another 26 percent in the paper documentation created by its

employees. Sixty-six percent of this valuable asset is in the hands and brains of humans. The organization's survival and performance depends on how well this knowledge is managed & valued.

Even though this project is still a work in progress, it is being profiled now to stimulate interest in other natural resource professionals reaching retirement. Composing a professional work journal can augment other human resource efforts such as mentoring and job-shadowing to reduce the national science disciplines "brain-drain" underway within the agency. Leaving a legacy of documented work knowledge and experiences for others to use and add to is an excellent path to pursue as one closes out a professional career.

For more information, contact: James E. Doyle, Fish Program Manager; USDA-Forest Service, Region Six, Mt Baker Snoqualmie National Forest, 21905 64 Ave W., Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043: (425 744-3422; jdoyle@fs.fed.us)

Regional Roundup: Dan Duffield, Regional Fisheries Program Leader, Intermountain Region

In the **Regional Office** things have been relatively busy with travel and meetings increasing since the first of the year. Dan Duffield attended the annual Lahontan cutthroat trout meeting in Reno in January, an interagency recovery plan meeting for listed fish in the Columbia River Basin in Portland, and the Idaho Chapter AFS meeting in Boise in February. Dan also attended the Bonneville Chapter AFS meeting on March 8 and 9.

On March 2, Dan moderated a one day habitat session scheduled for the Utah native cutthroat trout conservation teams (Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout teams). The session reviewed the aquatic habitat language proposed in the revision of the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Agreement and Strategy for the State of Utah and then focused on assessment of aquatic habitat for progress in attaining the habitat goals and objectives in the revised agreement and strategy. Mostly fish biologists attended along

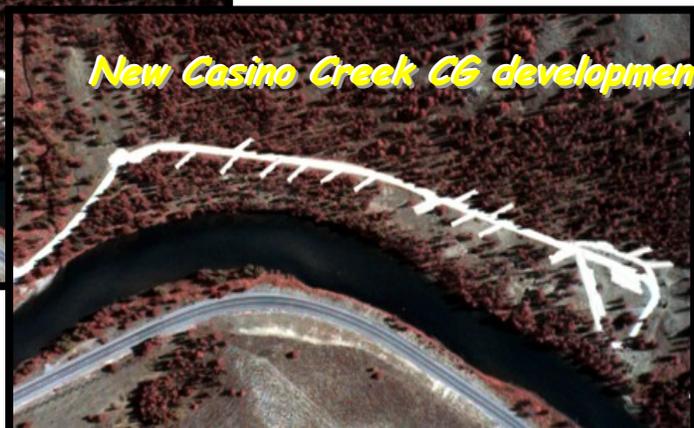
with some representatives from Trout Unlimited. The one day session was hosted by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources in Salt Lake City, Utah. Presenters included Rick Henderson who covered broad-scale habitat monitoring and evaluation in the Columbia River Basin and selecting attributes and design questions for habitat and riparian monitoring. Kerry Overton (RMRS Research Station Fish Biologist) presented aquatic multi-scale assessment procedures for Forest Plan revision. Dr. Amy Harig (Trout Unlimited Project Program Manager) talked about BACI monitoring designs and detecting restoration effects in Lahontan cutthroat trout populations. Dan Duffield presented results of fine sediment monitoring on the Monongahela National Forest. Chuck Chamberlain (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Fish Biologist) discussed overgrazing and temperature effects on UM Creek of the Fishlake National Forest. All the presentations were outstanding and should contribute to the development of uniform habitat monitoring protocols for native cutthroat trout in Utah.

The BPR staff continued planning for the annual BPR workshop which is scheduled for the week of April 11. This Region 4 workshop will focus on fish, wildlife, soils, and hydrology for the BPR portion. It will also be held concurrently with regional workshops from other staff areas to facilitate information sharing and integration. Other concurrent workshops include Lands, Recreation, and Vegetation Management staff areas.

