



Utah Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Monthly Report (May 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. Present partnership agreements 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 assistance is with Hill Air Force Base near Ogden, Utah. This newsletter will highlight some of the activities with these groups for May, 2020.

Native American Tribes

Access and field assistance to Utah's Native American Tribes were not allowed in May due to COVID-19 closures. Though no field work was accomplished, negotiations for 2020 access permits were made.

Ute Tribe

An access permit to enter the Northern Ute Tribe was received in May for 1 June to 1 August. Another access permit application was submitted for August 1 - November 22, 2020. The Northern Ute Tribe's Fisheries Office began field work the last week of May. Their efforts have been fisheries surveys in Midview Reservoir, and waterworks at the inflow of Cedar View Lake.

We scheduled stocking trout from Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery to their fish-ready Twin Pots Ponds. This will occur the first week of June, 2020.

(Ute Tribe continued)

Utah FWCO assistance at Big Springs Fish Hatchery has not happened as of May 31, and may not in 2020 as this assistance is contingent upon hired seasonal FWCO employees. The tribe is expecting less assistance based on this position not being filled.

Goshute Tribe

The Utah FWCO is planning to provide a project proposal for Spring Creek stream restoration on the Goshute Indian Reservation. This will be the office's top long-term priority.

Paiute Tribe

The stream restoration project on the Shivwits reservation is underway. Though the Utah FWCO has not been in the field assisting, the tribe continued spraying and burning vegetation in May. Cutting mature tamarisk is an objective still needing attention. The goal is to improve habitat for virgin spinedace along the river while maintaining southwest flycatcher habitat by planting cottonwoods and willows.

Resources and permissions for beaver control and monitoring on the reservation along the Santa Clara River was planned, and a SOW with Utah's DWR was worked on. This SOW will be presented to the VRP this spring or early summer.

The Shivwits five-year water agreement that delivers three cfs to the Santa Clara River, and use of the three million dollars held by the BIA for aquatic resource management was staged for negotiations this month.

Access permits to assist the Paiute Tribe are needed but not yet available.



Fish Passage

The FWCO is yet to finalize an agreement with Utah's DWR for fish passage improvements in Raft Creek in N.E. Utah.

Additionally, we participated in coordinating fish passage design in the Virgin River in Zion's National Park. This effort is being planned by a work group that includes the Park Service, Utah's DWR and our own Regional Fish Passage Coordinator William Rice. We appreciate Bill's interest and help with this phase of the project.

State Assistance

The FWCO in partner with the UDWR and Forest Service worked together to plan native cutthroat trout activities on Ashley National Forest. Information on Pole Creek and other streams were topic-ed.

We also assisted the UDWR summarize (Santa Clara River) conditions in negotiation for future water use and sustained Virgin Spinedace habitat to be included in the Virgin spinedace SSA.



Robyn Henderek, U.S. Park Service

Hill Air Force Base

The FWCO hired and welcomes Holli Holmes. She will assist at Hill Air force Base as a seasonal employee working with FWS biologist Nick Brown on wildlife projects in Utah's West Desert.

Field work is expected to resume in early June.

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 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. We expect that all field work in these areas will begin in June.