



FY2016 activities assisting the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes on the Wind River Reservation, WY- US FWS Lander Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office, November 3, 2016

To meet our trust responsibilities of assisting the Tribes with sensible fish and wildlife conservation, we performed the following activities:

October 2015

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, assessed the sauger population in the Little Wind River using an electrofishing raft. This has been done annually for nearly the last 10 years. During the 2-day survey, we observed a substantial increase in the number of sauger, especially fish less than 3 years old – a very good sign.

Stocked Bull Lake (26,700 rainbow trout) and Dinwoody lakes (11,300 rainbow and 11,700 Snake River cutthroat trout) with 8 inch catchables to support recreational fishery. Fish were from the Jones Hole and Jackson National Fish Hatcheries.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, assessed the trout population in the Popo Agie River from Wypo Bridge to Ruby's Ranch using electrofishing gear. This is an excellent fishery with many 1 to 2 pound rainbow and brown trout observed.

Removed entrained native fish within Dinwoody Canal during water shutdown. Only a few trout and burbot over 12 inches were observed. These were captured and returned to Dinwoody Lake.

Attended coordination meeting for the Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery and planned stocking for 2016. Rainbow and tiger trout from Jones Hole are stocked into waters of the Wind River Reservation.

Completed annual report of bobcat harvested during the 2014/15 season. Fewer trappers afield resulted in the lowest reported harvest (total of 15 bobcats) since 1999.

Using an electroshocking raft to capture and release sauger on the Little Wind River.



A nice rainbow trout to be released back into the Popo Agie River.

1

Acknowledgements: The Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office located in Lander, Wyoming, has assisted the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes with fisheries conservation since 1941 and wildlife conservation since 1975. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to assist the Tribes with conserving and enhancing their 2.2 million acres of beautiful lands, and the abundant fish and wildlife that reside there. Our special thanks go to the Tribal Fish and Game Department: Ben Snyder, Western Thayer, Art Lawson, and Sherilyn Heba without whose cooperation we could not accomplish our mission. For further information, please call 307-332-2159 or visit us at 170 North 1st St., Lander, WY. Pat Hnilicka (Project Leader and Wildlife Biologist), Mike Mazur (Fish Biologist), Mark Hogan (State Coordinator for Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program), Laurie Connell (Administrative Officer). We thank you for your time reviewing this report.

In cooperation with Trout Unlimited, the Tribes, and the Riverton Wyoming Middle School, helped conduct an Adopt-A-Trout education program on Bull Lake Creek. Over 160 6th graders had an excellent time getting up-close and personal with 30 brown trout that were implanted with tracking transmitters. Over the next year, students will help monitor movements and survival, while providing meaningful scientific data. It was a fun 2 days that was well-received by teachers, kids and biologists alike.



6th graders learning about fish first-hand during Adopt-A-Trout along Bull Lake Creek.

November 2015

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, retrieved a grizzly bear radio-collar in the Dry Creek area of the Owl Creek Mountains. Bear #829 had slipped its collar in October. Occasionally this occurs since a bear's neck can be larger around than its skull, allowing the collar to be "slipped off".



Developed partnerships and potential projects to construct fish passage structures. Water diversions and elevated culverts can act as barriers and prevent fish from moving upstream. Structures are constructed at these sites to allow fish to pass the barrier. We will be seeking potential projects from across Wyoming.

Registered, measured and attached metal plugs to the horns of 10 bighorn sheep harvested by tribal hunters from Wind River. Registering sheep creates a "paper-trail" that significantly reduces illegal harvest of these trophy animals. Some very nice rams were harvested as indicated by the photo at above right.



Garrett Nemo and son with a very nice ram from the Owl Creek Mountains.

In cooperation with the Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & F (Lee Tafelmeyer, Clint Atkinson), installed remote camera traps and bait sites for detection of wolverines at 3 locations on Wind River. Sites were all above 10,000 feet elevation and included Bold Mountain, Mount Shoshone above Washakie Park, and Trail Ridge near Monument Peak. Sites were baited with liquid lure and quarters from



Positioning camera to face bait and lure tree in hopes of capturing a wolverine image.

road killed deer. Hair snares for DNA analysis were also installed. This effort continues the project begun in March 2015, and is a part of a larger regional effort to assess wolverine occurrence in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington.

