

# 2012



## New 2012-13 Fishing Regulations - Steve Yekel

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Before you head out to your favorite lake or stream this spring, you should first check out the new fishing regulations for 2012 and 2013. Believe it or not, we fishery managers continue to try to simplify these regulations while still protecting the fisheries resource.

I will mention a few of the major changes to look for and study. First, on page four of the regulation booklet, you will see a change in the trout category of our statewide creel limit. The statewide trout creel limit no longer includes lake trout because lake trout have been given their own statewide limit. The statewide creel limit for lake trout is six lake trout, only one fish to exceed 24 inches. This might look familiar to you as it is the same limit we had on Buffalo Bill Reservoir for years. Another change is in the brook trout creel limit. The statewide brook trout creel will remain at 16 brookies, but the length limits have been removed.

The third major change is the differing limits for lakes versus streams across the state. This change has to do with the way we manage lakes and streams. Most lakes are stocked so we want anglers to be able to harvest more fish, hence the limit remains at six trout but new this year, the length limit was dropped. The limit on streams has been reduced to three trout, only one fish to exceed 16 inches. This reduction reflects that most stream fisheries are wild and populations are much lower and less productive, so a reduced number and length limit is warranted in most cases. Lastly, the whitefish limit has been reduced from 25 to six, as populations are on the decline in many waters.

Anglers wishing to fish our area (2), which contains both the Cody and Lander Regions, are directed to page 25-26 for area-wide and water specific creel limits.

Probably the largest change is in the area-wide regulation that is listed in blue at the very top of page 25. The statewide stream limit of three trout, only one trout to exceed 16 inches was adopted for Area 2. The one major exception to this area wide limit is the addition of a cutthroat protection clause. Now, only one cutthroat shall exceed 12 inches. The lake

limit is still six fish but here again; the length limit has been removed.

Several water specific regulations have been added that are exceptions to the area-wide stream limit. These are the Nowood drainage (including Tensleep and Paintrock creeks) and the Shell Creek drainage. In these drainages, the creel limit remains at six trout but the length limit has been removed. Another drainage exception to the area-wide regulation is in the Shoshone River below Buffalo Bill Reservoir. For this area, the creel limit is six trout, only one fish to exceed 16 inches. All of these drainages were left at a six trout limit because they are either stocked to allow larger harvest or have large populations that can withstand a larger limit than the area-wide regulation of three trout.

A side note for you sauger anglers, the limit on Bighorn Lake has been increased from two fish per day or in possession to three fish per day or in possession.

Please look all regulations in the booklet over closely (changes are in blue) and if you have questions, let us know.

## Suckers Removed to Make Way for Trout—Jason Burckhardt

*“Chemically removing nongame fish will make way for better trout fishing opportunities.”*

Suckers and carp are sometimes so successful they out-compete stocked trout. This was just the case in Diamond Creek Dike pond where our nets were catching ten times as many suckers and carp as trout. The fishing in this pond had become so poor, few people ventured to this pond to try their luck. Sometimes in these situations the best thing to do is wipe the slate clean and start from scratch.

In November Diamond Creek Dike pond and Irma Mitigation pond located just southeast of Buffalo Bill Reservoir (off of Bartlett Lane), were treated with rotenone to chemically remove the fishery. Rotenone is a chemical that is toxic to fish at very low doses.

The Bureau of Reclamation drew down Diamond Creek Dike

pond as far as their pumps would allow, to reduce the volume of water we had to treat. We then used a specialized pump to apply powdered rotenone to the ponds. Diamond Creek Dike pond was allowed to refill and has already been stocked with catchable

sized Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Irma Mitigation Pond will be stocked with Yellowstone cutthroat later this year.

The restoration of these two ponds is expected to greatly improve the trout fishing in these fisheries.



Protective suits are worn by biologists applying rotenone to reduce exposure to rotenone dust.

## Illegal Fish Stocking Taken Seriously—Jason Burckhardt

*“Individuals convicted of illegally stocking fish face hefty fines, restitution costs and could lose their hunting and fishing privileges for life in Wyoming and 36 other states.”*

If you are a regular reader of our newsletter you will know that illegal stocking of fish is taken seriously. Across the U.S., illegal stocking is damaging sustainable recreational fisheries, threatening native fish with extinction, and diverting important agency resources away from programs that benefit anglers and aquatic resources.

