



U.S. Fish & Wildlife

Mountain-Prairie Fisheries

Fish Passage from the Rockies to the Missouri River

Mountain-Prairie Fisheries uses three voluntary, non-regulatory, cooperative approaches to improve fish passage and benefit fish populations. These approaches include National Fish Passage Program, the Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA), and our Yellowstone River Coordinator.

National Fish Passage Program

The National Fish Passage Program (<http://fisheries.fws.gov/FWSMA/FishPassage>) provides technical assistance and Federal funds to remove, replace, or retrofit artificial barriers; design and construct fishways; and monitor the effectiveness of these actions. Funds may be used for projects on both public, private and Tribal lands, but cannot be used on hydroelectric projects licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Essential to the program is cost sharing by partners with a desired match of 1:1.

Nationally, the Program has supported 105 fish passage projects, restoring access to over 3,750 miles of river habitat and 69,191 acres of wetlands. This Program has leveraged an average of 3:1 dollars in partner contribution.

Fish Passage Projects

Mountain-Prairie Fisheries fish passage projects are listed in our Fishery Operational Needs System (FONS) database. In the Mountain-Prairie Region, up to \$210,000 annually are used to restore fish passage. These projects are primarily in Montana and Wyoming. There are also opportunities throughout the Mountain-Prairie States.

In Montana

Five fish passage projects include 1 culvert renovation, 3 irrigation diversion improvement projects, and 1 watershed survey.

These projects provided access to 132 miles and 12 acres of spawning and feeding habitat.

Federal contribution \$335,000 with Partner match of \$165,000.

Partners are US Bureau of Reclamation, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP), Arctic Grayling Recovery Program, Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Crow Indian Nation Fish and Wildlife Department, US Bureau of Indian Affairs (USBIA), and private entities.

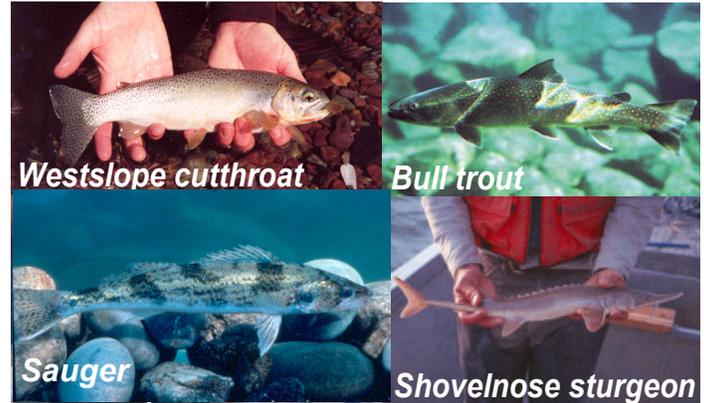
In Wyoming

Three irrigation diversion improvement projects include 2 on Mill Creek and 1 on Battle Creek.

Restored 95 miles and 25 acres of habitats.

Federal contribution \$55,000 with Partner match of \$5,000.

Partners are Natural Resource Conservation Service, USBIA, Shosone and Arapahoe Tribes of the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming Game & Fish Department, and Snake River Conservation District.



Mountain-Prairie Fisheries recovers and restores native species through watershed planning, improving habitats and managing populations.

The goal of the National Fish Passage Program is to restore native fish and other aquatic species to self-sustaining levels by reconnecting habitat that has been fragmented by barriers.



Lander Fish & Wildlife Management Assistance Office replaced a dam with cross vein boulders to stabilize the stream and improve fish passage for Yellowstone cutthroat trout while maintaining irrigation, Mill Creek, Wyoming.

Why do we care about fish passage?

Most fish species require upstream and downstream movements to reach important spawning, rearing and feeding habitats.

Dams, culverts, dikes, water diversions, and other artificial barriers impede movement of these species, resulting in lower populations of sturgeon, trout, sauger, and other species.

Fisheries Restoration and Irrigation Mitigation Act (FRIMA)

Congress provided the Service \$4M to benefit native fish such as salmon, bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout in the Columbia River basin which includes Oregon, Washington, Idaho & Montana. In cooperation with State, Tribal, and local governments, projects are solicited and ranked for Service funding. The program requires a 35% non-Federal match. FRIMA funded 43 projects in 2002. FRIMA was provided \$2M in 2003.

