

# ASHLEY NATIONAL FOREST 2003 FISHERIES PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

## Flaming Gorge Ranger District

### *Fish Distribution Surveys*

During the summer of 2003 the fisheries crew (7 persons) surveyed nearly every stream on the district for population, distribution and presence/absence data. Three reaches were sampled, one at the inlet to Flaming Gorge or confluence to a larger tributary, one in the middle of the drainage and one in the headwaters. The depletion method (2-3 pass) was employed to calculate a population estimate of sampled species. This was a daunting assignment, but the crew really worked hard and completed the surveys ahead of schedule. Next year the crew will focus on additional head-water population surveys, R1/R4 habitat surveys and PFC's (proper functioning condition index.) This baseline data will be invaluable in performing effect analyses for proposed projects.



**Ashley NF  
Fisheries  
Biologists**

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Flaming Gorge District

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Vernal District

#### Partners

Utah Division of  
Wildlife Resources



National Fish and  
Wildlife Foundation



**Sportfish  
Restoration**



**Fisheries volunteer crew in action on Middle Fork Beaver Creek**

## Manns Creek - Habitat Improvement and Non-native Eradication Project

With help from the Daggett Co. Jail crew we were also able to finish the enclosure fence around approximately 42 acres of riparian/stream corridor along Manns Creek. The post and pole portion of fence turned out very nice and many people commented positively on the project. Excluding the livestock, which used the area very heavily, will allow the riparian vegetation to become established and help rebuild the natural geomorphology of the stream channel. In addition to the fence, we also constructed an in-channel barrier to impede fish migration. The barrier was built in preparation for a chemical treatment to eradicate non-natives and restore Colorado River Cutthroat Trout (CRCT.) In August we assisted the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) with that treatment, which was a big success.



**Manns Creek Migration Barrier**

## Whirling Disease Testing

Whirling disease has recently been discovered in the Blacks Fork drainage and UDWR personnel plan to complete a holistic survey of the surrounding drainages and their respective headwater lakes. We were asked by state biologists to assist in their sampling efforts in around the Burnt Fork drainage. On two separate occasions the crew collected head wedge samples and assisted the Utah Fisheries Experimental Station (FES) personnel in processing samples for later laboratory analysis.



**Brook Trout from Burnt Fork drainage used to test for Whirling Disease.**

### *Moose Pond - Kids Free Fishing Derby*

On free fishing day the Flaming Gorge District hosted a fishing derby for children ages 2-9 at Moose Pond along HWY 44. The derby was a great success as we had over 50 entries and caught almost 200 fish. Prizes for the top three fish in each age group were donated by local businesses including: Slaughts Chevron, The Hub, Trout Creek Flies, Flaming Gorge Lodge, The Villa, Red Canyon Lodge and Wal-Mart.



**Beautiful weather and good fishing made for great fun!!**



Moose Pond – Flaming Gorge Ranger District

### *Amphibian Surveys*

The volunteer crew surveyed the Sheep Creek/Carter Creek canal corridor for amphibian species. The only amphibian species recorded were chorus frogs and tiger salamanders. The crew spent three days performing these grid and audible call surveys during the last week of May.



**Chorus frog at One Fish Lake**

## NEPA Support To Other Programs

- Small Products Timber Sale
- Sheep Creek Canal (Special Uses)
- Linwood/South-Valley Allotment Management Plan (Range)
- Greendale Fuels Reduction Project (Hazardous Fuels)
- Conifer Encroachment Project (Wildlife)
- Sheep Creek Bay/Horseshoe Canyon Cut-Through Project (Recreation)
- Birch Creek Springs Enclosure (Range)

## Assistance to the Wasatch-Cache NF

The fisheries crew also surveyed 6 streams for distribution and habitat functionality on the Wasatch-Cache N.F., Mountain View R.D. The data were collected for two allotment management plans (AMP's) the district is working on this winter.