Unfortunately illegal introductions are common and widespread. The illegal introduction of walleye in Buffalo Bill Reservoir threatens this excellent trout fishery. West Newton Lake and Luce Reservoir were chemically treated in the past to remove illegally introduced yellow perch. Several years ago yellow perch were illegally introduced into Harrington Reservoir and this fishery has been going downhill ever since. In other parts of the Wyoming, the illegal intro-

duction of burbot (ling) has caused serious problems with sportfish and native fish management. Last year walleye were caught in Beck Lake and Yellowstone cutthroat were caught in East Newton Lake (managed for Eagle Lake rainbow trout).

In 2010 Governor Freudenthal signed a bill into law that now makes the penalties commensurate with these illegal introductions. Individuals convicted of unauthorized stocking of fish in public waters may be convicted of a high misdemeanor, face fines up to \$10,000 and a year in jail. Violators

may be required to pay restoration or remediation costs and could lose their hunting and fishing privileges in Wyoming and the other 36 Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact states for their lifetime. Anyone with information on illegal introductions should call the Cody regional office at 307-527-7125 or the Stop Poaching Hotline at **1-877-WGFD-TIP**. Rewards of up to \$10,000 may be available.

For more information on this problem visit: <http://stopstocking.cowyafs.org/>

**Kick the Bucket  
Don't Move Live Fish**



## Sauger Boom—*Mark Smith*

The Bighorn River and Big Horn Lake harbor the states best sauger fishery. Over the last five years the fishery has boomed. Sauger are abundant from Worland to Montana and they just keep getting bigger.

The average length of sauger in our October surveys on Big Horn Lake in 2011 was 18.3 inches and the average weight was 2.5 pounds.

The number of sauger really started to grow about 2005 when Big Horn Lake water levels increased. Since 2005, water levels have been more stable than they were previously. This lead to more emerald shiners for sauger to eat and great habitat for small saugers.

Because sauger make movements back and forth from the reservoir to the river, the number of sauger in the river has also increased.

We would love to keep this sauger boom going. One of the primary concerns for Bighorn sauger has been the stocking of walleye into Big Horn Lake. Walleye stocking could lead to hybridization and eventual loss of this native resource.

Beginning in 2011 we started a project with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks to collect sauger eggs from the Bighorn River. The eggs taken are raised at the Miles City, Montana Hatchery and then returned to Big Horn Lake. If successful, sauger stocking could replace walleye stocking in the reservoir.

Sauger spawn in May in the Bighorn River. Fish from the reservoir swim upstream to spawning sites often more than 50 miles upriver.

May of 2011 was among the coldest and wettest on record in

the Bighorn Basin and the river remained high and muddy for months. Sauger are well adapted to these conditions but our ability to capture them diminishes with increased water quantity.

Between May 3 and June 1 we captured 716 sauger between Rairden and Greybull. We were able to take a total of 1.5 million eggs from 20 females. The eggs were hatched and 50 thousand finger sized sauger were stocked in Big Horn Lake in July.

We came up short on the number of eggs we would like to collect and the survival from egg to stocking wasn't very good (2011 was an atypical year in many respects). However as a first attempt at spawning sauger, we were encouraged by our small success.

We would like to be able to collect as many as 10 million eggs and stock 500 thousand fingerling sauger in the reservoir. We plan to continue the project this year. Hopefully river conditions will be less extreme in 2012 and more sauger will be swimming in Big Horn Lake this summer.



Sauger are top predators in the Bighorn River. They have a mouth full of teeth to prove it.



Adult sauger are collected using an electrofishing boat. Sauger stunned by the electric current are netted into a holding pen in the boat.



Collecting eggs from female Bighorn River sauger. A single female may produce more than 150 thousand eggs.

## A New Cat in Renner Reservoir—*Mark Smith*

*“Introducing channel catfish will not be an instant cure”*

Renner Reservoir on the Renner Wildlife Habitat Management Area near Tensleep is the most consistently productive bass and sunfish fishery we have in the Big Horn Basin. By some measures, the reservoir is too productive. The reservoir has too many small fish and not enough large fish.

The fishery consists of hybrid sunfish (bluegill x green sunfish), largemouth bass (sunfish predator) and grass carp (stocked to control plant growth). Historically the largemouth bass in the reservoir have been relatively small. Hybrid sunfish were introduced in the 1990's to provide prey for the bass so that they would grow larger (and to add another fish for anglers to catch). To some degree this worked and by 2005 we had a few bass pushing state record weights.

Unfortunately a series of partial winter-kills and an exploding number of sunfish has resulted in a fishery that is headed in the wrong direction. If you have fished Renner in the last three years you know what I mean.