In Montana (<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/fisheries/frimaindex.htm>), the Regional Ranking Team consists of MFWP, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Montana Water Users Association, Trout Unlimited, and the Service.

Fish Passage Projects

We are improving aquatic watersheds by implementing 14 projects on irrigation diversions through FRIMA. The endangered bull trout and imperiled westslope cutthroat trout are the primary fish benefitted. Other recreationally valued species such as rainbow trout also benefit. FRIMA funding was matched on an average of 2:1.

MFWP's nine projects include project design, screening diversions, and installing fish ladders. These were, often in partnership with local conservation districts. Dunham Creek is the first project completed.

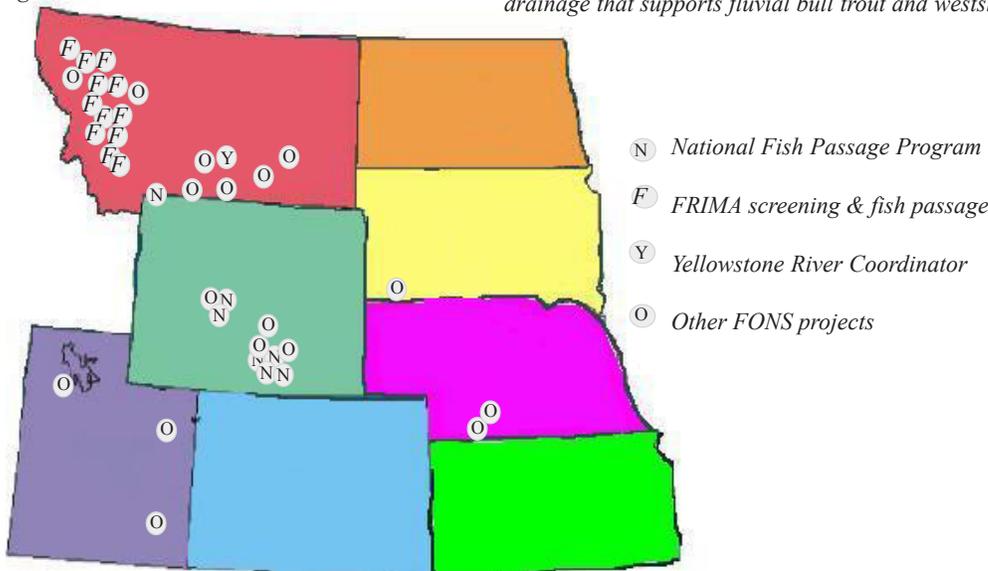
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe's five projects include screening diversions and installing a flume to separate irrigation water.



Fish screens at water diversions keep fish in the stream and improve upstream and downstream migrations.



MFWP completed the first FRIMA project in Dunham Creek, Montana a tributary in the Blackfoot drainage that supports fluvial bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout.



Current and possible future Mountain-Prairie Fisheries' fish passage projects. Possible future fish passage projects are listed in our Fishery Operational Needs System (FONS) database.

Yellowstone River Coordinator

Mountain-Prairie Fisheries has a Yellowstone River Coordinator (<http://yellowstonerivercoordinator.fws.gov>) who works with a variety of Federal, State, local groups and individuals to promote the conservation of fish and wildlife resources found in the Yellowstone River Basin for the benefit of the public.

There are six diversion dams on the main-stem Yellowstone River downstream from Billings, Montan. The uppermost (Huntley) and the lowermost (Intake) diversions are federally owned, while the middle four (Waco, Rancher's Ditch, Yellowstone, and Cartersville) are privately owned and managed by the local irrigation districts. All six dams present some degree of impediment to fish passage. Species that will benefit from improved fish passage include cutthroat trout, blue sucker, paddlefish, and the endangered pallid sturgeon.

Fish Passage Projects

Currently, our Yellowstone River Coordinator is working with State and Department of Agriculture partners to develop restoration plans for 35 miles on the Tongue River, Montana a tributary to the Yellowstone River.

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