Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YSC) were historically native to the foothills of many Bighorn Mountain streams. In the summers of 1999-2001, many miles of stream were hiked and sampled to find out if any YSC were still present. As it turns out, a few streams contained remnant populations, most of which are on private lands.

An excellent opportunity arose for a restoration project on a grand scale. After much debate on feasibility and after support from the public, it was decided to move forward with the project. In 2009, approximately 15 miles of the Little Tongue River and its tributaries (above Fallen City) were treated with rotenone to remove non-native trout (i.e., brook, brown, and rainbow trout).

In 2010, a second chemical treatment is planned for the same 15 miles that were treated in 2009, a first phase treatment on the Little Tongue River below Fallen City to the confluence with the South Little Tongue River, and a first phase treatment on the lower portion of the South Little Tongue River. All told, in 2010, approximately 20 miles of streams will be treated. In 2011, the second treatments of the Lower Little Tongue River and South Little Tongue River will be completed.

Multiple years of chemical treatment are required to ensure a complete removal of nonnative trout. It would be a waste of time and money if we had missed a few brook trout that would eventually reestablish themselves.

After all treatments are complete, the YSC in the South Little Tongue River will have over 20 miles of streams in which to recolonize and redistribute. The WGFD will also stock several thousand YSC for a year or two to help get a vibrant population of YSC restored within their native range and to jumpstart what we expect to become a popular fishery for one of our native species.
Water levels improved in 2009 and the fishery continues to hold on at Keyhole Reservoir. With decent snow melt and some good spring rains water levels rose to 55% of capacity up from 35% in 2007. We were really busy again this year at Keyhole. One spring sampling event, one night of electrofishing, and two nights of fall sampling were conducted on Keyhole in 2009. Not to mention several trips to talk with anglers and to monitor tournaments. The goal of each sampling event is to gather as much data as possible such as population abundance, size structure, and overall condition of the fish.

This year, 127 walleye were sampled ranging in size from 7.2 to 27.4 inches. The walleye population broke down to 22% of the catch was 9 inches or less, 72% between 10 and 19 inches, and 6% of the walleye were greater than 20 inches. Strong year classes were found in the 7 to 9 inch class and the 13 to 15 inch class. Keyhole has always held several large walleye, but this year we didn’t find very many. It certainly doesn’t mean that they have disappeared, but there are likely fewer larger walleye than in past years. One thing for anglers to keep in mind, walleye from Keyhole that are 25 to 30 inches are somewhere between 10 and 15 years old! That means these fish were stocked or naturally reproduced between 1995 and 2000. For a third consecutive year young walleye (7 to 9 inches/age 1) are abundant. This is an excellent sign for the future of angling in Keyhole.

For the past three years, a special marking technique has allowed us to determine whether a particular walleye came from the hatchery or if it was naturally reproduced in Keyhole. Prior to walleye being stocked in Keyhole they are marked with oxytetracycline (OTC) that puts a phosphorescent ring on the boney structures of a fish. The otoliths (inner ear bones of a fish) are placed under a specialized microscope, if the otolith shows a ring, then that walleye came from the hatchery, if it does not, then that fish was naturally reproduced in Keyhole. The samples that have been analyzed the last few years show that more than half of the walleye in Keyhole Reservoir are naturally reproduced fish. Although there is no size limit on Keyhole walleye, think twice before keeping a limit of spawning size fish (18 to 24 inches).

Other game species continue to do relatively well in Keyhole as well. Black and white crappie continue to thrive with most of the fish ranging between 7 to 11 inches with a few 12 to 13 inches. Smallmouth bass seem to be doing fine as well with most fish ranging from 6 to 12 inches. Only a few northern pike were captured this year. These lie-and-wait predators are very difficult for us to capture. If they don’t move, we just don’t catch them. The northern pike we captured were between 25 and 33 inches. There is always that chance of a lunker waiting to be caught.
North Tongue River and Bull Creek

