



Slide Lake Near Lost Eagle Peak

PINEDALE FISHERIES NEWSLETTER

Greetings From The Fisheries Staff!

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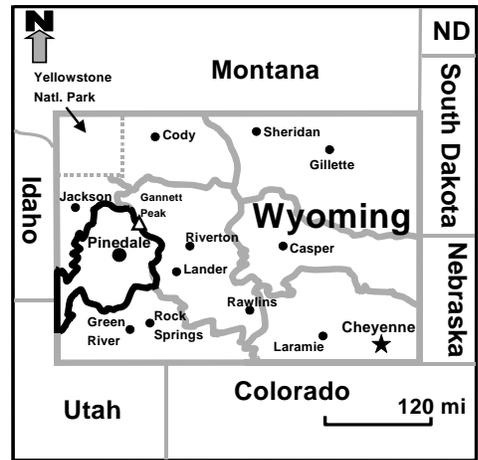
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This free newsletter is designed to inform interested public of the activities of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Fish Division within the Pinedale Region. The Pinedale region encompasses the Upper Green River Drainage (upstream of Fontenelle Reservoir) and parts of the Bear River drainage around Cokeville (see map).

It is our intent to produce up-to-date newsletters each year to keep you informed on findings, progress, and recommendations from the previous year. This newsletter is intended for everyone interested in the aquatic resources in the Pinedale area. The resources we manage belong to all of us.

We hope you find this newsletter useful and informative. Please direct any feedback that

you may have or suggestions for improvements to the contact listed on the back page.



WGFD Regional Map:

Pinedale Region outlined in black.

Pinedale Fisheries Management Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Although fisheries management in Wyoming has been going on for over 50 years, this year (2006) marks the 50-year anniversary of the fisheries management crew based in Pinedale.

Land was acquired for Pinedale's first Game & Fish office from Elton and Almira Cooley on August 21, 1946. The original office building in Pinedale was a log structure built under the direction of then Deputy Game Warden Jim Harrower. That office was located on the same site as the current Pinedale Game and Fish office.



Wyoming Game & Fish Department biologists collecting fish population data.

Greg Anderson
Daniel Hatchery
Asst. Superintendent

Early Wyoming Game Wardens carried the dual duties of enforcing wildlife laws and collecting biological data. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission saw the increased need to gather and analyze biological data. In the late 1950's, the Wildlife Resource Division was established in order to satisfy this need. One of the changes implemented by the newly formed Wildlife Resource Division was to add more fisheries management crews to the state.

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Pinedale Region Fisheries Staff:

Fish Management

Hilda Sexauer (Fisheries Supervisor)
Pete Cavalli (Fisheries Biologist)
Matt Kondratieff (Fisheries Biologist)

Aquatic Habitat

Floyd Roadifer (Habitat Biologist)

Spawning

Brian King (Spawning Coordinator)
Pete Feck (Spawning Specialist)

Boulder Rearing Station

Chip Moller (Superintendent)
Alan Shaffer (Asst. Superintendent)
Joe Gillis (Fish Culturist)

Daniel Fish Hatchery

George Gunn (Superintendent)
Greg Anderson (Asst. Superintendent)
Randy Tullous (Fish Culturist)

Pinedale Fisheries 50th Anniversary (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

In the fall of 1949, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department assembled the first state fisheries crew and stationed them in Laramie, Wyoming. During June of 1950, the state expanded from a single fisheries crew to three fisheries crews. Fisheries management within the Pinedale region was conducted from the fisheries management crew stationed out of Cokeville, Wyoming. The Pinedale fisheries crew was established in 1956. Fred W. "Bob" Jackson was Pinedale's first fisheries biologist and served as the fisheries crew foreman. Currently Hilda Sexauer serves as the Regional Fisheries Supervisor.

Many other biologists have served the public as fisheries managers in the Pinedale region over the years. Each person has helped shape the amazing fisheries resources we currently enjoy today in the Pinedale region.