**Electrofishing survey on the Henrys Fork (Wasatch -Cache N.F.)**



**Quality fisheries habitat on Dahlgreen Creek (Wasatch-Cache N.F.)**

## Vernal Ranger District

### *South Fork Brownie Creek - Habitat Improvement Project*

South Fork Brownie contains an isolated pure population of Colorado River cutthroat. This year we developed a springhead box and two water troughs outside the meadow area to relieve the meadow from grazing pressure. Last year, we developed a riparian exclosure and placed boulders to prohibit motorized vehicles from entering the meadow to improve resource damage in the meadow. This project is in partnership with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.



**Water collection device to fill off-stream stock troughs.**

## Reader Creek - Mechanical Brook Trout Removal Project

Forest Service personnel assisted UDWR with the mechanical removal of brook trout from Reader Creek this summer to protect a small existing pure strain of Colorado River cutthroat trout (CRCT). A second year (2004) will be required to remove any missed brook trout and assess the effects of removing brook trout on CRCT. The brook trout were removed using a 3-pass electrofishing depletion-removal method. This project is in partnership with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

## NEPA Support to other Programs

- Trout Slope West Project (Timber)
- Frenches Park Project (Timber)
- Firewood Project (Timber)
- Black Canyon Allotment (Range)

## Outreach and Education

- Massey Meadow Environmental Education Program
- Plants, Animals, Water, Soils (PAWS)

## **Roosevelt-Duchesne Ranger District**

### Timber Canyon - Colorado River Cutthroat Trout Project

The NEPA requirements were completed in 2003 for the construction of a permanent fish migration barrier and sediment reducing measures along the road that parallels Timber Canyon Creek. The Forest Service contracted the barrier and road construction work and all the work was completed in October 2003. The barrier will prevent any further brown trout from entering Timber Canyon Creek thus reducing competition with native Colorado River cutthroat trout. This is a very important project for native cutthroat restoration in that Timber Creek is serving as the initial brood source for this geographical management unit. In addition to this work, we assisted the UDWR for the second consecutive year with the removal of approximately 300 CRCT from Timber Creek for stocking in Lake Canyon Lake to establish a broodstock source for this geographical management area.



**Foundation of fish migration barrier on Timber Creek.**



**Completed Timber Creek fish barrier looking upstream, approx. 5-6 foot drop.**



Closure of an ATV road crossing at a dispersed campsite along Timber Creek.



Cleaning out plugged culverts to improve road drainage and reduce sediment into Timber Creek.



**Resurfacing of the canyon road adjacent to Timber Creek will help reduce sedimentation.**

### *Uinta Pond - Kids Free Fishing Derby*

On Free Fishing Day the Roosevelt-Duchesne Ranger District hosted a fishing derby for children ages 2-14 at Uinta Pond which is located up Uinta Canyon. The derby was well attended with over 50 kids showing up to have fun and catch rainbow trout. Prizes for the top three fish in each of the 3 age groups were donated by local businesses including: Alco Discount Stores, Big Foot Fly Shop, Western Farm and Home Supply, Basin Sports, K-Mart, and Kenneth's Catfishin.



**Getting them hooked at a young is the objective.**



**The good spots on the pond were claimed early on.**

### *Lake Canyon Lake: CRCT Broodstock Program*

We partnered with UDWR to improve conditions for the newly established CRCT brood stock fishery at Lake Canyon Lake. The Forest Service provided funding to assist in contracting services to fortify the existing reservoir dam and replace the outlet structure. Additionally, funding was provided to construct a fish trap which will be used for the CRCT broodstock program.



**Boulders placed along the face of Lake Canyon Lake dam.**



**A new outlet structure was installed.**

### NEPA Support to other Programs

- Paint Mine Project (Minerals)
- Honeycomb Calcite Project (Minerals)
- South Slope – West Side Allotment (Range)
- Firewood Program (Timber)

### Thank You,

As you can see, it was a great year on the Ashley National Forest in fisheries. We're very grateful to all of those who have helped bring successes and accomplishments to the fisheries resources of the Ashley National Forest. A special thank you goes out to the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for their support and willingness to work together as a team. Thanks again, we look to forward to 2004 as we continue our dedication to the protection and enhancement of fisheries on the Ashley National Forest.

*Dan Abeyta  
Forest Fisheries Biologist  
Ashley National Forest*