A cutthroat trout strain stocking evaluation continued for a third consecutive year on the North Tongue River and Bull Creek. Past stocking of the North Tongue and Bull Creek were the Auburn strain of Snake River Cutthroat (SRC). This strain of SRC outperformed Yellowstone cutthroat (YSC) quite handily. They grew big and strong and for the most part, stayed in the river where they were stocked (i.e., they didn’t go downstream searching for warmer water like we think the YSC did). In 2005 however, this broodstock was discontinued due to the lack of genetic integrity. In 2006, the first Bar BC strain of SRC were stocked in the North Tongue, thus warranting the question “which strain of cutthroat will perform best in the North Tongue, SRC or YSC?” Approximately 1,000 fish of each SRC and YSC are stocked each year and every fish receives a fin clip for species identification and to indicate that it came from a hatchery and wasn’t naturally reproduced. Several fish of each species have been captured and so far, the SRC appears to be outperforming the YSC. At every electrofishing station, the number captured and subsequent SRC population estimates were double that of YSC. We will continue to evaluate these trends for another year.

Population estimates continue to be very strong. In the North Tongue below Bull Creek (outside of the Catch and Release section) estimates ranged between 2,400 and 2,900 fish/mile. Above Bull Creek (within the Catch and Release section) estimates ranged between 1,200 and 1,900 fish/mile. Estimates in Bull Creek dipped slightly this year with 700 fish/mile. Not too shabby for a couple of high mountain streams!!

Healy Reservoir

Management changes are underway at Healy Reservoir. As many of you know, there are literally millions of stunted yellow perch in Healy. Perch were introduced into Buffalo Wetlands Pond to increase fishing opportunities there, however, some escaped and traveled down Clear Creek to Healy, where they were first discovered in 2000. It didn’t take long for perch to become over-abundant. In 2004, the average length of a perch was 8.5 inches, in 2009 the average size was 6.5 inches.

What could we do to make this fishery better? A chemical treatment, meaning we would kill the fish in the reservoir, then start over, is totally out of the question. To treat Healy, a 250 acre reservoir, would cost somewhere in the neighborhood of $20,000. And this would only be a temporary solution. Fish would shortly infiltrate the reservoir from Clear Creek and in a couple years, would likely be where it is now. We tried this approach in 1985, and it just didn’t last.

So, our best option was to introduce a fish that would prey heavily on the perch and white suckers, increase the overall size structure of perch, and provide a trophy component to the fishery. This fish was the walleye. In 2009, 19 walleye were transplanted from Lake DeSmet to Healy. We will transplant more walleye in 2010 in hopes that in a year or two, walleye will be self-sustaining. Also, in 2010, 5,000 tiger muskie will be stocked hopefully providing another trophy opportunity at Healy.

We don’t want to rid Healy of perch, we just want to increase their size to make them more desirable to anglers. In the meantime, Healy is a great place to take a child fishing and a great place to get a limit of perch, and we certainly encourage anglers to help by taking a few perch home.
Some people consider beaver a nuisance because they flood streamside areas, detain flows, remove shrubs and trees, or force anglers to alter their fishing habits. In appropriate settings, such as headwater streams, beaver improve stream bank water storage and streamside habitats. In turn, these actions improve conditions for fish, wildlife, and man.

Beaver help maintain consistent flow in streams during the year. Stream banks and floodplains absorb water during high flows in spring and this water is gradually released during drier periods. Beaver dams slow and disperse high flows, which expands the sub-irrigated streamside area known as the riparian zone.

Riparian zones provide food and cover for fish and wildlife. Many wildlife species depend on riparian zones for some or all of their annual needs. Increased water availability in the riparian zone increases the production of lush forage available for wild and domestic animals. Also, average trout size is often greater in streams with beaver ponds. Beaver ponds also provide a haven for the winter survival of trout by providing low velocity pools that are protected from floating ice.

Many native trees and shrubs are adapted to beaver cutting. They re-sprout from the stem or root system after being cut, and thrive with the increased water flow available from beaver. As with all herbivores, beaver must be managed to ensure they do not overuse the vegetation resources.

Inadequate dam building materials and food can limit beaver populations. They need willows, aspen, alder, birch, or cottonwood to meet winter forage demands, and to provide the building blocks necessary to maintain durable dams. Today, beaver inhabit only a fraction of their original range in northeastern Wyoming. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has been working with willing partners to restore beaver to suitable habitats. We want to ensure the natural engineering talents of beaver will continue to benefit fish, other wildlife, and people.