Pinedale Fisheries Management Roster

1950's F. W. "Bob" Jackson-Fisheries Crew Foreman
Charles A. Viox-Fisheries biologist.
Cliff Bosley-Fisheries Biologist

1960's F.W. "Bob" Jackson-Fisheries Crew Foreman
Charles A. Viox-Fisheries Biologist
Bill Helms-Fisheries Biologist
Cliff Bosley-Fisheries Biologist/Pollution Analyst
Glen Dunning-Fisheries Biologist
Gaylen Boyer-Special Project Fishery Biologist

1970's F.W. "Bob" Jackson- Area Fisheries Supervisor
Glen Dunning- Fisheries Biologist/ Area Fisheries Supervisor
Gaylen Boyer-Special Project Fishery Biologist
Jack McMillian-Special Project Fisheries Biologist
Ralph Hudelson-Special Project Fisheries Biologist
Don Miller-Fisheries Biologist
Ron McKnight-Fisheries Biologist
Jim Kurtz-Fisheries Biologist
Ronald Remmick- Fisheries Biologist

1980's Glen Dunning-Area Fisheries Supervisor
Jim Kurtz-Fisheries Biologist
Ronald Remmick- Fisheries Biologist

1990's Glen Dunning-Area Fisheries Supervisor
Ronald Remmick- Fisheries Biologist/Regional Fisheries Supervisor
David Belford-Fisheries Biologist
Hilda Sexauer-Fisheries Biologist

2000's Ron Remmick-Regional Fisheries Supervisor
Hilda Sexauer-Fisheries Biologist/Regional Fisheries Supervisor
David Belford-Fisheries Biologist
Pete Cavalli-Fisheries Biologist
Matt Kondratieff-Fisheries Biologist

Freshwater Mussels in Western Wyoming *Pete Cavalli Fisheries Biologist*

Most Wyoming residents don't realize that freshwater mussels are native to many waters in the state. Even biologists are just beginning to understand where these interesting critters can be found. We currently know of seven species that have occupied the state, but just two of these have been documented from waters in the Pinedale Fisheries Management Region.

The western pearlshell has been collected from a few sites in the Bear River drainage in recent years. It has also been documented from other areas in the state, such as the Snake River drainage and in the Missouri River headwaters. This species was once abundant throughout the Bear River drainage, including many streams along the Wasatch Front in Utah, but they have not been found in Utah for at least 50 years. Therefore, it appears that the range of this species is shrinking, as is the case with many species of mussels. The western pearlshell, like nearly all mussels, depends on fish to act as a host for the larval portion of their life cycle. This allows mussel species to move to new areas that probably would not otherwise be occupied. Even though a typical western pearlshell can live to be 60 or 70 years old (a lifespan of over 100 years is possible), the adult mussels do not move very far and spend much of the time partially buried in sediment.



The inner surface (left) and outer surface (right) of western pearlshell (top) and California floater (bottom) shells.

The other species of mussel native to western Wyoming is the California floater. This species also depends on fish to act as a host for its larval stage, but it only lives to be 10 to 15 years old. Little is known about the current status of the California floater in Wyoming. Shells were collected from the Bear River drainage in 2005, but live specimens have not been seen for many years. It is possible that this species may no

longer inhabit the drainage, so additional surveys need to be conducted to determine whether this species can still be found in the state.

Today, many people fail to recognize the values of freshwater mussels, but that has not always been the case. Native Americans in some areas occasionally ate mussels, and the shells were used to make tools and jewelry. In addition, mussel shells were commercially harvested in the 1800s and early 1900s for the production of buttons used in the clothing industry. Mussels play an even more important role ecologically. They clean water by filtering suspended material and they provide an impor-

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Soda Lake: The Forecast for 2006

Pete Cavalli
Fisheries Biologist

Anglers anticipating the opening of the fishing season at Soda Lake should prepare for conditions similar to what they experienced in 2005. Unfortunately, that means catch rates will probably be lower than what many people have come to expect from this outstanding fishery. However, persistent anglers could be rewarded with a catch they won't soon forget.



One of the big brown trout that draws anglers to Soda Lake.

More than half of the brown trout that were harvested by anglers on opening day in 2005 were longer than 20 inches. One lucky angler harvested a 9.7-pound brown trout that day, and reports of other fish in the 10-pound range were also received during the month of May. Sampling in the fall showed that the average brook trout was 13.6 inches long, and the average brown trout was 20.4 inches long; brown trout over 24 inches long were relatively common. Anglers are advised to measure each fish they plan to harvest in 2006, because the possession limit allows for only one trout longer than 20 inches. Several anglers received citations in 2005 for keeping too many of these big fish.