Attended the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team meeting and Yellowstone Subcommittee meeting of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee at Teton Village, WY. Topics included: current population estimate (approximately 720 grizzly bears), no proposal from FWS for de-listing at this time but may be forthcoming in 2016, and traditional bear song sung by Lakota tribal member.

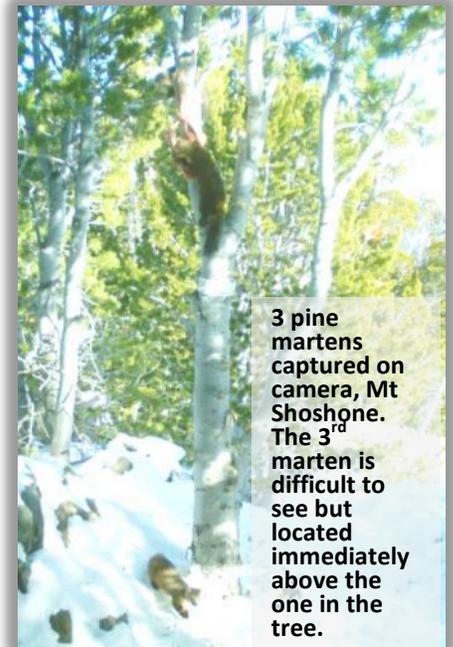
Participated on education panel during a K-12 teachers workshop held at Central Wyoming College. Teton Science School led the workshop with the goal of integrating outdoor education and the public school system curriculum as well as to develop contacts for potential future outdoor education opportunities.

December 2015

Attended the Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) committee meeting in Bozeman. This group coordinates conservation and management of the YCT in the Idaho, Montana and Wyoming region.

Developed partnerships and potential projects to construct fish passage projects from across Wyoming. Water diversions and elevated culverts can act as barriers and prevent fish from moving upstream. Structures are constructed and/or barriers are removed at these sites to allow fish to pass.

In cooperation with the Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, revisited remote camera traps and bait sites for detection of wolverines at 2 locations on Wind River. No wolverines were detected in December, but plenty of pine martens though! Sites are above 10,000 feet elevation and included Bold Mountain and Mount Shoshone above Washakie Park. This effort continues the project begun in March 2015, and is a part of a larger regional effort to assess wolverine occurrence in Wyoming, Montana, Idaho and Washington.



3 pine martens captured on camera, Mt Shoshone. The 3rd marten is difficult to see but located immediately above the one in the tree.

Registered, measured and attached metal plugs to the horns of 2 bighorn sheep harvested by tribal hunters from Wind River. Season closed on 11/30. A total of 13 sheep were registered during the 2015 season. Registering creates a “paper-trail” that significantly reduces illegal harvest of these trophy animals.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, the University of Wyoming, and Wyoming Game & Fish, captured, collected disease samples, assessed body condition, and released 4 bighorn sheep ewes that were previously captured this past March on or near Red Creek and Sacagawea Ridge. A net fired from a helicopter was the means of capture. All ewes were in apparent good health. Three other collared ewes located in Wilderness on top of Arrow Mtn were inaccessible. A 4th ewe’s collar malfunctioned and was not located. Study is being led by UW.



“Working up” a ewe prior to release near Red Creek.

Prior to capture listed above, ground surveyed the Red Creek/Sacagawea area for radio-collared bighorn sheep ewes to assess whether a lamb was present at the ewes' sides. Four sheep were observed, 2 with lambs-at-side.

Attended Wyoming Game & Fish Bighorn Sheep Working Group meeting to plan capture and radio-collaring of 10 to 15 bighorn sheep this February in the North Fork Popo Agie and Little Wind River areas.

Presented at the Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation winter meeting in Dubois describing the current conservation of bighorn sheep on Wind River. The WWSF will provide nearly \$30,000 to pay for the capture and radio-collaring of bighorn sheep mentioned above. The Wyoming Game & Fish, with support from Tribal Fish & Game and our office, submitted this funding request.

Conducted a ½ day survey of the Crowheart Butte area for the presence of pygmy rabbits. These rabbits are rare and have not officially been documented to occur on Wind River. An unconfirmed sighting in March indicated pygmy rabbits may be present there. Found no definitive sign nor observed any pygmy rabbits.

Surveyed Bull Lake Creek for wintering Trumpeter Swans. Observed 37 adults and 15 juvenile birds equaling the largest total on record. The large number of juvenile is very encouraging. The vast majority of these swans are not summer breeders on Wind River, but instead, are winter migrants from other parts of Wyoming and/or Idaho, Montana and Canada.