In the summer of 2009, in conjunction with the Bighorn National Forest, “trash-catchers” were constructed on a section of Big Willow Creek, a tributary to the North Tongue River. Forest wide, beaver populations have plummeted from approximately 1,200 in the 1950s to only 200 today. Most willow habitats across the Bighorns are in terrible condition because there are too many grazers and browsers such as elk, deer, moose, and cattle. The North Tongue River and its tributaries however, are one of the few areas on the forest that has suitable habitat for such a project.

The “trash-catcher” is an artificial dam constructed with T-posts and fencing material. Willows and mud are packed in front of the fencing to simulate a beaver dam. These dams are built to leak intentionally. The theory is that a beaver will hear the water leaking and then rush in to fix the dam, of course, better than any human could. A total of 10 trash catchers were constructed last summer and 11 beavers were transplanted into Big Willow Creek. We hope that this project will restore the function of Big Willow Creek by elevating the water table, encouraging willow growth and vigor, create seedbeds for new willow establishment and keep water on the land longer.
Bighorn Mountain Reservoirs

**Park Reservoir**: When people think of catching trout in a reservoir, most people in the Sheridan area probably think of Lake DeSmet. Most folks don’t realize the angling opportunities that Park Reservoir has to offer. Brook, brown, rainbow, Yellowstone cutthroat, splake, and the occasional lake trout inhabit this reservoir and you might also be able to hook into the occasional arctic grayling at the inlet of East Fork Big Goose Creek. There are not too many places on the mountain that you can go and possibly catch seven species of fish. Most fish range between 10 and 14 inches, however, the wild brown and lake trout have been sampled at 14 and 20 pounds, respectively. The only drawback to this fishery is a large population of white suckers. So starting in 2007 splake (brook trout/lake trout hybrid) were introduced to hopefully prey upon some of these suckers. In 2011 lake trout will be stocked again for the same reason. If we can get these suckers somewhat under control, it should improve the condition of the trout (i.e., fewer suckers, more food available to trout). And if the sucker population decreases, there should be some big browns, splake, and lake trout swimming around.

**Tie Hack Reservoir**: Located west of Buffalo, this reservoir offers some good angling opportunities as well. We have been sampling Tie Hack the last three years to get a better idea on how our stocking regime is working. Prior to 2008, Tie Hack was stocked with 6,000 sub-catchables (4-5 inch fish) and 6,000 catchables (8-9 inch fish). Since 2008, we have stocked 20,000 subcatchables (10,000 each of rainbow and cutthroat). Why the change? It had previously been thought that Tie Hack may summer or winterkill on occasion. Had that occurred, the 6,000 catchables would have been stocked to reestablish the fishery. In the 10 plus years that Tie Hack has existed, there has not been one summer or winter kill. Thus, it made no sense to stock these bigger fish. By stocking smaller fish, we are able to get more fish into Tie Hack, it creates more room in the hatcheries, and it doesn’t cost as much money to stock smaller sized fish. These smaller trout will take some time to grow to a harvestable size but we believe that there are enough big fish in Tie Hack (from the previous year’s stocking) to satisfy anglers. However, we will be monitoring Tie Hack for the next several years to make sure that this is the case and we will make changes if necessary.

**Cloud Peak Reservoir**: Located just outside the Cloud Peak Wilderness and four miles from Penrose Park, this reservoir offers some excellent brook trout fishing. We sampled this reservoir in 2009 and captured 181 brook trout ranging from 6 inches to 13 inches (average was 10 inches). We didn’t capture any rainbow or cutthroat on this trip, but there is a chance of catching one of those as well. From this reservoir, several other waters are within a short walk including the South Piney Lakes and Mead Lake in the Wilderness and Frying Pan and Flat Iron reservoirs just downstream of Cloud Peak Reservoir.