Population estimates calculated in October 2005 showed that approximately 1340 brown trout and 390 brook trout survived

through the angling season. These estimates include only fish longer than 6 inches because smaller trout are too difficult to capture. The estimates made in 2005 are almost identical to those made in October 2004, and both estimates are far below the average for Soda Lake. Unfortunately, there are even fewer fish in the lake now, as the lake experienced a partial winterkill this winter. This has been the case for the past several years. However, some fish did survive the winter, so anglers will have a few fish to try to catch.

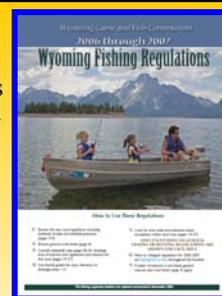
There are probably several factors that have led to the reduction in trout numbers, including low dissolved oxygen concentrations in the winter, warm summer temperatures, and a bacterial disease. Many of the problems are results of the long-term drought that hit Wyoming. Readers interested in learning more about how the drought affected Soda Lake and its trout populations can find additional information in Volume 1, Issue 2 of the Pinedale Region's Angler Newsletter. This document is available on the Internet at the following address: <http://gf.state.wy.us/downloads/pdf/Fish/Newsletters/Pinedale/PE05bAngler.pdf>

All of the trout living in Soda Lake are the result of a stocking program. Suitable spawning habitat for trout does not exist at this lake, so the Wyoming Game & Fish Department stocks fingerlings (fish about 3 to 4 inches long) annually. Survival of these young fish has been poor in recent years, due to poor habitat conditions, so the number of fish stocked and timing of stocking have been altered in an effort to increase survival. Unfortunately, these changes do not appear to be making much of an impact. The lake will be stocked again in 2006, but survival will probably remain low until the water level increases significantly. Therefore, anglers will need a little patience if they hope to catch one of the remaining trophy trout from Soda Lake in the next few years.

“Sampling in the fall (2005) showed that the average brook trout was 13.6 inches long, and the average brown trout was 20.4 inches long...”

2006 Fishing Regulation Changes

There are few changes to the Pinedale regional fishing regulations for 2006. However, some of these changes are significant and anglers will want to make a note of them. Be sure to get a complete copy of the 2006 fishing regulations (photo right) and familiarize yourself with regulations associated with the waters you plan to fish before leaving for your next fishing trip. You can pick up copies of the 2006 fishing regulations at any fishing license vendor or any Wyoming Game & Fish Department Regional office. Fishing regulations are also located online at <http://gf.state.wy.us/downloads/pdf/fishregs.pdf> Note that any regulation changes for 2006 are highlighted in light blue font.



For additional information on fishing regulation changes, view details in Volume 2, Issue 1 of the Pinedale Region Newsletter located online at: <http://gf.state.wy.us/downloads/pdf/Fish/Newsletters/Pinedale/PE06Angler.pdf> or contact the Pinedale Regional Game & Fish office at (307) 367-4353.

Visit A Fish Hatchery

With springtime comes anticipation of the fishing season. In our region we can have snow and muddy conditions until June. If your favorite fishing hole is still inaccessible and cabin fever is high, a great way to satisfy your need to "get out" is to visit one of our region's two fish hatcheries, Daniel Fish Hatchery and Boulder Rearing Station. Since these facilities operate year round, many activities take place during the "off season". On a trip to Daniel from Christmas until early spring, you will find the hatchery "loaded" with trout eggs and small fry for the spring and summer stocking season. Daniel maintains the Bear River and Colorado River cutthroat trout brood stocks and has plenty of big fish on hand to look at. The Boulder Rearing Station offers visitors the opportunity to view the Fall Rainbow Trout broodstock, a mainstay for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's catchable fisheries program.

These two stations begin to get busy with the preparation for spring stocking. The region's lakes and reservoirs are stocked in early spring shortly after ice off. Streams and rivers are stocked after spring runoff.

Daniel Fish Hatchery

The Daniel Fish Hatchery rests in an extremely scenic location in a mountain valley between the west slope of the Wind River Mountains and the east slope of the Wyoming Range. The hatchery has been in operation since 1917, when Mr. and Mrs. William Pape donated land for this facility to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. The facility was upgraded in 1923, expanded in 1966 and again in 2000.