The sunfish have become so prolific that the number of mouths in the reservoir is outstripping the available food. This creates what we call a bottle-neck. Because food is limited for everyone it is difficult for bass to get large enough to take advantage of the abundant sunfish prey. If we did nothing the bottle-neck could remain for years.

What is needed to loosen the bottle-neck is a decrease in the number of small mouths (not smallmouth bass, just “small” mouths) in the reservoir. To bring about this change we decided to try introducing a native predator with a huge mouth and a reputation for eating sunfish.

Many view the channel catfish as a scavenger or “bottom feeder”. The truth is that channel catfish are opportunistic eaters. They eat what they can fit in their mouth. In Midwestern farm ponds they are as much sunfish predators as largemouth bass.

Fortunately we have a ready supply of large channel catfish in the Bighorn River and in April 2011, we moved 150 channel catfish to Renner Reservoir. The catfish we recaptured in the reservoir in June had bellies full of sunfish.

Introducing channel catfish will not be an instant cure for the bottle-neck at Renner. We hope that in time the additional predation on sunfish will result in bigger largemouth bass as well as bigger sunfish.

The intent of the introduction isn't to add another place to go fishing for cats. We hope that anglers who might catch one of these fish will consider returning them to the water to eat more sunfish.

We will keep working to improve the bass and sunfish fishery at the reservoir and if the channel catfish introduction produces results, we will continue to incorporate them in the reservoir management.



Underrated as a predator, channel catfish have a penchant for eating sunfish.



Renner's hybrid sunfish have reproduced prolifically and resulted in small average size.



The grass carp in Renner are not common carp. Unlike common carp these fish eat aquatic weeds. Without them in Renner the reservoir would be unfishable in late summer.



The goal for the Renner fishery is to produce more fish like this.

## Bighorn River Trout Numbers Set Record -Mark Smith

The Bighorn River from Wedding of the Waters south of Thermopolis to the Black Mountain Road Bridge is one of the best trout fisheries in our region and in the top tier of trout fisheries in Wyoming. The moderating influence of Boysen Dam results in cooler water in the summer and warmer water in the winter. Rivers flowing from large dams are called tailwaters. Tailwater conditions are great for growing trout and the bugs they eat.

The Bighorn River in Wyoming is overshadowed on the regional stage by the much more famous Bighorn River tailwater below Yellowtail Dam in Montana. The two fisheries have their similarities and their differences. One of the most obvious differences is that the Bighorn River trout fishery in Wyoming doesn't have an angler on every island and a drift boat on every cobble bar.

The Bighorn trout fishery in Wyoming has been a constant work in progress for fisheries managers. The quality of fish habitat in the river varies from one year to the next as does the survival of young fish. To compensate for low wild trout production in many years, we stock the river each June with 8,000 Snake River Cutthroat and 16,000 rainbow trout. While these stocked trout provide stability in years when wild trout production is low, wild trout make up the bulk of the fishery in the years when fishing is at its best.

The past several years have been great for trout production in the Bighorn. Adequate winter releases from Boysen combined with annual spring flushing flows (requested by WGFD) to clean river gravels has produced new record trout counts.

Brown trout and Snake River Cutthroat numbers in the river have been relatively stable in recent years but rainbow trout abundance has greatly increased. Most of this increase has been the result of improved spawning

success of wild fish.

In October 2011 we captured fish for an estimate of abundance between Wedding of the Waters and 8th Street in Thermopolis. The estimated number of rainbow trout was greater than 2,000 per mile. The estimate for brown trout was about 500 per mile and the estimate for cutthroat was over 200 per mile. The number of fish in the river is great and even more impressive is the size of fish. Our estimate of the number of fish in the river that are 12 inches or larger was the best ever recorded (see figure below).