The USFWS National Conservation Training Center is offering a course on “Rotenone & Antimycin Use in Fish Management” which is scheduled for May 23 – 27, 2005 at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. The course provides a foundation for the planning and execution of a fish sampling/control/eradication project using the fish management chemicals rotenone and antimycin. Topics include: fisheries management plans; piscicide uses and strategies; species sensitivities; pre- and post-project monitoring; crisis management strategies; and elements of a good/bad project. Also included are product chemistry and toxicology, use history and profiles, application, monitoring and neutralization techniques, and applicator safety for both rotenone and antimycin. Application techniques are demonstrated in hands-on field exercises. Successful completion of a final exam will give the participant a certificate of completion. For more information, contact June McIlwain, Aquatic Resources Training, 304-876-7439, FAX 304-876-7225, june_mcilwain@fws.gov, closing date for applications: March 23, 2005, <http://training.fws.gov/>

Casino Creek Campground Reconstruction/Restoration - Sawtooth National Recreation Area – John Chatel, Forest Fisheries Biologist

The purpose of this project was to curtail degraded and deteriorating conditions along the Salmon River and Little Casino Creek at Casino Creek Campground to allow for rehabilitation of healthy riverside habitats. Intensive



riverside camping and activities had resulted in the absence of ground cover in most streamside areas for over ¼ mile. Meanwhile, the informal growth and establishment of the campground had resulted in poor overall design and user safety. Increased fine sediments, reduced wood recruitment, spawning exposure, and site design and user safety, were all motivations for the project.

With the use of tracked excavator with thumb, grader, backhoe, and dump trucks, the project relocated and rehabilitated approximately 1,800 feet of continuous dispersed camping area, including the surfaced access roads, from the riverside area. New campsites were then established and designated along the existing access road. An informal trailhead was also formalized, and ¼ mile of roadway upstream was converted to single-track trail. Disturbed areas were seeded with native seed, and fine and course organic material (e.g. wood) was also added.

Evermann Interpretive Signs - Sawtooth National Recreation Area

The purpose of this project was to complete a Term and Condition of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Opinion for existing recreation developments at the inlet of Alturas Lake. The Biological Opinion required the education of visitors regarding the importance of the habitat and the status of the species.

Three interpretive signs were completed telling the story of a scientific study at Alturas Lake 110 years ago lead by Dr Barton Evermann, and contrasting their observations with the current conditions. It is hoped that information will improve visitor's knowledge related to aquatic habitats in the area and reduce impacts to fish when exposed during spawning.

beneficial uses such as aquatic life (e.g. cold water, salmonids spawning, etc.) during storm and high runoffs events. Assessment information has helped to fully describe the extent and geographic distribution of these issues on the forest. Assessment results are being used with the forest's "Watershed Restoration and Recovery Strategy" to prioritize culverts restoration across the forest. However, estimated costs of replacing all barrier culverts will be steep and could exceed \$20,000,000. Still, addressing barrier and undersized culverts will be a critical part in any restoration approach. Replacement of poorly designed stream crossings will reduce sediment sources that impair beneficial uses and will aid in the recovery of fish species protected under the Endangered Species Act by expanding access to former habitat.

Bull Trout Population Characteristics of Two South Fork Boise River Tributaries

Dan Kenney, North Zone Fisheries Biologist, Sawtooth National Forest
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We sampled bull trout with backpack electrofishing equipment and weirs in the Boardman and Skeleton Creek subwatersheds (HUC 6) in 2002, 2003, and 2004. These streams enter the South Fork Boise River, Idaho less than 10 stream miles apart, but differ in important physical characteristics. Both systems support migratory bull trout populations (adfluvial and, likely, fluvial) and one or both may also support resident life history forms. Results and conclusions gleaned from fish size and abundance statistics and sampling location and timing data:

It appears that median length of bull trout when captured in late summer in the Skeleton Creek drainage are roughly: 1+, 100mm; 2+, 150mm; 3+, 185mm. The corresponding figures for Boardman Creek are: 90mm, 135, and 170mm. YOY bull trout in the Boardman Creek drainage range from about 30 to 60mm near the end of their first summer. These growth rates appear to be roughly comparable to those recently observed in the North Fork of the Boise River. Only one definite migratory adult bull trout was captured during EF (a 400mm individual in lower Boardman Creek) over the three years of sampling. Extrapolation from 2002 EF efforts leads to minimum total estimate of approximately 6,000 bull trout of all sizes in the Boardman Creek drainage and approximately 2,000 in the Skeleton Creek drainage.