**Kearny Reservoir**: Located just outside the Cloud Peak Wilderness and 4.5 miles from Penrose Park on trail 320, this reservoir offers some excellent angling opportunities. Kearny was also sampled in 2009 and we were quite surprised! Brook trout ranged in size from 9 to 14 inches, rainbow trout ranged in size from 11 to 15 inches, and lake trout ranged in size from 9 to 24 inches. There are not too many places in the Sheridan area with such nice brook trout and a good chance of catching a quality sized lake trout. Several high mountain Wilderness lakes are within a fairly short walk from Kearny as well, including Highland, Peggy, and Myrtle lakes.
**South Tongue River**

More habitat and bank stabilization structures were installed on the South Tongue River, downstream of the Dead Swede Campground in 2009. Approximately 2,100 feet of an abandoned oxbow was reconnected to the main channel and 5,300 feet of the main channel had structures installed. The design of this project emphasized a restoration approach rather than an improvement approach; meaning, restoration of stream function as it once was and letting the stream create the fish habitat naturally, rather than construction of “fish houses” with little regard to overall function. Fish should greatly benefit because several pools were enhanced, undercut banks were developed, and woody debris (trees and root wads) were installed as well. Over the last four years we have been gathering pre-construction population and biomass estimates. Now that the project is complete, we will gather several years of post-construction data to see how the fishery has responded. We think that the fish population will greatly benefit. A big thanks goes to the Bighorn National Forest and Oxbow Earthworks of Blackfoot, Idaho for all their hard work on this project.

Easy access and tons of fish are available on the South Tongue River at Pine Island. We completed population and biomass estimates at our Pine Island station (just upstream from Arrowhead Lodge) this fall. There are over 4,800 fish/mile in this stretch of river with most of them being brown trout. These fish are slightly stunted with average length around 7 inches. We encourage anglers to take a few fish home.

**Cook Lake Chemical Treatment —Postponed**

Cook Lake, located in Wyoming’s beautiful Black Hills National Forest was scheduled for chemical rehabilitation in 2009. While doing some preliminary work prior to the treatment, it was discovered that water was leaking out of the outlet valve. Black Hills National Forest personnel attempted to get the valve closed but to no avail, so the project was postponed for a year. It is our intention to only treat the lake and not Beaver Creek, above or below Cook Lake. Several native nongame fish are present, hence only the lake will be treated.

Cook Lake can be a very good trout fishery, however, the last several years, green sunfish, white sucker, and black bullhead have become over abundant. With all of this competition for food and space, trout have suffered.

In 2010, with any luck, the leaky valve will be replaced and/or fixed. The lake will then be drained to approximately 100 acre feet (1/3 of full pool) and treated with rotenone to remove all fish within the remaining lake. During the remaining fall, winter, and early spring 2011, Cook Lake will refill and be restocked with catchable size trout.
Kleenburn Ponds

Kleenburn Ponds, also called Acme Ponds, are located about 10 miles north of Sheridan. This new recreation area covers about 75 acres owned by Sheridan County. Game and Fish first became involved with this project in early 2007 when an Abandoned Mine Land (AML) project was proposed. The project’s goals included addressing safety issues such as unstable high walls and coal slack. Our interest was to improve the fishing in this popular warm water fishery. These ponds support fishable populations of largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie, channel catfish, black bullheads, yellow perch and green sunfish.

To improve the fishery AML connected the two ponds and placed four cottonwood trees into the ponds to improve habitat. The connecting channel will greatly reduce future chances of winterkill of the northern pond by giving fish in this pond access to the much deeper southern pond. The channel will also create boating access between the ponds and boaters will be able to launch in the southern pond and then enjoy both ponds. A walking bridge over this channel will provide walking access to the whole site. Through Fish Wyoming funding, Game and Fish contributed funding assistance for the walking bridge and a permanent restroom facility.

After numerous discussions, two parking lots were constructed at the site. The main parking lot is adjacent to the northern pond and will provide the bulk of the available parking. A handicap parking area was constructed near the bridge and will facilitate access to the area for those people who cannot easily access the site. The area also has a crude boat ramp where boats can be launched to access both ponds.

The area is managed by Sheridan County and the rules include no motorized travel, no fires (except BBQ or propane grills), no fireworks or shooting guns or archery and the area is only open from sunrise to half hour after sunset. Also remember that no internal combustion motors are allowed on either pond. This area will be a great addition to Sheridan County. Please treat the area with respect so we can enjoy it for years to come.

Cloud Peak Wilderness Sampling

July and August is our chance to escape the heat in Sheridan and head to the mountains for our high mountain lake surveys in the Cloud Peak Wilderness. In 2009, we were only able to sample four lakes. Inclement weather created dangerous conditions preventing us from sampling several lakes in the South Piney Creek drainage. Hopefully we’ll get to these in 2010.