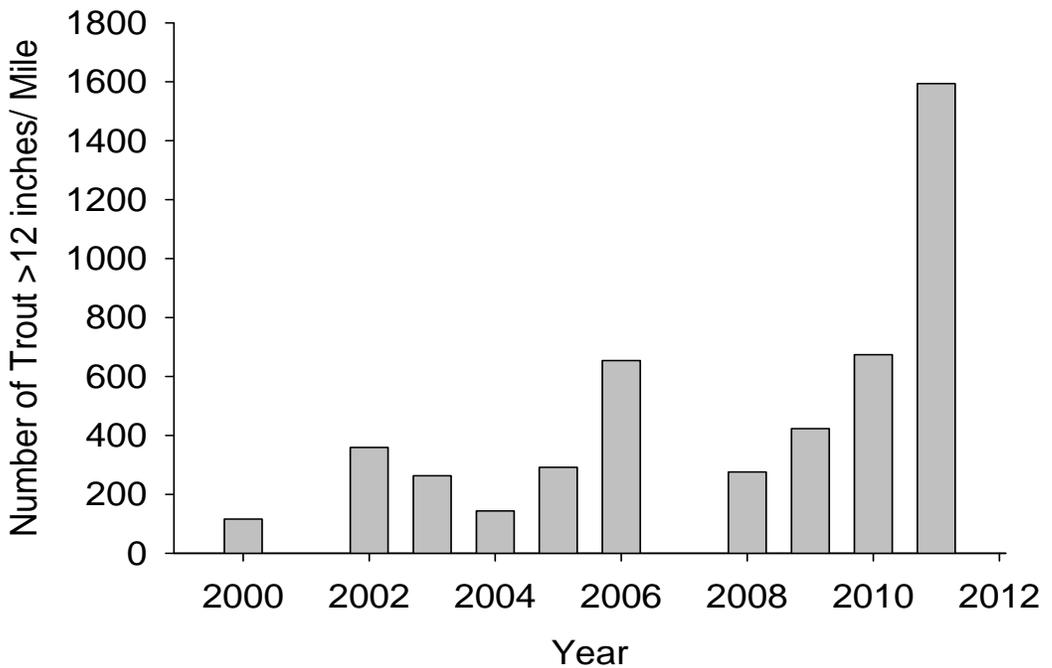
Because rainbow trout growth and survival was great in 2009 and 2010 the number of fish larger than 12 inches has more than tripled from 2009 to 2011.

Fishing on the river this year should be as good or better than ever. There should be many rainbow trout that are greater than 18 inches with some stretching to 25 inches. Its not a secret that the fishery here is doing well, expect more anglers than in previous years.

Stocking rainbow trout into the Bighorn River



Rainbow trout abundance has increased dramatically in recent years



## Summary of Recent Beartooth Mountain Surveys -Jason Burckhardt

*“Our stocking prescriptions are being changed in these readily accessible Beartooth lakes to improve angling opportunities and properly allocate hatchery resources.”*

Beartooth, Island, and Long lakes are lakes adjacent to Highway 212 on the Beartooth Plateau. Given their proximity to highway 212, they receive substantial angling pressure during the summer. These three lakes have wild brook trout populations (Beartooth Lake also has wild lake trout) but are stocked to provide additional angler opportunities. In each of these lakes the wild brook trout were the most common trout present. The rainbow and cutthroat trout stocked in these lakes were rare. Over the next several years, we will be altering our stocking prescriptions

(both size and numbers of trout stocked) in an attempt to improve angling opportunities and properly allocate hatchery resources. We will also be con-

ducting more angler interviews to determine if angler harvest is responsible for the few stocked trout in our nets.

Species	Num	Avg. Length	Range	Avg. Weight	Range
<u>Beartooth Lake</u>					
Brook Lake	28	8.2	6.2 - 12.5	0.24	0.08 - 0.72
Lake	20	15.7	9.7 - 26.5	1.52	0.34 - 7.28
Rainbow	8	10.2	7.6 - 16.2	0.59	0.26 - 1.64
Cutthroat	2	10.6	10.2 - 11.0	0.44	0.42 - 0.46
1 Grayling and cut-bow also taken.					
<u>Island Lake</u>					
Brook	65	9.3	5.6 - 12.4	0.33	0.08 - 0.70
Rainbow	25	10.7	7.5 - 12.0	0.46	0.10 - 0.68
Cutthroat	2	13.3	12.4 - 14.2	0.91	0.80 - 1.02
<u>Long Lake</u>					
Brook	38	8.4	6.3 - 10.2	0.24	0.12 - 0.44
Rainbow	4	7.7	6.7 - 8.7	0.16	0.10 - 0.22
Cutthroat	5	8.6	7.7 - 11.2	0.23	0.18 - 0.34

## Summary of Recent Big Horn Mountain Surveys- Mark Smith

**Poacher Lake-** This lake is currently fishless but will be stocked with Yellowstone Cutthroat in future years.

**Little Poacher Lake-** This lake is currently fishless but will be stocked with Yellowstone Cutthroat in future years.

**North Solitude Lakes (Summit Lake)-** Golden trout are common with most fish ranging from 6-10 inches.

**Canyon Creek-** Above forest road 25, brook trout are abundant averaging 6 inches and ranging 1-8 inches. Below

Forest Road 25, rainbow trout are more abundant averaging 7 inches and ranging from 5 to 10 inches.