Daniel Fish Hatchery.

Daniel Fish Hatchery maintains the Department's Bear River cutthroat trout and Colorado River cutthroat trout brood stocks. Offspring from these broods are used for restoration efforts as well as for stocking in waters throughout the state. The main goal of the Daniel Fish Hatchery is to maintain two cutthroat trout brood stocks to produce fish for restoration, fish transfers, and helicopter stocking.

Three department personnel (Superintendent George Gunn, Assistant Superintendent Greg Anderson and Fish Culturist Randy Tullous) are stationed at the Daniel Fish Hatchery and are responsible for taking care of the eggs, incubation, fish rearing, and stocking of 500,00-750,000 fish/year, in addition to the facility's general maintenance and operation.

Greg Anderson
Daniel Hatchery
Asst. Superintendent

George Gunn *Joe Gillis*
Daniel Hatchery Boulder Rearing Station
Superintendent Fish Culturist

Two springs supply approximately 2 million gallons of water per day to the hatchery at an average temperature of 46 degrees F. The Daniel facility performs the important function of incubating and rearing various salmonids including: splake, grayling, kokanee salmon, brook trout, brown trout, lake trout and several strains of rainbow trout.

Daniel Fish Hatchery
(307) 859-8252
P.O. Box 168,
239 Pape County Rd
Daniel, Wyoming 83115



Greg Anderson sorting eggs in rearing troughs

Because the water temperatures at Daniel are so cold, hatchery personnel are able to "hold back" or slow the growth of fish and to provide small fish for helicopter stocking, horse packing, backpacking, and ATV stocking, and provide fish transfers to other hatcheries and rearing stations. These facilities finish growing these fish and stock them into Wyoming waters.

Daniel Fish Hatchery provides fish to several management regions around the state. Regional Fish Management Crews request number, size and species to be stocked based on the available habitat, fishing pressure, and management objectives for each water. Most waters are stocked with small fish that grow and provide fishing over several years.

The hatchery is open to the public and we welcome scheduled group tours and walk-in tours of the facility. Visiting hours are from 8 AM to 5 PM daily. The hatchery is located 15 miles northwest of Pinedale on U.S. Highway 191, and 2.4 miles west on Sublette County Road 23-150 or Pape Road.

Boulder Rearing Station

Built on the East Fork River along the west slope of the Wind River Mountains, the Boulder Rearing Station is only a few miles from Highway 191 south of Boulder, Wyoming. The station sits on 200 acres of land purchased by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and opened for operation in 1952. This facility offers visitors the unique opportunity to view fish culture in progress.

Boulder Rearing Station's primary function is to care for a fall

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The Warren Bridge Access Area

*Pete Cavalli
Fisheries Biologist*

The Warren Bridge Access Area, also known as the Upper Green River Special Resource Management Area, provides over 10 miles of public access to a quality fishery on the Green River. This area consists of a main access road with spur roads that provide access to 12 points along the river. Some of the access points consist of nothing more than a parking area and a great place to fish, while others also provide an outhouse, a place to launch a boat, a fire pit, and/or picnic tables.



A view of the Green River along the lower section of the Warren Bridge Access Area.

Trout habitat in this section of the Green River had been severely degraded by historic “tie drives” (floating logs down the river for use in making railroad ties), water diversion, livestock grazing, and other human activity. Therefore, the Wyoming Game & Fish Department built a series of large logjams in the lower sections of the area to provide more cover and habitat diversity. The new structures performed as expected, and there are now more than 550 brown trout per mile of river; prior to construction, there were only about 150 brown trout per mile. In addition, 57% of all trout captured during an effort to estimate fish numbers in 2002 came from the logjams, even though only about 8% of the sample reach was modified with logjams. All of the brown trout in this section are naturally reproduced, but these fish are supplemented with hatchery-raised rainbow trout. These stocked fish tend to concentrate in reaches with higher gradient located in the upper end of the area, so people can find fish wherever they chose to go.

The Warren Bridge Access Area offers plenty of opportunities to find good places to fish without having to compete with crowds of people. A creel survey conducted during the summer of 2004 showed that July was the month that received the heaviest use by anglers, and usually about twice as many people fished on weekend days as weekdays. However, even during the busiest times there was usually less than one angler per mile of stream. A

higher percentage of non-residents fish this stretch of river than other waters in Sublette County, but catch rates have not suffered as a result. The average catch rates for 2004 were 0.86 trout per hour and 0.85 mountain white fish per hour, resulting in an outstanding total catch rate of 1.71 fish per hour. These anglers kept less than 3 % of the fish they caught, so fishing pressure appears to be having very little impact on fish numbers.

