



# Utah Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Monthly Report (July 2020)

## Overview

The Utah Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Vernal, Utah assists partners with Fish Passage, National Fish Habitat Partnerships 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 role is with Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, Utah. This newsletter will highlight some of the activities with these groups in July, 2020.

We responded to the Ute's FWS request to support their decision to not re-license Moonlake Electric's water lease at the Pole Creek diversion, however, the hydropower company's license was renewed by FERC with recommendations for the company to repair the diversion. The diversion has been drawing all available water and leaving the stream dry in the summer. We have had recent discussions with the Tribe in regard to plans and the electric company's responsibility to repair the diversion.

Utah FWCO assistance at Big Springs Fish Hatchery did not happen this month, and may not in 2020 due to reduced staff and COVID-19 regulations.

## Native American Tribes

Utah's Native American Tribes are generally shut down to field work due to COVID-19. Though no field work was accomplished in July, efforts to pursue critical tasks were planned for August and September. This includes a proposal to monitor sage grouse on the Ute and Goshute reservations, and an SOW for beaver control on the Santa Clara River with the Shivwits Band of the Paiute Tribe. We also made plans with the Ute's Department of Fish and Wildlife to assist in their bison roundup in September. COVID-19 safety measures are being considered and may be a reason to cancel this project this year.

### Ute Tribe

The Northern Ute Tribe's Fisheries Office continued field work this month but, because of an upswing in COVID-19, has been recently shut down for a second time.

### Goshute Tribe

The Utah FWCO provided a sagebrush ecosystem project proposal for the Goshute Indian Reservation. This is for additional funding that will greatly benefit sage grouse management on the reservation.

### Paiute Tribe

The stream restoration project on the Shivwits reservation is 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.

Resources and permissions for beaver control and monitoring along the Santa Clara River are in progress, but not yet ratified by the program. The SOW will be presented to the VRP this fall.

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 and all DWR required documents have been uploaded in the program.

## State Assistance

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

## Hill Air Force Base

Nick and Holli have been busy on projects at Hill AFB. Holli has been in the field weekly and is doing a great job working with BYU employees. She was also able to assist the DWR in IBAT sampling on the upper Duchesne River (more on this in August).

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 served on our hiring panel and helped interview applicants for a new biologist position on the base. He also prepared for our upcoming mule deer hunt (draw) scheduled for this fall.

## Outlook

The Utah FWCO will continue working with partners to conserve fish and wildlife resources in Utah. Our activities at Hill Air Force Base will continue to be a high priority, as will 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 that we know will improve as COVID-19 restrictions lift.



2020 IBAT sampling in the upper Duchesne River. Science Technician (fish) Holli Holmes second from right.