A trumpeter swan (#F37) that was released as a juvenile cygnet in Sept 2013 at Alkali Lake near Ft. Washakie has been spotted again for the 3rd consecutive winter along the Green River at Seedskaelee National Wildlife Refuge southwest of Farson, WY. This is approximately 100 air-miles distant. F37 had returned to Alkali Lake in 2015 with a mate. Typically trumpeters will first breed when 3 to 4 year-olds. We're hopeful this pair will breed in 2016 or 2017 at Alkali Lake.



F37 with mate seen on Dec 19, 2015 at Seedskaelee NWR. Photo by Tom Koerner.

January 2016

Over 2-day period, led classroom discussions with 160 6th graders from Riverton Middle School on fish anatomy as part of the on-going Adopt-A-Trout program. Last October, 30 brown trout were implanted with radio-transmitters along Bull Lake Creek.

In cooperation with Tribal Water Engineer, completed proposal to the BIA's Tribal Youth Initiative to fund 2 water technicians.

Compiled data to compare water levels at Ray Lake with numbers of fish netted during annual late spring surveys. Fluctuating water levels due to irrigation draw-down may negatively influence the abundance of fish in Ray Lake.

Conducted annual count of wintering bald and golden eagles on Wind River. Surveyed 124 miles of roadways and observed 7 adult and 6 immature bald



Mike Mazur with Riverton 6th graders learning about fish anatomy.

eagles, and 4 adult golden eagles. This is the 4th year of surveying and has seen about the same number each year.

Revisited wolverine camera sites on Trail Ridge in the Owl Creek Mountains and Mount Shoshone in the Wind River Mountains to check cameras, remove storage cards, and resupply with fresh bait and lure. No wolverine detections as of yet on Wind River. However, in early January, 1 wolverine was caught on camera during a night-time visit along the Loop Road above Lander approximately 15 miles south of the Reservation boundary at a site managed by the Wyoming Game & Fish.

Investigated report of wolf depredation on a livestock cow and calf in the Burris area. Wildlife Services and follow up by our office confirmed wolves were responsible for kill. Coordinated with both Shoshone and Arapaho Councils and Tribal Fish & Game to decide on course of action. All agreed to continue to monitor situation. Set up remote cameras to monitor site and determine numbers of wolves. Wolves returned to kill site a week later. Subsequently, traps were deployed for 5-day period in hopes of radio-collaring and releasing wolves to aid in monitoring. During trapping effort, no wolves returned to the site. No additional depredations have occurred to date.

A wolverine along Loop Road, 15 miles south of the Reservation boundary. Photo courtesy of Lee Tafelmeyer of WY Game & Fish.



February 2016

Met with WY Game & Fish personnel to plan for upcoming sauger spawning in May. This will be the 5th year of augmenting this inter-jurisdictional population that was in decline. Sauger have increased dramatically since the start of this effort.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, reviewed and updated fishing regulations for 2016-17 booklet.

Met with member of Drought Team and Tribal Fish & Game to coordinate how fish and wildlife data will be incorporated into drought preparedness plan for Wind River.

Conducted midwinter annual survey of trumpeter swans. Observed the most wintering swans on record on the Reservation (34 adults and 8 juveniles on Bull Lake Creek including #F34 above, and 30 adults and 10 juveniles on Dinwoody lakes). This survey is part of the larger tri-state midwinter survey. Also, necropsied trumpeter swan that was found dead floating in Bull Lake Creek. It died of natural causes and was extremely emaciated.



Swan #F34, released as a cygnet in 2013 near Ft. Washakie, spending the winter at Bull Lake Creek

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, captured and GPS radio-collared 10 bighorn sheep ewes and 2 rams in the Little Wind River wintering areas on Feb 22nd. Helicopter capture went extremely well. This study will assess disease, movements and survival of bighorns that are descendants of 88 sheep transplanted to the Washakie Reservoir area in 1988 and 1993. The Bighorn Sheep Restoration Group assisted. Funds for capture and collars graciously provided by Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation.



Revisited wolverine camera sites on Trail Ridge in the Owl Creek Mountains, and Mount Shoshone and Indian Ridge in the Wind River Mountains to check cameras, remove storage cards, and resupply with fresh bait and lure. No wolverine detections as of yet on Wind River.