Deer Lake: This small lake has very nice brook trout ranging in size from 8 to 12 inches, with the average being 10 inches. This lake is fairly easy to get to and angling is excellent.

Florence Lake: This lake is at the very top of our region and in the shadows of Bomber Mountain. This lake is one of the most famous lakes in our region and is accessible from both sides (Sheridan and Tensleep). Although the fish can be very picky at times, it is well worth it. The Snake River cutthroat ranged in size from 16 to 18 inches and 1.4 to 2.25 pounds!

Powell Lakes 1 and 2. A little more difficult to get to these lakes, but definitely well worth it. Powell #1 had Snake River cutthroat ranging in size from 11 to 16 inches with the average being 13.8 inches and Yellowstone cutthroat between 7 and 11 inches with the average being 9 inches. Powell #2 had Snake River cutthroat ranging in size from 15 to 17 inches with an average of 16 inches.
Lake DeSmet

Lake DeSmet is one of the most popular fisheries in the Sheridan Region. Great opportunities are available for the boaters, bank and ice fisherman. Several game species are present in Lake DeSmet including rainbow, brown, cutthroat, perch, rock bass, and walleye.

We sample Lake DeSmet in the spring, then again in the fall. The goal of the spring sample is to target trout species, while the fall sample is primarily geared towards sampling walleye. Our gear includes the use of both floating gill nets and sinking gill nets. The floating nets target species that are swimming close to the surface (trout), while the sinking nets follow the contour of the lake bottom catching everything from trout to walleye and carp to perch. Eight floating nets and eight sinking nets are used in the spring and the fall for a total of 32 nets each year. Sounds like a lot of nets, but this is necessary in order to sample DeSmet thoroughly.

This year several large brown trout were captured ranging in size from 17 to 31 inches and 1.7 to a whopping 16.5 pounds. A total of 59 cutthroat were sampled ranging from 10 to 17 inches and up to 2.7 pounds. A grand total of 70 walleye were sampled ranging from 11 to 25 inches and up to 7.5 pounds.

In 2009 we saw a dramatic increase in our “catch per unit effort” (CPUE = number of nets/number of hours the net fished) for rainbow trout, almost tripling our catches from 2008. Why did this happen? Prior to 2008, most of the fish that were stocked in DeSmet were stocked in the spring. Spring-time equals hungry time for the walleye and we believe that the walleye negatively affected the trout population within DeSmet. From now on, most of the trout will be stocked in the fall and they will be larger (9 to 10 inches). In the fall, a walleye’s metabolism slows way down, meaning less trout consumption. And by stocking bigger trout, fewer of them will fall prey to the walleye.

Fish Passage at Kendrick Diversion-Clear Ck.

A project that has been in the works for several years has finally come to fruition in late 2009/early 2010. A bypass channel was built around Kendrick Dam, a diversion dam on lower Clear Creek, 7.4 miles upstream from the confluence with the Powder River. Native fish within the Powder/Clear Creek drainage, such as channel catfish, sauger, shovelnose sturgeon, and goldeye, primarily live most of the year in the Yellowstone River in Montana. In the spring, during runoff, these fish migrate up the Powder River, then eventually to Clear Creek, where they spawn before returning downstream. For the last hundred years, the Kendrick Dam prevented fish from accessing most of Clear Creek. With this bypass channel in place, native fish now have access to 36 additional miles of Clear Creek before the next diversion dam.

In the spring of 2010, water will flow through the 800 foot bypass channel for the first time and we will be there to monitor fish movement through the channel and upstream habitats.

Funding for the project was provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries program, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resources Trust Board, Wyoming Governor’s Office Sensitive Species Fund, and the Department’s Habitat Trust Fund. This project would not have been possible without the support and cooperation from the PeeGee Ranch, thank you!
Story Hatchery

As many readers are aware, the Story Fish Hatchery has been closed to the public for the past few years in order to complete a major construction project. The end is finally near with an anticipated completion date of July 1, 2010!