If this sounds like a fishery that you might like to try, then load up your gear and head to the river. The Warren Bridge Access Area is located immediately upstream from U.S. Highway 189/191. The access road is on the west side of the river, and begins approximately 0.2 mile from the highway bridge. The main road is fairly smooth, and can accommodate most vehicles. Some of the secondary roads leading to the river are more primitive, and are only recommended for high clearance vehicles. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) closes the area to vehicles in the early spring to reduce rut formation on the roads, but it is usually open for all of the prime months of the fishing season. However, if you are in doubt, you can check with the BLM (307-367-5300) to make sure the road is open before planning your trip.

“[T]he Wyoming Game & Fish Department built a series of large logjams in the lower sections of the area... The new structures performed as expected, and there are now more than 550 brown trout per mile of river; prior to construction, there were only about 150 brown trout per mile.”



An angler targeting fish hiding in one of the large logjams built by the Wyoming Game & Fish Department.

LaBarge Creek Restoration Project: Making A Home For A Native Sport Fish

Hilda Sexauer
Fisheries Supervisor



Native Colorado River cutthroat trout.

The Colorado River cutthroat trout is the only trout native to the upper Green River basin, which includes the LaBarge Creek watershed. Populations of this native species in the LaBarge Creek watershed were threatened by competition for food and habitat with introduced species of trout. In addition, hybridization with rainbow trout and nonnative subspecies of cutthroat trout was destroying the genetic purity of this beautiful sport fish. Therefore, an extensive project designed to restore pure Colorado River cutthroat trout to the LaBarge Creek watershed was set in motion in 2000.

Biologists from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Forest Service have removed many nonnative fish from the project area during the past 6 years. This year we will again use a piscicide (fish toxin) to remove nonnative trout from the upper 58 stream miles of LaBarge watershed. Pure Colorado River cutthroat trout will be stocked into the treatment area in 2007 if the work done this summer is determined to be a success. This population will be managed as a sport fishery, so anglers can look forward to catching cutthroat trout in LaBarge Creek again in the near future.

With your continued support and cooperation, Colorado River cutthroat trout will once again thrive in the LaBarge Creek watershed. Please contact Pinedale Region Fisheries Supervisor Hilda Sexauer by telephone at (307) 367-4352 or by email at Hilda.Sexauer@wgf.state.wy.us for more information about this Colorado River cutthroat trout restoration project, or for suggestions of alternative recreational locations. Wyoming Game and Fish Department personnel will also be available at LaBarge Creek from August 8 – 19, 2006 to answer any questions you may have about this native species restoration project.

LaBarge Creek is located on the Bridger-Teton National Forest, and was selected as a site for restoration of Colorado River cutthroat trout because it contains high-quality habitat, and may prove critical for the future survival of this subspecies. LaBarge Creek should be considered closed to all water activities during the treatment period from August 8 – 19, 2006. If you were planning to vacation in the LaBarge Creek watershed during this time period, please consider going to an alternate location. A few suggestions would be to camp and fish nearby in the South Piney, Smith's Fork, or Greys River drainages.

“Colorado River cutthroat trout will be stocked (pending) into the treatment area in 2007...”

fore they are stocked. Spawning at the station usually begins in November and continues through December. The broodstock annually produces about 3.8 million eggs. Fertilized eggs are shipped to hatcheries where they are placed in incubators for 20-30 days. When the eggs begin hatching, the fish will be placed in small troughs to begin growing. Small fish are fed frequently, sometimes up to eight times daily.

Visit A Fish Hatchery (Cont.)

spawning rainbow trout broodstock. Other species raised include brown trout, kokanee salmon and Eagle Lake rainbow trout. In total, the facility raises approximately 28,000 pounds of fish annually. Around 350,000 fish are stocked from Boulder each year.