**North Paintrock Creek (Paintrock Basin-)** Brook, brown and rainbow trout are abundant.



North Solitude Lakes Basin.



Canyon Creek near Forest Road 25.

### Soldier Creek Nearly Ready for Return of Cutthroat—*Mark Smith*

*“after five years we are nearing our goal”*

Yellowstone cutthroat just can't seem to exist with other trout species. So in the early 1900's when brook, rainbow, and brown trout were stocked in every Big Horn Mountain stream with a road crossing, most native cutthroats disappeared.

In South Paintrock and Soldier Creeks a few cutthroat survived. However, they were fighting a battle with brook trout they were destined to lose. In 2008, we started a project to reverse the fortune of these fish.

The removal of brook trout from

the headwaters of South Paintrock Creek has been a long project for us. The first few years of the project involved removing fish from Buckskin Ed Creek. We then transplanted the remaining Yellowstone cutthroat from Soldier Creek into the renovated Buckskin Ed. The last two years we have worked to remove all fish from Soldier Creek. This year, we hope to finish the project by first making sure no brook trout remain and second, returning Yellowstone cutthroat to Soldier Creek.

After five years of effort, we are

nearing our goal of a drainage that is secure for the native Yellowstone cutthroat. It hasn't been easy. Brook trout are very prolific and they have the ability to live in even the smallest streams. Additionally, leaving behind even two brook trout could erase all of our efforts.

Hopefully in the near future, anglers will have the opportunity to catch these native fish in their native Big Horn Mountain Environment. Don't worry, plenty of brook trout are also still available in the Big Horn's.



Yellowstone cutthroat trout do very well in Big Horn Mountain streams but only when other trout aren't present.



Yellowstone cutthroat won't be as numerous as the brook trout were in Soldier Creek but they should be larger.

### Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Population Lost to Invading Rainbow Trout—*Jason Burckhardt*

*“Rainbow and rainbow-cutthroat hybrids (cut-bows) were found throughout the Crandall Creek drainage.”*

Yellowstone cutthroat trout are the only species of trout that are native to our portion of Wyoming, but they have disappeared from much of their historic habitats when nonnative trout were introduced. Rainbow trout are close cousins with Yellowstone cutthroats and readily hybridize with them where they coexist. For this reason rainbow trout are one of the greatest threats to Yellowstone cutthroat populations. Crandall Creek, tributary to the Clarks Fork, was one of the larg-

est remaining populations of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Cody Region occupying over 65 miles of habitat. Rainbow trout were known to occupy the lower reaches of this drainage, but had not been documented in upstream cutthroat strongholds. During 2011 we extensively sampled the Crandall Creek drainage to determine the distribution of rainbows and hybrids. Unfortunately, rainbows and hybrids were found to be broadly dis-

tributed within the Crandall Creek drainage. While rainbows and hybrids were present in low densities and comprised only about ten percent of the trout sampled, their broad distribution limits our options to remove them from the drainage. The invasion of rainbows into this Yellowstone cutthroat stronghold is unfortunate and it highlights the importance of restoration projects that we have been conducting.



Cutthroat Trout

Rainbow or Rainbow-cutthroat hybrid

Illustrations by Michelle LaGory

## Changing History of the Porcupine Creek Fishery—*Mark Smith*

*“This was the home of the trout, the large speckled beauties of the native variety”*

*J. W. Newell 1893*



Judge Tom M. Robinson, the first known angler on Porcupine Creek.



Porcupine Falls

Porcupine Creek on the north-west corner of the Big Horn Forest originates on the slopes of Bald and Medicine Mountains. The stream tumbles over Porcupine Falls and winds through Devils Canyon to Big Horn Lake in Montana.

In 1893 four men traveled across the Big Horn Mountains from Sheridan to the Big Horn Basin. Their goal was to float the Bighorn River through Bighorn Canyon. The four built a wooden boat somewhere near the town of Greybull and floated to Fort Smith, Montana.

There is little evidence that the four men knew much about Bighorn Canyon nor whitewater boating. One party member named J. W. Newell later wrote an account of the trip that was printed in the Sheridan Post.

Of interest to fisheries managers was the party member Thomas Robinson. Tom was a judge in Fort Collins, Colorado and an avid angler. Judge Tom brought fishing gear on the trip and provides the earliest account of angling in Bighorn Canyon and Porcupine Creek.