Continued to monitor wolf activity related to depredation of livestock cow and calf in the Burris area using remote cameras to monitor site and determine numbers of wolves. Wolves returned to kill site for multiple nights every 7 to 10 days. No additional depredations have occurred to date.



Ron Smith of the Bighorn Restoration Group, Ben Snyder and Art Lawson of Tribal Fish & Game, and personnel from Wyoming Game & Fish working up bighorn sheep.

Conducted environmental review of 1 proposed homesite at BIA's request, Threatened and Endangered species clearance for Shoshone Rose Casino expansion, and proposed installation of watering tanks and pipeline for livestock in the Meadow Creek area.

Hired seasonal 6-month biological technician. Will begin in May.

March 2016

In conjunction with Tribal Fish & Game, a swift fox was observed in the southern portion of Wind River. This is the first documented observation on the Reservation. This individual fox was initially reported after an astute observation by Tribal Warden Ben Snyder. Remote camera placement confirmed its presence. More extensive surveys are planned for this summer to further determine the extent of swift fox distribution across Wind River. Swift fox are an uncommon species that were nearly listed under ESA in the early 2000s.



First swift fox documented on Wind River.

Assisted the University of Wyoming and Wyoming Game & Fish with helicopter capture and GPS radio-collaring of mule deer in the North Fork Popo Agie area located off of, but adjacent to Wind River. These collared deer will be monitored intensely by UW and WGF personnel to determine migration routes.

In cooperation with University of Wyoming, Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, captured and disease tested 2 bighorn sheep ewes that were collared previously in the Red Rocks/Sacagawea Ridge area. Of 8 collared ewes, 2 were recaptured as mentioned, 4 were located on the summit of Arrow Mtn and not accessible, and 2 have failed collars and were not locatable. This study, led by UW, is assessing body condition, pregnancy rates and disease status on the same ewes over the course of 3 years. Preliminary results indicate that ewes in the Whiskey Mtn herd, of which these sheep are a part of, are smaller and acquired much less fat during the 2015 spring/summer/fall season when compared to sheep from Cody and Jackson areas.

Revisited wolverine bait sites on Trail Ridge and Mount Shoshone to check cameras, remove storage cards, and resupply with fresh bait and lure. No wolverine detections as of yet on Wind River.

Reconnoitered Bobs Creek area to assess presence of wolves and plan for capture and collaring.

Completed annual summary report of wolf conservation on Wind River. Portions of the report are incorporated into larger Interagency annual summary report for the Northern Rocky Mountains.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted a tour of the Bighorn Flat area with students from Yale. Viewed an active sage-grouse lek, and discussed water, fish and wildlife issues on Wind River.

Completed annual summary report of grizzly bear conservation on Wind River. Portions of the report are incorporated into larger annual summary report for the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Began checking sage-grouse attendance at ~50 leks (breeding grounds) located on Wind River. The counts of males displaying on leks is a good indication of the trend in population. This is done annually between mid-March and early May.

Began aerial survey of pronghorn antelope to assess population trend. Scheduling conflicts, winds and poor weather delayed completion until April.

Investigated report of alleged illegal alteration of riverbed and banks along the Big Wind River near Johnstown. Bank stabilization was recently done and was determined to be legal under the Army Corp of Engineers' Nationwide Permit.

Shoshone Tribal member Tucker Russell attaches a GPS collar to a mule deer.



Students from Yale after viewing a sage-grouse lek.

Participated in the sauger coordination meeting with the Wyoming Game & Fish to plan for upcoming spawning in May.

Participated in the regional Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout annual coordination meeting with biologists from multiple agencies.

Organized and led Interagency Coordinating Meeting of local state and federal personnel to discuss and inform others of issues and upcoming projects of mutual interest.

Provided environmental review of the proposed reopening of a gravel pit along Urbigit Road for use in the Lenore Bridge reconstruction.

In cooperation with NRCS, BIA and the FWS Partners Program, met with Crowheart area ranchers to discuss options that would lessen impacts to wildlife from proposed Meadow Creek stock watering pipeline and tanks. We mutually agreed to fence Meadow Creek to minimize cattle impacts to riparian areas.

April 2016

Revisited wolverine camera sites on Bold Mountain and Mount Shoshone to remove cameras. Cameras will likely be re-deployed in November to continue with study. No wolverines captured on camera. Weather prevented access to Trail Ridge site (will be pulled in May).



