



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

Overview

The Utah Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Vernal, Utah assists partners with the National Fish Passage Program, the National Fish Habitat Partnership and Tribal Wildlife Grants. Partnership agreements are currently held with Trout Unlimited, Utah's Department of Wildlife Resources, Tribal governments and Universities (Brigham Young University, and Utah State University). Another major office role is with Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, Utah. This newsletter will highlight some of the activities we shared with these groups in August 2020.

Native American Tribes

Activities with Utah's Native American Tribes have been reduced due to COVID-19 restrictions. Though less field work was accomplished, efforts to pursue critical tasks were planned and completed. These include plans to collect salmonids from Jones Hole Creek for whirling disease testing (with Ute tribal volunteers), CRCT sampling in Hill Creek, and BCT management with the Goshute tribe. The proposed work to monitor sage grouse on the Ute and Goshute reservations was not awarded (for 2021) as hoped for. Due to COVID-19 the Ute's Department of Fish and Wildlife canceled the bison roundup that was scheduled in September. Plans to work on the Santa Clara River with the Shivwits Band of the Paiute Tribe are ongoing.

Ute Tribe

The Northern Ute Tribe's Fisheries Office continued field work this month despite an upswing in cases of COVID-19.

We participated in CRCT monitoring in Hill Creek near Weaver Reservoir. This is in an extremely remote part of the reservation south of Fort Duchesne. Holli

Holmes assisted and enjoyed getting to know the tribes fisheries crew and being in greener pastures for a while. Backpack electrofishing took place up and down stream of the reservoir. Monitoring stations were sampled downstream and brook trout were removed from above. The ratio of cutthroat vs brook trout above the reservoir was ~ 10 to one. We hope to continue mechanical control of brook trout in this reach of stream.



2020 Camp at Weaver Reservoir.

Goshute Tribe

The Utah FWCO was not awarded sagebrush ecosystem project proposal funding for the Goshute Indian Reservation. This would have been additional funding to benefit sage grouse management on the reservation; we are hopeful for next year.

We helped the tribe with BCT management at Nelm's Pond and in Spring Creek this month. After being notified that water was pouring over the dam, and unable to remedy the problem over the phone, it became apparent that I needed to get out there with some tools. Upon my arrival I used a pipe wrench to close down the valve at the head of the spring (the valve wheel was missing). Then after inspecting the outflow I found that the effluent pipe was clogged at its outward end. I spent a lot of time trying to unplug the pipe but what worked best was boating out and pouring aquatic herbicide down the pipe. The root was blown out the next morning. The pond level dropped and normalized. I then treated the overgrowth of algae along the ponds shorelines with the aquatic herbicide.

along the Santa Clara River are in progress, but not yet accepted by the program. The SOW will be presented to the VRP this fall.



FWS sign at Nelm's Pond.

Resources and permissions for beaver control and monitoring Access permits to assist the Paiute Tribe are needed but not yet available.

Fish Passage

The FWCO plans to complete an agreement with Utah's DWR for fish passage improvements in Raft Creek in N.E. Utah. The new Grant Solutions training for recipients has been completed. We also worked with TU to propose a dam to be removed in the Price River, Utah.

Utah DWR Assistance

The FWCO in partner with the DWR and Forest Service worked together on native cutthroat trout activities on Ashley National Forest. The FWCO participated in the IBAT sampling in the upper Duchesne River drainage.

Hill Air Force Base

Nick and Holli have been busy on projects at Hill AFB. Holli was pulled out of the West Desert and spent some time in the Uintah and Ouray Reservation backpack electrofishing Hill Creek.

Nick has been instrumental in writing proposals, agreements, and purchase requests for invasive species and wildlife management. He completed the Sikes Act agreement with BYU which required close correspondence with professors and university employees. He conducted an archery mule deer hunt (draw for civilian employees) that pulled in funding that we used to purchase fish for three ponds.



Effluent pipe unplugged after trees and root wad removed.

Paiute Tribe

The stream restoration project on the Shivwits reservation remained inactive due to summertime heat. Cutting, spraying, and disposing of trees will continue this fall. The goal is to improve habitat for virgin spinedace while maintaining southwest flycatcher habitat by planting cottonwoods and willows.



Outlook

The Utah FWCO will continue working with partners to conserve fish and wildlife resources in Utah. Our activities at Hill Air Force Base are high priority, as is our emphasis on fish passage in streams where fish habitat is fragmented by barriers. Our role to assist Utah's Native American Tribes in fish and wildlife management is one of importance and priority that will improve as COVID-19 restrictions lift.