The party camped at the mouth of Devils Canyon along Porcupine Creek. About Porcupine Creek Mr. Newell writes, “This was the natural home of the trout, the large, speckled beauties of the native variety, and they inhabited this stream in unlimited numbers”. Following an expedition upstream into the canyon Mr. Newell wrote “Tom returned late at night, completely exhausted from his day’s

work. He brought in about 25 trout ranging from 18 to 28 inches”.

In 1893 when the expedition took place the only trout in the drainage were the “speckled beauties of the native variety” today known as the Yellowstone cutthroat trout. In fact, these native trout were fairly common in the coldwater streams of the basin in those days. However a substantial change was on the horizon. Within a few decades, the Yellowstone cutthroat of Porcupine Creek would be gone.

Yellowstone cutthroat like most other cutthroat trout have a substantial weakness. The weakness is that when other trout species (e.g., brook, rainbow, brown) are introduced Yellowstone cutthroat generally disappear.

Around 1933 brook trout a non-native from the Appalachian Mountains of the Eastern U.S. were first stocked in the stream. A decade later rainbow trout native to the west coast and brown trout native to Europe were stocked into the stream. By the 1950’s, Yellowstone cutthroat were gone from the stream.

Porcupine Creek today is still a good fishery. Above the falls brook trout are abundant and easy to catch. Below the falls, adventurous anglers can pursue rainbow and brown trout in a scenic canyon. It has been so long since the native cutthroat disappeared that most anglers don’t know that what they see today is a relatively new fishery

created by trout stocking 60-70 years ago.

The fate of Yellowstone cutthroat in Porcupine Creek is a pretty common tale. On the west slope of the Big Horn’s only a few small reaches of stream still have native cutthroat. None of these remaining populations is large enough to sustain a substantial recreational fishery.

We believe that returning a few of these fisheries to the native Yellowstone cutthroat will once again provide anglers the opportunity to capture these “speckled beauties”. To accomplish this necessitates removing some of the nonnative trout introduced in the last century. Additionally, the removal must be in a location that nonnative trout can’t return.

Porcupine Creek above its falls is being seriously considered for this return. The water is large enough to produce a considerable number of Yellowstone cutthroat. Access for anglers above the falls is excellent. Most importantly the falls are an absolute barrier to natural re-invasion of nonnative trout.

If the project were to be pursued chemical removal of brook trout would be required over a 3 to 4 year period. During this period we would stock Yellowstone cutthroat of catchable size (8-10 in) so that anglers would continue to have the opportunity to fish the stream.

We are interested in what anglers think about this potential change. Please write or call and let us know how you feel.



Porcupine Creek above the falls



Brook trout were stocked into Porcupine Creek beginning in 1933.

## Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Movements in the Greybull River Under Investigation

—Jason Burckhardt

*“The Greybull River drainage is one of the last strongholds for Yellowstone cutthroat trout.”*

The Greybull River drainage is one of the last strongholds for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout. Very little is known about the movements of Yellowstone cutthroat within this basin. In 2011, we began a project to determine the movement patterns of Yellowstone cutthroat trout in cooperation with Trout Unlimited and the U.S. Forest Service. The goal of this project is to identify manmade barriers to their movement and diversions that may be entraining a large number of fish. The replacement of the Upper Sunshine Diversion on the Greybull River mainstem was an impetus for this project. This dam had blocked most cutthroat in the lower Greybull River from accessing upstream spawning tributaries for the past 80 years. The new diversion structure has an incorporated “fish ladder” that allows fish to pass upstream. The movement data will also be used to direct restoration activities and accrue information needed to improve future management within this basin.

This project was part of Trout Unlimited’s Adopt-A-Trout program where students from Meeteetse and Cody middle schools use radio telemetry to track trout in local aquatic systems and learn about the underwater life of trout.

Radio transmitters were surgically implanted into 32 Yellow-

stone cutthroat and their movements were followed through 2011. Most fish moved upstream during high flows and remained in upstream habitats until mid August. One fish was able to navigate past the old Upper Sunshine diversion structure twice, which indicated that

this structure was not a complete barrier to fish passage. Several other tagged fish were stopped however at the base of the diversion dam. We will continue to track these fish for the next several years and document the movement of fish past the Upper Sunshine diversion.



Radio transmitters are implanted in a Yellowstone cutthroat trout using a simple surgical procedure.



Tommy Thompson from Trout Unlimited shows Meeteetse and Cody Middle School students a recently captured Yellowstone cutthroat trout.



The old upper sunshine diversion served as a fish passage barrier for most fish for the last 80 years. The new structure, pictured here has a “fish ladder” (wooden steps in the center of the picture) that will allow fish to travel past the diversion dam.