Completed aerial survey of pronghorn antelope to assess population trend of pronghorn located south of the Big Wind River. Data compilation to be completed in May.

Continued checking sage-grouse attendance at ~50 leks (breeding grounds) located on Wind River. Rainy/snowy weather had significantly hampered our ability to access remote locations of a number of leks. The counts of males displaying on leks is a good indication of the trend in population. Number of males counted on leks appears to similar to slightly higher than last year.



Completed analysis of the impacts of water fluctuations on the Ray Lake fishery and discussed results with the Tribal Water Control Board and Tribal Water Engineer.

Toured Subagency diversion with Tribal Water Engineer personnel to discuss operations of fish ladder.

Met with Ryan Ortiz and Steve Babits of Northern Arapaho Environmental Program to coordinate activities.

Attended the bi-annual Wyoming Fish Passage coordination meeting in Lander.

Attended Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's Regional Conference in Red Lodge MT April 11-13. Presentations on sauger restoration and wolverine study were well received.

Attended the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team and Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee meetings in West Yellowstone, MT April 13-15. Grizzly bear is currently proposed for de-listing and will take 6-12 months for the Fish & Wildlife Service to determine whether to list or not.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, presented fish and wildlife ID and biology to 120 K-8 students from St. Stevens Elementary.

Provided environmental review of the proposed replacement of several water pipelines in the Lander area. Surveyed area for Ute ladies-tresses (threatened plant). None located.

May 2016

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, conducted sauger spawning from the confluence of Beaver Creek to the Hwy 789 Bridge on the Little Wind River. Eggs were hatched at the state-run Speas Hatchery near Casper, and then fry are transported to and reared at the federal-run Garrison Hatchery in North Dakota. Fingerlings will be returned in August for stocking in the Wind River drainage. This is the 5th year augmenting this inter-jurisdictional and once declining population.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, initiated grizzly bear capture and radio-collaring in the Crow Creek area beginning in late May. This is a continuation of capture efforts in 2006 and 2011. 1 grizzly bear was collared and released unharmed at the site of capture.

Completed surveys of sage-grouse leks (breeding grounds). Of 39 leks that have been occupied by breeding males at least once in the last 10 years, 26 had males present in 2016 (67% active). Grouse have been increasing since 2013, with this trend continuing in 2016. The number of males seen on leks in Spring 2016 (26 males/lek on average) was 7% higher than 2015, and 116% higher than 2014. However, this was still less than ½ as many seen in 2006, the most recent peak. Summarized data for input into database.

Set range cages on the north rim above Washakie Reservoir and on the south and north rims of Bull Lake. These cages are clipped in the fall to assess the amount of grasses and forbs produced and available for wildlife.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, investigated wolf depredation on livestock calf in the Ft. Washakie area.

Participated in the 4th grader Outdoor Education Day at Sinks Canyon Camp on May 6th, teaching 165 kids and 40 adults about fish and wildlife



Administering reversal drug to sedated female.



Installing range cages on the south rim of Bull Lake.



4th Grade Outdoor Day, wildlife ID and ecology.

identification, biology and conservation.

To provide for recreational fishery, stocked Ray Lake with 6,500 8-inch rainbow trout.

Attended 1-day firearms refresher in order to qualify for carrying firearms in the unlikely event that self-defense is needed when capturing and collaring grizzly bears.

June 2016

Stocked several lakes and reservoirs with six to eight inch rainbow trout to support recreational fisheries: Ray Lake with 7,525, Goose Pond with 2,500 and Sharpnose Reservoir with 500. Fish were reared at Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery near Vernal, UT.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted annual netting of Dinwoody and Bull lakes to assess fish abundance. Over 100 school children helped pick nets and weigh and measure fish.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, presented fish and wildlife ID and biology, and toured the Dubois Fish Hatchery with 20 Arapaho school children and 6 counselors during their summer camp program.



Hides and Horns - Arapaho Summer camp.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, presented fish and wildlife ID and biology to 20 Ft Washakie 7th graders and 5 teachers.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, completed a 22-day capture and radio-collaring effort of grizzly bears in the East Fork and Crow Creek areas (May 23 – June 13). It proved to be very successful with 6 different grizzlies captured and released on-site (2 adult females, 3 adult males and 1 subadult male). Four radio-collars were deployed. Radio-collars and other data collected when handling bears improves our knowledge and ability to conserve bears in Greater Yellowstone area.