For those unfamiliar with the situation, let’s take a moment and look back at the last few years. In 2005, during annual routine disease testing, one group of fish was found to have been infected with the whirling disease parasite. Luckily, whirling disease cannot be passed from parent to egg, so we were able to keep the fish that we collect eggs from. The switch from being a fish hatchery that collects eggs, rears, and stocks fish to being a broodstock facility that only collects eggs was quickly made. Story is currently home to the Eagle Lake rainbow, brook, lake, and golden trout broodstocks for the state of Wyoming.

Raising a brood fish that is kept for up to 15 years is much different than raising a one or two year old fish that will be stocked out. Any issues with water quality are magnified over the long term, larger fish need more space and are harder to move and handle. So the need arose for better fish holding areas, more space for spawning, and more options for egg incubation. Therefore, the state legislature appropriated $2.6 million to build a state-of-the-art brood stock spawning and holding facility. Ground was broken in spring of 2008 but several setbacks occurred and work did not begin in earnest until early summer 2009. Grading, landscaping and a small amount of piping are all that is left to do in the spring of 2010.

There are several new features that visitors will see this year. The most notable will be the large brood facility building. In the lower section, there are three separate concrete holding units to house the Eagle Lake rainbow, brook and golden trout broodstocks. Running between the inside units is a deep channel that allows the spawning fish to be easily “herded” into the spawning area with minimal stress and handling. The lake trout will continue to be held outside in a pond and can be easily pushed into the spawning area by way of a funnel shaped run. Once inside the center spawning area, fish can be divided by age, sex and degree of ripeness in pens that we can vary in size depending on need.

Once the eggs have been collected, it is a few short steps down into the new incubator room. While we did not gain much extra capacity, three waterlines have added options in how we can care for the eggs. We now have the choice of the “usual” cold big spring water, slightly warmer mixed well and little spring water or, if needed, water warmed by an instantaneous heater. This will allow us to better accommodate the needs of hatcheries receiving the eggs.

Two other additions have been made. First, two small buildings out back will help with water quality. These have large degassing towers which create a vacuum that pulls off unwanted nitrogen gas in the water. Because these towers remove all kinds of gas, low head oxygenators inside the building will re-inject oxygen into the water before it heads to the fish. Second, a travelling screen has been put into the big spring pond. This screen will keep unwanted wild fish from entering our pipes and, because it rotates, will clean debris such as leaves, pine needles and algae off the screen so water does not back up and overflow the pond. (Story Hatchery continued on page 10)
Story Hatchery Continued

Finally, as a separate project, we are actively working with our Aquatic Education officer to make the facility more easily enjoyed by visitors. Plans are in the works for a self guided tour brochure that will have several stops and informational signs at all major buildings and fish holding areas. The visitor center will be refurbished and updated to reflect recent changes. Lastly, with better signage, people will find it easier to know where to park, what our public visitation hours are and what they can expect to see when they visit the Story Fish Hatchery. This project is anticipated to be fully completed by summer of 2011.

Golden trout broodstock at Story Hatchery

Story Fish Hatchery is proud to announce that they have completed the first successful spawn of a captive golden trout broodstock in the United States! The golden trout is native to California and, because of habitat loss and interbreeding with other species, is being considered for protection by the Federal Government.

These fish are very sensitive to human disturbance and their spawning (egg laying) is very closely tied to seasonal water temperature fluctuations. Because we have the space and a spring with seasonally fluctuating water temperature, Story was the ideal place to attempt to develop a captive broodstock of these fish.

The first juvenile fish arrived at the hatchery in July of 2008 and were spawned as two year olds in June of 2009. Approximately 250 females provided us with about 55,000 eggs during this first year. Egg production is expected to increase each year as the fish grow larger and more age classes are added. Just prior to hatching, the eggs were sent to the Daniel Fish Hatchery near Pinedale to be reared and will be stocked into wilderness lakes by helicopter this summer.

As the development of this broodstock continues, the Story Fish hatchery hopes to provide enough eggs to meet all of the state fisheries management requests for golden trout in the future.

Mavrakis Pond

Mavrakis Pond in Sheridan has long been a favorite for locals to fish. Over the years, populations of white suckers and black bullheads have exploded and have tied up a lot of the productivity. Since these fish also occur in several of the upstream reservoirs, completely getting rid of them is not possible. We needed to find another way to improve the fishery.