*“Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Greybull River were implanted with radio transmitters”*

## Lots of Little Walleye at Deaver Reservoir - Jason Burckhardt

Since 1997 we've been sampling Deaver Reservoir by electrofishing at night for one hour in May. This has been a good way for us to assess the fishery. The number of walleye we catch in one hour give us an indication of the number of walleye in the reservoir. We also look at the size structure of the population (number of fish in various sizes) and the condition (plumpness) of the fish. Our goal for this water is to maintain a sufficient population of walleye to allow us to catch at least 80 fish in one hour of electrofishing that are greater than 10 inches (catchable sized).

In 2011, we sampled more walleye than any time in the past 15 years. We caught 86 walleye greater than 10 inches, meeting our goal. We also caught 139 walleye less than 10 inches. Hopefully, the large

number of small walleye sampled last year will indicate good fishing to come in 2012. As you will notice, however, a large number of small fish one year does not equate to a large number of larger fish sampled the following year.

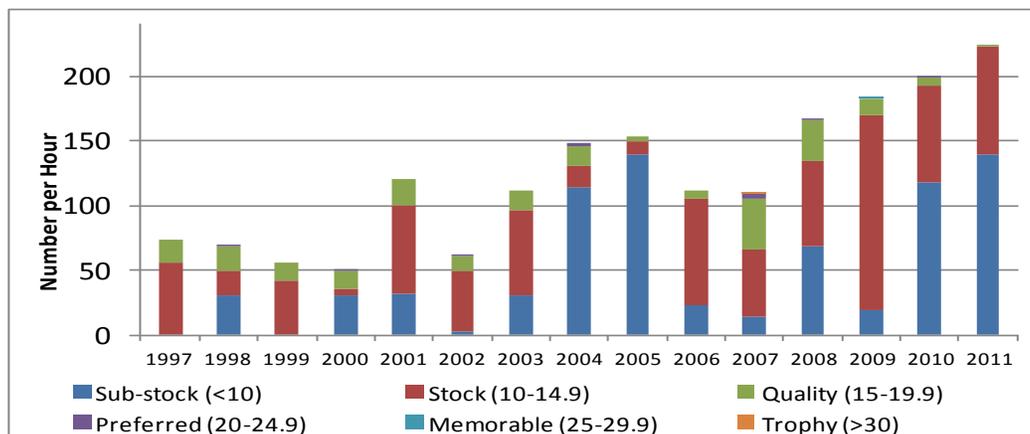
Since the regulation was reduced from six to three walleye in 2008, we've seen a steady increase in

the total number of walleye sampled, though the average size continues to go down due to the large number of small fish sampled.

We'll continue to work to reduce those factors limiting the Deaver Reservoir walleye population and perhaps soon we'll have a few fish in the population like this one we sampled in 2007.



A 31.4 inch 11.4 pound walleye caught in Deaver Reservoir May 2007.



Number and sizes (in inches) of walleye captured in Deaver Reservoir during one hour of electrofishing 1997-2011

## Cooperative Effort Re-connects Bitter Creek - Lew Stahl

Bitter Creek is a tributary of the Shoshone River near Garland. The newly constructed Darrell Mumm Fishway is located approximately one mile upstream of its confluence with the Shoshone River. Completed on April 8, 2011 this structure re-connects approximately 14 miles of upstream habitat for spawning brown trout and other fish species. The stream is the primary spawning tributary for fish within 24 miles of the Shoshone River below Penrose Dam.

As fish migrate upstream they are attracted to the current at the downstream end of the fishway and are guided toward the fishway by a row of submerged boulders. Fish swim into the fishway which slopes upward into the adjacent uplands, curves back around to the stream, and releases fish on the upstream side of the barrier. The fishway has a 5 foot wide

bottom with sloping sides developed to carry approximately five cubic feet of water per second at low flows and handle up to 25 cubic feet per second during high water. The bottom and sides are formed by rock projecting upward between six and 10 inches out of grouted concrete. The upstream end of the fishway is the top of the rectangular irrigation canal culvert with walls added to guide water into the fishway and guide fish upstream of the fishway.

Monitoring with a sampling net set at the upstream end of the fishway (fish exit) found successful passage of brown trout, flat-head chub, lake chub, and longnose dace. The size of fish ranged from an 11.3 inch brown trout to a 2.3 inch longnose dace. These results suggest that all fish in the system should be able to move upstream regardless of size and swimming capability.