Female #848 captured/released near Meadow Creek.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted 3 two-hour flights to survey for grizzly bears in the Wind River and Owl Creek Mountains. This is part of a larger effort by many partners to help assess the size of the grizzly bear population across the Greater Yellowstone Area.

Set 2 remote trail camera in the Bobs Creek area to assess the degree of wolf occupancy, and whether trapping and collaring would be possible. Cameras were deployed from June 2 – July 8. One to two wolves visited one site on 6 occasions.



FWS, TFG & WGF personnel at snare site, Crow Creek.

Retrieved a wolf collar that had been attached to an adult female that was captured and collared by Wildlife Services in

May in the Mexican Creek area above Lander (just off the Reservation to the south). The collar had been chewed off.

Attended Tribal Water Control Board monthly meeting to discuss water usage on Ray and Coolidge canals.

Attended Wind River/Sweetwater River Local Sage-grouse Working Group to discuss funding research, habitat and educational projects. The group, one of 8 similar groups within Wyoming, received \$148,000 from the state legislature to promote sage-grouse conservation in central Wyoming.

Attended 2-day sage-grouse workshop held in Lander. Topics included current research into the sage-grouse ecology, effects from habitat treatments, and effects from human disturbances (wind farms, etc.).

In cooperation with NRCS, BIA and the FWS Partners Program, toured Meadow Creek area with Crowheart ranchers to discuss placement of range fence to lessen impacts to riparian habitats from cattle grazing.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, developed 2016 hunting season recommendations for Wind River and presented to both business councils for review and approval.

Provided environmental review for installation of Cowboy Lane Water Pipeline. No fish and wildlife concerns with this project.

July 2016

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted annual netting survey of Dinwoody lakes. Brown trout and younger age classes of burbot were more prevalent in the catch than past years.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, stocked ~136,000 native sauger fingerlings into the Little Wind and Big Wind rivers. Eggs were collected in May from the Little Wind River spawning operation, hatched at Speas State Fish Hatchery near Casper, and then reared at Garrison National Fish Hatchery in North Dakota.

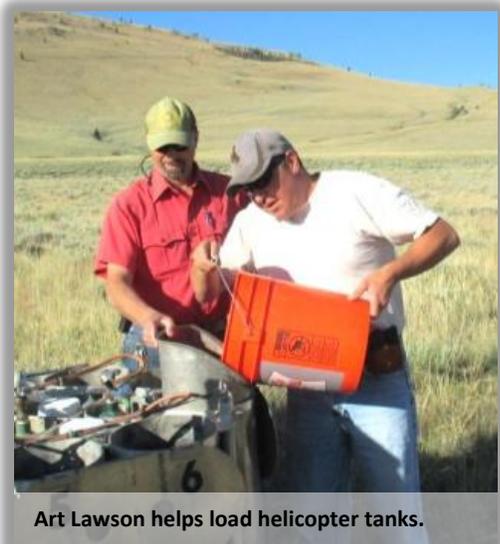
In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted netting survey of Moccasin Lake. Abundant numbers of Snake River cutthroat trout were evident. Shore fishing is excellent at this time. Tiger trout from recent stocking events were also observed and appeared to be in good condition.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, helicopter stocked high mountain lakes in the Wind River Range with Yellowstone cutthroat trout reared at Saratoga National Fish Hatchery. Lakes stocked with cutthroat included: Vernal, Windy, Aragon, Ice, Polaris, 37, 38, Tigee, Elk, 71, Steamboat, & 20 lakes. Yantie Lake was stocked with 2,500 brook trout from Dubois State Fish Hatchery.

Conducted an AIS inspection of Jackson National Fish Hatchery to ensure the hatchery is free of potential invasive species that could be spread during fish stocking efforts.

Participated in the Wind River drought workshop hosted by the Tribal Water Engineers Office.

Conducted a 2-day ground survey of bighorn sheep in



the Wind River Canyon. Only 1 ewe was observed.

Responded to report of sickly elk in the Cold Springs Road/Dry Creek area. No elk collected.

Conducted mid-summer trumpeter swan survey near Diversion Dam, Ft. Washakie, and Ethete. A total of 5 different adult swans were observed (1 at Martins Ponds, 2 at Alkali Lake, 2 at Ray Lake Marsh). No cygnets (young from this year) were observed.