Fall rainbow trout spawning operation

Natural springs in the area provide a constant supply of cold water needed for a successful fish rearing station. The springs furnishing water to the facility vary from a low of 900 gallons per minute (gpm) in March, April and May to a high of 2,000 gpm from June through September. During these peak months the springs provide water with an average temperature of 51 degrees F. After passing over the fish, the water is sent to the East Fork River.

The fall spawning rainbow trout broodstock held at the station consists of approximately 3,600 fish, weighing between two and six pounds. The broodstock fish usually become sexually mature in their third year. Normally, rainbow trout spawn or mate in the spring, but fall spawning rainbows have been manipulated to spawn in the fall. This allows a longer growing season for offspring be-

fore they are stocked. Spawning at the station usually begins in November and continues through December. The broodstock annually produces about 3.8 million eggs. Fertilized eggs are shipped to hatcheries where they are placed in incubators for 20-30 days. When the eggs begin hatching, the fish will be placed in small troughs to begin growing. Small fish are fed frequently, sometimes up to eight times daily.

Once fish have reached the size requested by regional fish management crews they are ready to be stocked. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department only stocks fish in waters where public fishing is allowed. Trout fishing near the rearing station is available at the three ponds located near the station and along a one-mile stretch of the East Fork River.

Please visit the Boulder Rearing Station located 15 miles south of Pinedale on HWY 191, then 1.5 miles east on Boulder Rearing Station Road.

**Boulder Rearing Station
(307) 537-5439
P.O. Box 36
Boulder Rearing Station Rd
Boulder, Wyoming 82923**

Please visit the Boulder Rearing Station located 15 miles south of Pinedale on HWY 191, then 1.5 miles east on Boulder Rearing Station Road.



Boulder Rearing Station.

Aspen, The Best Tree in the West!

Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) is one of the most important, but perhaps under appreciated, tree species in the Rocky Mountain west. Fortunately, people who value native fish and wildlife are becoming more appreciative of the value of aspen communities. Many biologists in the west refer to aspen as a “keystone species” because only riparian/wetland communities provide more productive wildlife habitat. Most large ungulates, ruffed and blue grouse, many other species of birds and small mammals, beaver, and many other wildlife species either make their homes in aspen for at least a portion of their lives, or depend on these communities in some way. This extensive prey base combined with readily available herbaceous forage is also a natural attraction for many predators, such as black bears. Nearly everyone who has ever put on their hiking boots and picked up a fishing pole, camera, or weapon to pursue their outdoor recreational interests has some fond memories which occurred in a stand of aspen. Other important values produced from aspen communities include wood products, forage and aesthetic beauty.

In addition to the important wildlife habitat that healthy aspen communities provide, both water quality and yield from these areas is superior to that from other vegetative communities. Besides these obvious benefits to our fishery resource, large beaver dams provide important habitat where fish can survive the winter. This was recently well documented through a local study in the South Cottonwood Creek watershed in the Wyoming Range. Aspens not only provide an important food source for beaver, but they also provide excellent material for beaver to construct large, stable dams that survive run-off events better than dams built from smaller material. Beaver dams also improve water quality by storing large volumes of sediment. They also provide water storage which helps sustain late season flows.

Another overlooked value of healthy aspen communities is that they can provide a natural firebreak during large-scale wildfire events. Although fire can carry through aspen communities, the circumstances under which this can happen generally occur during a very narrow window in the fall between when the leaves drop and before the first snows. Intense crown fires moving through coniferous forests have been known to “lay down” (creep along the forest floor instead of through the tree canopies) when they encountered healthy aspen communities. Because of this unique characteristic, aspen communities have been referred to as the “asbestos forest”.

Aspen: Ecology and Management in the Western United States, a Forest Service publication that I refer to as the “Aspen Bible”, shows that approximately 470,000 acres of aspen were present in 1985 in Wyoming. The number of acres dominated by aspen has declined significantly since this book was published. More recent investigators estimate that 50% of the aspen in Wyoming has been lost. In 1983 the Bridger Teton National Forest (BTNF) recognized that “In order to maintain existing aspen clones approximately 5,000 acres per year need to

*Floyd Roadifer
Habitat Biologist*

be treated Forest-wide.” An estimated 25,000 acres of aspen have been treated on the BTNF since the early 1970’s when a burn program was initiated. Managers who pursue these challenging efforts need strong public support so their efforts can be expanded. The recently initiated Forest Plan revision process provides an excellent opportunity to offer this support.