In mid April 2009, we coordinated with the City of Sheridan to open the bottom drain and send all the fish downstream. Surprisingly, it only took a little over one day to drain all water (and fish) from the pond. The drain was closed back up and in just three days the pond was again full. Just one week after the pond was drained, 300 catchable rainbow trout were stocked. During the summer and fall, another 700 rainbows were stocked and provided good fishing. This project would not have been possible without the great cooperation of the City of Sheridan.
**Don’t Move a Mussel: Preventing Aquatic Invasive Species in Wyoming**

Aquatic invasive species are organisms that are introduced into new ecosystems where they cause harm and threaten human uses of water resources. Often called "nuisance" species, they can attach to equipment, boats, and clothing used in the water and can then be transferred from one body of water to another. Once established, these species cause significant problems for aquatic ecosystems and the people who use them. Of particular concern are two species posing a significant and immediate threat to Wyoming—zebra and quagga mussels.

**What are they?**
Zebra and quagga mussels are freshwater, bivalve mollusks, typically with a dark and white pattern on their shells. They are native to Eurasia and were first discovered in the Great Lakes in 1988, most likely transported in the ballast water of ocean-going ships. They are up to an inch long and are often found in clusters attached to hard surfaces such as boats, piers, pipes, and other equipment. Invasive mussels reproduce rapidly. There are no known populations of these mussels in Wyoming to date, but they have rapidly invaded waters across the country and are now present in Colorado, Nebraska and Utah.

**Impacts to You**
The negative impacts of invasive zebra and quagga mussels cannot be overstated. They impede water delivery and increase maintenance costs by clogging pipes, pumps, turbines and filtration systems. Invasive mussels can clog water intakes on motors, overheating and ruining boat engines. Invasive mussels remove plankton from the water. Plankton is the primary food source for forage fish - which in turn are the food of sport fish. The result is often a catastrophic decline in sport fisheries.

**How You Can Help**
Overland transport on trailered watercraft poses the greatest risk for spreading aquatic invasive species. To prevent the spread of these mussels to Wyoming and protect our resources, we’re asking all boaters and anglers to **Drain**, **Clean**, and **Dry**. Drain all water from your equipment and boat, including the livewell, bilge, and ballast. Clean all mud, plants, and debris from your equipment and boat. Dry your equipment and boat thoroughly before launching in another body of water for at least 5 days in summer, 18 days in spring and fall, and 3 days in winter.

The 2010 Legislature passed a new aquatic invasive species bill that allows the establishment of check stations to inspect watercraft for aquatic invasive species and if necessary decontaminate the watercraft. In addition to encountering check stations at boat ramps throughout Wyoming, boaters will need to purchase a Wyoming Aquatic Invasive Species Sticker before launching in any waters in Wyoming in 2010. For more information, call 307-777-4600 or visit [http://gf.state.wy.us/fish/AIS/index.asp](http://gf.state.wy.us/fish/AIS/index.asp).

To report an aquatic invasive species sighting, or to request assistance with watercraft decontamination call 1-877-WGFD-AIS.
We welcome your comments or suggestions about this newsletter. Please feel free to contact us or send us an email at:
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Upcoming work for 2010

Thanks for taking time to view our newsletter! Please feel free to stop by our office, give us a call, or catch us out in the field. Although we’ll be very busy this summer with field work, we’ll be more than happy to answer any questions you might have about fishing and fishing opportunities within the Sheridan Region. Below is a list of projects upcoming for the 2010 field season. Stay tuned for updates on these waters in our next newsletter. Happy fishing!!

- Fish passage evaluation on Clear Creek at Kendrick Diversion.
- Sampling on the North Tongue, South Tongue, Bull Creek, Middle Fork Powder, Clear Creek in Buffalo, and Lake Creek.
- Sampling on Keyhole Reservoir, Lake DeSmet, Healy Reservoir, LAK Reservoir, Calvin Lake, Duncan Lake, and Tie Hack Reservoir.
- Several Cloud Peak Wilderness lakes will be sampled as well including Mead, South Piney Creek Lakes, Loomis, and Bard.
- Cook Lake chemical rehabilitation.
- Yellowstone cutthroat trout restoration on Little Tongue and South Little Tongue rivers.

Dates to Remember


June 5th, 2010 and June 4th, 2011

Wyoming’s Free Fishing Day Check the Game and Fish website or your fishing regulations for further details.