Participated in coordinating meetings for restoring buffalo to Wind River. The Eastern Shoshone Tribe intends to initially establish a herd of 10 to 15 buffalo near Pilot Butte Reservoir.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, presented wildlife ID and biology to 15 youth and 10 adults participating in the Arapaho Ranch Work Camp. Program was well received by campers.

Attended Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies in Cody. Gave presentation on the collaborative successes of working with the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes and Wyoming Game & Fish on Wind River, highlighting grizzly bear collaring and sauger restoration.

Mark Hogan of the FWS's Partner Program provided planning oversight of Meadow Creek Riparian Fence project. The Wind River Re-entry program and a local Tribal contractor will provide labor and materials.

Provided environmental review of the Trout Creek Bike Path construction. No fish and wildlife concerns with this project.

August 2016

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, the Tribal volunteers, Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery, and staff from the USFWS Denver Regional Office, stocked sterile tiger trout into Moccasin, Little Moccasin, Long, Shoe, and Mary's Lakes as part of an experimental fisheries restoration effort. The sterile tiger trout predators are intended to control overpopulated lake chub, brook and lake trout populations. This was the final year of a 3-year stocking effort. Next year we will be assessing the fish populations in these lakes to determine whether this approach was successful.



Releasing tiger trout at Mary's Lake.

Finalized the 3-year trial effort of lake trout removal at Lake 17 of the Bob's Creek drainage. The number of lake trout was significantly reduced; however, netting efforts appear to be insufficient to completely remove lake trout from this lake. The brook trout population appears to have increased in size and health as a result of the lake trout removal efforts.

Electrofished the South Fork of Owl Creek above the canyon for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Genetic samples were acquired at two sites. The captured cutthroat trout appeared to be in relatively good shape and were abundant.

Conducted a 4-day fishery survey of the 20 Lakes drainage. Abundant populations of healthy cutthroat and other trout were evident in the mainstem lakes.



A South Fork Owl Creek cutthroat trout.

Brook trout were observed in low abundance in Roberts Lake and lake trout were found in all lakes from Trail Lake down the drainage to Raft Lake. Cutthroat Lake is now almost exclusively populated by brook trout.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and Wyoming Game & Fish, stocked ~40,000 native sauger advanced-fingerlings into the Little Wind and Big Wind rivers.

Continued oversight and funding of the Meadow Creek Fencing Project area near Crowheart (primary oversight by Mark Hogan, Partners Program). The fence will greatly reduce impacts from cattle grazing to sensitive and unique riparian habitats. Project is progressing very well. The Wind River Re-entry program comprised of members from both tribes has been working diligently to construct the fence. Poles and posts have been purchased from 12 different enrolled members as well.

Surveyed whitebark pine cone production on Bold Mountain. This is part of a larger effort throughout the Greater Yellowstone area to track the amount of cones available to grizzly bears. The nuts in the cones are an excellent bear food high in fat and protein. Cone production was very good (about 57 cones per tree).

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted 2nd round of aerial surveys for grizzly bears in the Wind River and Owl Creek Mountains. This is part of a larger effort by many partners to help assess the size of the grizzly bear population across the Greater Yellowstone Area.

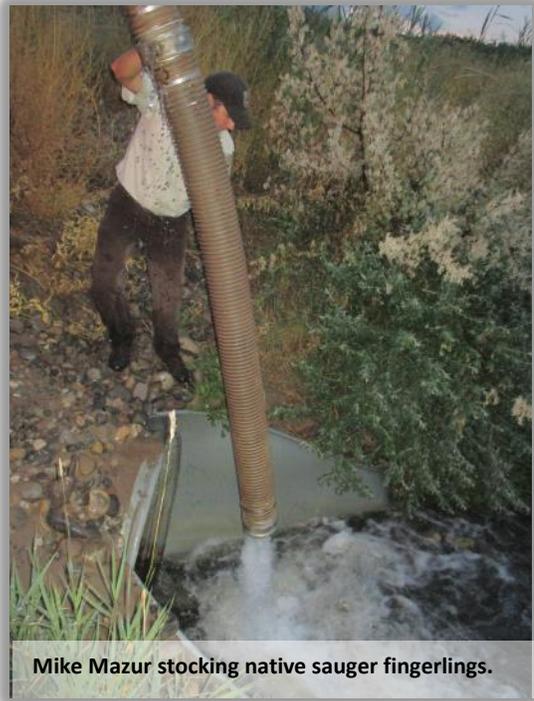
During a 2-day survey, personnel from the Wyoming Game & Fish observed 13 boreal toads, indicating the toad is common in the Crow Creek area. The species has been declining throughout its range and is considered a species of concern - so this is an encouraging find. This survey was given approval by both Councils.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, conducted the drawing for limited quota hunting tags (bighorn sheep, moose, trophy deer and any deer).

