



Utah Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Monthly Report (April 2020)

Overview

The Utah Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Vernal, UT assists partners with Fish Passage, the National Fish Habitat Partnerships and with Tribal Wildlife Grants. Present partnerships are with Trout Unlimited, Utah's Department of Wildlife Resources, tribal governments and Universities (Brigham Young University, Utah State University). A big part of the office's efforts is with Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, UT. This newsletter will highlight some of the activities undertaken in collaboration with these groups in February 2020.

Native American Tribes

Ute Tribe

No work was completed with Tribes in Utah due to adherence to COVID-19 regulations. Most affected is the Myton Townsite Diversion fish passage project (on the reservation) with a deadline of Sept. 30. Inactive project funds (including Ute Tribe match) are in place and available. Utah's DWR is involved, but actions are less and varied due to COVID regulations. Trap modifications are scheduled later this year, and maning the trap is scheduled for this time of year.

We have also coordinated efforts with the Ute Tribe's fish hatchery located at Big Springs along the Uinta River. Past duties have included propagation of Brown, Rainbow, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and Tiger trout, along with related hatchery tasks.

(Ute Tribe continued)

At times, daily tasks have been carried out solely by the Utah FWCO, however, this level of assistance has been contingent upon hiring seasonal FWCO employees. This year the tribe is expecting less assistance based on this position not being filled.

The main effort with tribes has been to acquire 2020 access permits. Application for Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation access has been made but a permit still has not been issued.

Goshute Tribe

Planning to provide a project proposal for Spring Creek stream restoration on the Goshute Indian Reservation. This will show the office's top long-term priority.

Paiute Tribe

The stream restoration project on the Shivwits reservation is underway. Though the Utah FWCO is not physically assisting, the tribe continues this on-ground work. Their effort in April was mainly burning debris piles and removing tamarisk. The goal is to improve habitat for virgin spinedace along the river while maintaining southwest flycatcher habitat by planting cottonwoods and willows.

The Shivwits five-year water agreement was also signed.





Fish Passage

The FWCO received funding for fish passage improvements in Raft Creek in N.E. Utah. Training for writing this agreement was accomplished this month.

Additionally, we participated in ranking engineer firms to complete fish passage structure design in the Price River. This effort was implemented with a functioning work group that includes William Rice, Regional Fish Passage Coordinator. We appreciate his interest and help with this phase of the project.

State Assistance

The FWCO in partner with the UDWR worked on a proposal (Statement of Work) to be presented to the Virgin River Recovery Program. The project focus is to control beaver in the Santa Clara River.

We also assisted the UDWR summarize fourteen years of (Santa Clara River) data for the Virgin spinedace Species Status Assessment.

Hill Air Force Base

The FWCO partnered up with Hill AFB in Ogden, Utah to hire a seasonal employee. Holli Holmes will be joining our team on 12 May. Her duty station will be at Hill Air force Base working with FWS biologist Nick Brown on various wildlife projects in Utah's West Desert.

Back to work on a newly installed guzzler which had been picked up, thrown up hill and landed upside down. This was a disheartening event and unexpected; its weight included hundreds of pounds of cement used to anchor it down. We plan to reconstruct the structure as soon as allowed to return to the field.

Outlook

The Utah FWCO will continue working with our partners to conserve our fish and wildlife resources in Utah.

Our priorities at Hill Air Force Base are set and will be shown in upcoming projects, as will our emphasis on fish passage in streams where fish habitat is fragmented by barriers, and in our important role to assist in trust responsibilities with Native American Tribes.