Cooperators include the Darrell Mumm family, Sidon Canal Irrigation District, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, U.S.

Fish and Wildlife Service Fish Passage Program, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.



The Darrell Mumm Fishway, which provides upstream fish passage, was dedicated to Mr. Darrell Mumm.

## More Access—the search continues!—*Steve Yekel*

The search for willing access partners has begun big time in the Cody Region and that is especially so on the lower Shoshone River below Buffalo Bill Reservoir.

This spring we put the final touches on an Access Development Plan for the Shoshone River that includes the goal to maximize recreational opportunities by upgrading existing facilities and acquiring new access for facilities such as boat ramps, parking areas, and comfort stations.



North Cody Shoshone Public Access Area – Will be open to the public May 2012 and provides about two miles of stream access .

A priority list of where to start this effort was developed that keys in on three basic criteria: 1) potential to increase angler and recreational opportunities, 2) the opportunity to work with other state and federal agencies to improve public access, and 3) consider the productivity of the water to support increased angling pressure as a component in decision making.

Considering these criteria, our highest priority will be the blue ribbon trout section of the lower Shoshone River from Buffalo Bill to the Corbett take-out that many anglers and floaters presently use.

We will seek funding this spring for about five projects within this reach. Actual available money will dictate how much we will get done, but a very large component will be to find a couple of willing private landowners to negotiate with for additional access points.

We also have plans to construct

a handicap accessible fishing pier within this reach which is a must and will be the only one that is presently available on the Shoshone River.

One item on the list in this first phase of development was the construction of facilities for the North Cody Shoshone Public Access Area located within the city limits of Cody near the Certaineed Gypsum Plant on the north edge of the city. The parking area was completed in late March with plans to complete the pathways down to the Shoshone River for foot travel in the near future with the help of the local chapter of TU.

We will also be working closely with the Bureau of Reclamation and BLM to secure more public access for anglers as a key component of this plan.

So stay tuned and if you have ideas for more access give us a call.

## Floaters delight – Improvements to Rivers Rest Ramp Completed— *Steve Yekel*

Floaters of the North Fork Shoshone River will hopefully breathe easier the next time they take out at the new ramp constructed near Jim Creek on BLM lands. We had received numerous reports that it was nearly impossible to stop near this takeout in high velocity flow conditions, which were frequent the last two years. In an attempt to create some quite water upstream of the ramp, a rock weir was constructed this fall in cooperation with the BLM. The concept is to angle the weir of large rocks from near the top of the bank to a mid stream low water elevation. This will create lower water velocities behind the structure and because of the angle of the weir,

back cutting (washout) of the structure should not occur in all water level conditions.

This weir structure was necessary because of the limited sites where the ramp could be located originally. This access area has difficult geographic features and this was taken into consideration when a ramp site was selected.

In addition, a warning sign was placed upstream informing of the approaching ramp. Hopefully this will give floaters a little warning so they can be watching for the takeout. Let us know if you have problems.



Rivers Rest Ramp was improved in fall 2011 with a rock weir to reduce water velocities over the ramp.

Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Mark Smith

2820 HWY 120  
Cody, WY 82414



Conserving Wildlife-Serving People

## Bits and Pieces

The Cody Kids Fishing Day will be held June 4 At Beck Lake.

The Wyoming Free Fishing Day (no license required) is June 4.

If you are interested in helping with the Shoshone River Cleanup in March 2013, let us know or contact a local TU member. We can always use the help.

## Newsletter Contributors

Contributors to this years newsletter include the Cody Fisheries Management Crew, Lew Stahl statewide Fish Passage Coordinator and Regional Information and Education Specialist Tara Teaschner. Thanks to all.

This and past newsletters for the Big Horn Basin and across the state are available at: <http://wgfd.wyo.gov/web2011/fishing-1000439.aspx>

## Fisheries Management in the Cody Region

The Cody fisheries team includes regional fisheries supervisor Steve Yekel, fisheries biologists Jason Burckhardt and Mark Smith.

steve.yekel@wyo.gov  
mark.smith2@wyo.gov  
jason.burckhardt@wyo.gov

Check out our new WEB site-<http://wgfd.wyo.gov>

We manage your fisheries resources for you and we encourage you to call or stop by if you have questions or concerns.

307-527-7125

All photos in this newsletter were take by the Cody fisheries management crew unless otherwise noted.



Fisheries Biologist Jason Burckhardt.



Fisheries Biologist Mark Smith



Fisheries Supervisor Steve Yekel

Dennie Hammer Photo