Assisted staff from the USFWS Denver Regional Office in official consultations with the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone Tribes regarding the eagle take permits that the FWS will be issuing to NAT as required by court order.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, visited with Sen. Barrasso's staff (Pam Buline, Travis McNiven and Brian Clifford) to discuss issues, as well as our role in assisting the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes. Meeting was very productive.

Provided environmental review for Crooked Creek road paving project and 2 proposed homesites. No significant fish and wildlife concerns with these projects.



Mike Mazur stocking native sauger fingerlings.



Rebuilding Meadow Creek Fence.

September 2016

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, began multiple-week survey of swift fox using lure and trail cameras in the Wise Flat, Countryman Basin and Bighorn Draw areas. Intent is to determine the presence of swift fox in these areas. At this time, no swift fox have been detected, though one washed-out night photo of a fox could not be positively identified as to species. Cameras have captured a variety of wildlife including pronghorn antelope, coyote, red fox, badger, short-eared owl and mountain lion.



Installed trail camera in the Washakie Park area to assess presence and abundance of wolves. None have been detected at this time. In previous years, wolves have been present in this area during August and September.

Assisted Eastern Shoshone Tribe with organizing upcoming restoration of bison from Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge, Iowa. Release of 10 to 12 bison in the 300 acre grazing unit near Pilot Butte is targeted for early November. Transported squeeze chute donated by the Rocky Mountain Arsenal NWR near Denver to Wind River.

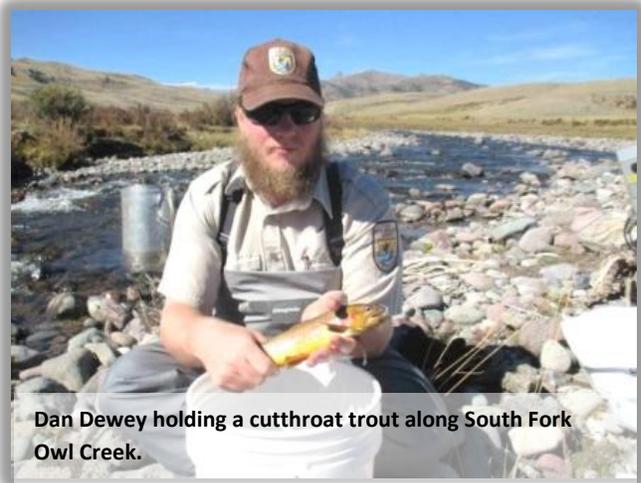
Continued summer/fall surveys of local trumpeter swans in the Bighorn Draw, Ray Lake and Diversion Dam areas. Observed 3 to 5 swans. We're hopeful that nesting and successful reproduction will occur in 2017.

Surveyed the canyon-mouth of Crooked Creek in the hope of finding remnant Yellowstone cutthroat trout from the aboriginal population believed to have been destroyed during the South Fork Little Wind Fire in 2004. No fish were observed in the lower mile of the canyon.

Continued electrofishing surveys of Yellowstone cutthroat population in the South Fork Owl Creek. Acquired genetic samples from an additional location. Samples were sent to the University of Wyoming to determine whether these come from a unique strain.

Surveyed Yantie Lake. Brook trout were relatively abundant and large.

Attended Tribal Water Engineer & Wind River Water Resource Control Board meeting involving BIA irrigation and various water users and water user groups regarding upcoming operational and rate changes for 2017.



Attended and presented program on sage-grouse biology at the Crowheart Festival. Attended by 15 adults and children.

Continued oversight and funding of the Meadow Creek Fencing Project area near Crowheart (primary oversight by Mark Hogan, Partners Program). The fence will greatly reduce impacts from cattle grazing to sensitive and unique riparian habitats.

Provided environmental review of 1 proposed homesite. No significant fish and wildlife concerns with this project.