



the wyoming game & fish department

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LANDER REGION newsletter

Photo by Mark Gocke

With the Grizzlies

Trapping in cooperation

In cooperation with the Shoshone and Northern Arapahoe tribes and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Wyoming Game and Fish Department conducted grizzly bear trapping and collaring as part of the regular population monitoring in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Traps were placed in the Owl Creek Mountains in the northern portion of the Wind River Reservation. A total of six grizzly bears (4 males, 2 females) were captured in seven capture events (one bear was captured twice). Samples were collected from all bears and radio collars were placed on five of the six captured bears for further monitoring of survival, reproduction, movements, habitat use, and many other aspects of grizzly bear ecology.

One of the main objectives of these trapping efforts is to maintain a representative sample of collared grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The information gathered from these captures will be added to the extensive dataset accumulated over the decades since grizzly bears were first listed as “threatened” in 1975 and will contribute to post-recovery monitoring of the population. The Game and Fish Large Carnivore Section would like to specifically thank Ben Snyder, Art Lawson, and Western (Gus) Thayer of the Shoshone and Arapahoe Tribal Fish and Game and Pat Hnilicka, Mike Mazur, and Dan Dewey of the USFWS for their assistance with the permission, setup, and running of the operation from start to finish.



Grizzly bear trapping with Gus Thayer (Tribal Fish and Game), Colby Clark, Justin Clapp (both WGFD), and Ken Smith (Tribal Fish and Game).

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On the Ground

Red Canyon cheatgrass



Measuring the level of cheatgrass infestation in Red Canyon.

Lander Region Habitat Biologist, Amy Anderson is working with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Fremont County Weed and Pest (FCWP) to monitor the extent of cheatgrass infestation on the Red Canyon Wildlife Habitat Management Area and TNC's Red Canyon Ranch.

The monitoring is in preparation for a fall habitat improvement project to treat cheatgrass on a large scale with combination treatments to decrease the prominence of cheatgrass on crucial elk winter range, and mule deer winter and year-long ranges.

The combination treatments will include areas treated with *Pseudomonas fluorescens* bacteria, a biological treatment that inhibits cheatgrass seed from sprouting. Some areas will be treated with only the bacteria; other areas will be treated with a combination treatment of bacteria and Imazapic herbicide. The herbicide will immediately set back the standing cheatgrass, while the bacteria takes approximately three years to establish in the soil.

The current monitoring taking place prior to any treatment will allow Game and Fish, TNC and FCWP to determine which treatments are most effective in the long-term to control cheatgrass in these important habitats.

Fence removal on Roundtop Mountain

The Wyoming Wildlife Federation and U. S. Forest Service (USFS) hosted a volunteer event on June 25 to remove an unnecessary fence on South Pass. Wyoming Game and Fish Department employees Amy Anderson, Stan Harter, and Brady Frude assisted in the effort. The fence was a two mile long boundary between USFS and Bureau of Land Management land, was decrepit and no longer serving any purpose. More than 35 volunteers helped pull, cut and roll old barbed wire fencing that threatened the passage of wildlife in the area of Roundtop Mountain.



Load of removed fencing; no longer a barrier to wildlife.



Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander, Riverton and places between

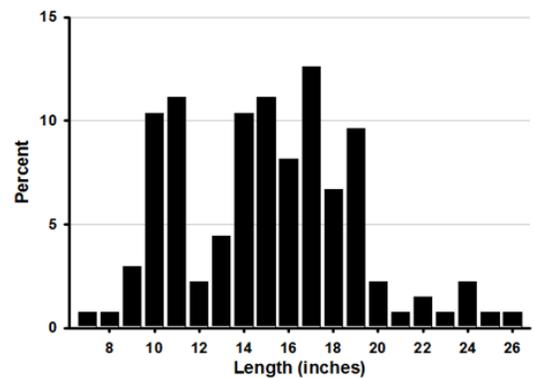


Fence removal on Roundtop Mountain in progress.

Under the Water

Boysen fishery

Walleye fishing at Boysen Reservoir has been slow in recent years, but anglers reported improvements in 2015 and recent sampling data has backed that up. Each year in September, the Game and Fish samples walleye in Boysen Reservoir with nets set in standard locations to assess population abundance and size structure. Data from the past two years has indicated the walleye population is slowly increasing thanks in part to very good reproduction in 2011. This four year old age class was abundant and mostly ranged from 15 to 17 inches. While these fish provided some good fishing last year, most in 2016 should be 20+ inches and the fishing should be even better.