An aspen stand in the Wyoming Range near Red Castles.

Why is this vitally important species declining? A basic understanding of the ecology of aspen communities is necessary to answer this question. The majority of aspen communities in the intermountain region are naturally fire dependent. This means that natural, frequent fire events historically removed species such as conifers and sagebrush, which will out-compete the aspen and eventually dominate the site. This natural process is referred to as succession. More than a century of aggressive fire suppression efforts have drastically reduced the frequency of fire events in these areas and the amount of area burned in each event. Also, extensive browsing of young aspen by large ungulates has further reduced opportunities for fires to rejuvenate these stands by removing the fine fuels needed to carry fires through them. This process has suppressed aspen regeneration. Consequently, the remaining portions of this important community type is being further reduced at an alarming rate. Once a clone (a group of genetically identical individuals) has been lost, that specific genetic phenotype is lost forever.

It is much more difficult to reestablish aspen on a site when they have been lost than to apply appropriate management actions to prevent their loss. Fortunately, there are efforts underway to address these problems. In addition to the prescribed fire program implemented by the Bridger Teton National Forest in the 1970’s, the Bureau of Land Management plans to begin implementation this year of a plan to treat approximately 9,000 acres along the east front of the Wyoming Range. These programs come with a very high price tag and involve the obvious risks associated with fire. Extensive coordination with all affected interests is crucial in order to ensure the objectives of these efforts will be met.

So the next time you see a large cloud of black smoke boiling up along the edges of the forest, you can celebrate because chances are habitat for many of your favorite wildlife species is just getting better!

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

*Pinedale Region Fish Division
117 South Sublette Avenue
Pinedale, WY 82941*

Phone: 307-367-4353

Fax: 307-367-4403

Email: matt.kondratieff@wgf.state.wy.us

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<http://gf.state.wy.us/newsview/frmNewsDisplay.aspx>



“Conserving Wildlife – Serving People”

Freshwater Mussels (Cont.)

(Continued from page 2)

tant food source for muskrats, otters, raccoons, and many species of birds. Unfortunately, several American species of mussels have gone extinct, and many of the remaining species are being heavily impacted by habitat loss, pollution, and introduced species.

Since we know so little about the distribution and abundance of freshwater mussels in western Wyoming, we could use your help to identify areas where these animals are found. Please let us know if you find mussels in Wyoming (our contact information can be found on the back page of this newsletter), even if you don't know what species they are. Record information about where the mussel is found (location data from a GPS unit would be best, but even a dot drawn on a map or a general description of the area would be useful), estimate the number of mussels you saw, and tell us whether you found live animals or just empty shells. Collection of a few empty shells would help us to identify the species you found, but please do not collect live specimens. Photos of the shells and the area where they were found would also be very useful, but are not necessary. All information you provide will be appreciated, and it will help us to learn more about these obscure animals.

“Please let us know if you find mussels in Wyoming.”

Fish Division Mission Statement

As stewards of Wyoming's aquatic resources, we are committed to conservation and enhancement of all aquatic wildlife and their habitats for future generations through scientific resource management and informed public participation. We will use an integrated program of protection, regulation, propagation, restoration, and control to provide diverse, quality fisheries resources and angling opportunities. Our efforts will balance the productive capacity of habitats with public desires.

Important Dates



- Pinedale Kid's Fishing Day is Saturday, June 3rd, 2006 call 307-367-4353 for more information.

- Wyoming Free Fishing Day is Saturday, June 3rd.

- The 8th Annual Wyoming Heritage Hunting and Fishing Expo is September 8-10, 2006 at the Casper Events Center. The Expo is a great event to take youngsters to and educate them about the value and diversity of Wyoming's wildlife resources. For more information about the Expo, visit the Game and Fish's website at <http://gf.state.wy.us> or call 1-888-EXPO-WYO.

WY Game & Fish Department E-Newsletter

The Wyoming Game & Fish Department has a new monthly e-newsletter. The free e-newsletter arrives once a month in your email inbox to keep you informed of all the latest news related to hunting, fishing, recreation, and wildlife conservation efforts in Wyoming. There are two ways to subscribe to the e-newsletter: sign up online at <http://gf.state.wy.us/newsview/frmNewsDisplay.aspx> or email: join-wgfnews@wyoming.gov