Mean juvenile outmigrant length in 2002, 2003, and 2004 for Skeleton weirs was 208, 204, and 210 mm. Comparable values at the Boardman weir were 210, 224, and 210 mm. Nine adult bull trout caught in weirs in 2002: Five at Boardman Creek and four at Skeleton Creek; these fish ranged in total length from 365 to 527mm. Six adults were captured at the Skeleton weirs in 2003 (342 to 465mm range) and one by the Boardman weir (479mm). No adults were captured at the weirs in 2004.

- ▶ Higher abundance and density in Boardman Creek drainage, and slightly faster growth in the Skeleton drainage
- ▶ Highest abundance and density in both drainages between about 6,300 and 7,500 feet in elevation
- ▶ Allopatric sample sites had highest densities
- ▶ YOY bull trout sampled only in Boardman Creek drainage, but absence in Skeleton Creek sample doesn't imply lack of reproduction

- ▶ Distinct YOY, 1+, 2+, and 3+ age classes evident in length-frequency histograms (3+ more distinct in Skeleton); older age classes somewhat muddled
- ▶ Site densities sometimes varied from year to year, but surprisingly stable when summarized by drainage
- ▶ The age class spawned in 2001 was noticeably weak in both drainages, but especially in Skeleton Creek
- ▶ Late summer and fall outmigrants are probably mostly Age 4+ fish, with some Age 3+ and Age 5+
- ▶ Only 3 out of 287 weir-caught outmigrants were less than 150mm total length—if trend holds in remainder of South Fork Boise subbasin, bull trout sampled smaller than this size should indicate the existence of a reproducing population
- ▶ Many more bull trout of outmigration-size exist in each drainage than have been caught at the weirs—spring and summer outmigration and weir inefficiency are factors here, but the existence of a resident life history cannot be ruled-out
- ▶ Previous radio-telemetry research shows that adfluvial bull trout in upper SFBR predominantly enter spawning streams in late spring or early summer and exit in the fall; the small number of adults caught at the weir suggest that over-summering/spawning mortality of adfluvial adults during the study period is high or that over-wintering of adults occurs, at least in low-flow years (and possibly that resident bull trout contribute substantially to reproduction).

Migrational Opportunities (Federal job announcements:
http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/agency_search.asp)

Hotlinks:

- Forest Service Fisheries and Aquatic Ecology: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/fish/index.html>
- Fish Your National Forests: <http://www.fs.fed.us/fishing/>
- National Fish Habitat Initiative (NFHI): <http://www.fishhabitat.org>
- Large-Scale Watershed Restoration Projects: <http://www.fs.fed.us/largewatershedprojects/>
- Fish Ecology Unit: <http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/fishecology/index.html>
- Watershed and Air Management: <http://www.fs.fed.us/clean/>
- National Fishing and Boating Week: <http://www.nationalfishingandboatingweek.org/>
- NatureWatch: <http://www.fs.fed.us/outdoors/naturewatch/>
- Forest Service Research Stations – One stop shopping: <http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/index.htm>
- Forest Service Research Station - Boise Aquatic Sciences Lab: <http://www.fs.fed.us/rm/boise/>

Sensory Stimulation:

"You have not converted a man because you have silenced him."

John Morley

*"But he that dares not grasp the thorn
Should never crave the rose."*

Anne Bronte, "The Narrow Way"

*"Wise are those that learn that the
bottom line doesn't always have to be
their top priority."*

William Arthur Ward

*"Why not upset the apple cart? If you
don't the apples will rot anyway?"*

Frank A. Clark

New Files for FishTales – FishTales can now be viewed in one of three ways. You can receive it via e-mail or go to our web site where it is available in a pdf or html version.

<http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/resources/pubs/fish/fishtales/>

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Positions listed are for outreach purposes only and are not full announcements. Interested individuals should contact the forests referenced or consult the USAJOBS website.

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