This figure shows the length distribution of walleye

Yellow perch abundance has also been low in recent years, but increased the last two years as well. The majority of these perch are two years old or younger which indicates a couple strong, young year classes. That's not only good news for perch anglers, but it's great news for walleye fisherman because perch are the main food source for walleye in the reservoir, especially the medium and larger fish. Therefore walleye numbers are often closely related to perch abundance. Basically when the perch are doing well, the walleye do well too.





A representative Boysen Reservoir walleye.

Rainbow trout are also on the rebound and fishing reports this spring have been very good. Trout are sampled in May each year to evaluate stocking. The declining abundance of rainbows that began in 2008 has drastically improved in recent years with catch rates nearly tripling since 2013. Not only are there more rainbows, but they are getting bigger. Average length increased from 14.2 inches in 2014 to 18.2 inches in 2015. The increase in size is encouraging and reflects a shift in the dominance from newly stocked trout to older fish.

Game and Fish hatcheries stock around 50,000 rainbow trout per year in Boysen Reservoir and plan to increase that number to 75,000 in the future. These fish are stocked in the fall at an average size of nine inches. Trout of this size are more likely to avoid being eaten by all but the larger walleye, and walleye feed less during the fall than in spring or summer. This strategy, therefore, maximizes the survival of stocked trout. The trout fishery continues to provide excellent opportunities to bank anglers during spring and anglers fishing through the ice during winter. During summer, when water temperatures are warm, trout move off shore and become more difficult to catch.



A jumbo 13.5 inch yellow perch sampled from Boysen Reservoir.



Out of the Classroom

Forever Wild Family Camp

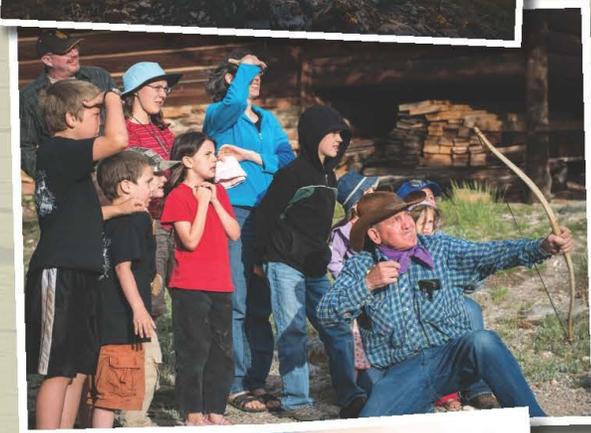
The third class of Lander Forever Wild Families attended their graduation at Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp in June.

Trout Unlimited joined Game and Fish employees to help make this weekend a big success. The families participated in a mock big game hunt, fly fishing on the East Fork Wind River, Archery, Hike to Glacier Falls, lessons on edible and medicinal, and many other activities.

Over the next year families will begin their mentor year, where they will continue to hone their new hunting and fishing skills with more confidence.



INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF WHISKEY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION CAMP TODAY!



The need for camp investment

We need your help! To continue to host top-notch conservation education programs, Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp is in need of some basic, but significant, renovations. Without investment, the Camp's historic buildings and the learning opportunities hosted here may be lost forever. The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission feels the Camp is its "Crown Jewel" and voted to invest \$2 million toward the \$4.5 million renovation project to begin in summer 2017. The WGFD hopes to preserve and enhance the Camp in a manner that complements the surrounding landscape and ensures it remains an outstanding facility for wildlife and conservation education.

How your investment helps

The Camp sits within the Torrey Valley, outside of Dubois, and the WGFD's Whiskey Basin Wildlife Habitat Management Area, which provides crucial winter habitat for bighorn sheep, elk and mule deer. This unique location has introduced generations of campers to outdoor skills and world-class wildlife. A renovated camp will begin a new era of conservation education and continue to inspire the next generation of conservation leaders.

- Help preserve this one-of-a-kind camp with basic infrastructure needs as well as an updated kitchen, dining area, ADA-compliant guest room and classrooms.
- Grow conservation education efforts across Wyoming. Your help will ensure the Camp can continue to function and will expand the overall summer capacity and ADA-compliant facilities for more people to enjoy.
- Help the bighorn sheep population in the Dubois area by raising awareness and increasing conservation education directed toward these animals.
- Facilitate the use of Commission dollars across Wyoming on WGFD habitat projects such as the Statewide Mule Deer Initiative, Squirrel Creek Wildlife Restoration, South Pass Aspen, and LaBarge Creek Fish Passage.

Please consider giving today and remember every donation makes a difference!

**To donate or for more information,
visit wgfd.wyo.gov/whiskeymtn**

