
A FISH HATCHERY'S ROLE IN A CHANGING MONTANA

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Demographic change is sweeping across Montana like a racing wild fire, rapidly changing the mix of rural and urban dwellers and the face of Montana politics. A good percentage of these new residents have relocated to Montana specifically to partake in the time honored Montana traditions of hunting and fishing. Interest in fish and wildlife is at an all time high. As the natural resources of our state are pursued more intensely by residents and nonresidents, as well as consumptive and non-consumptive users, the management of these resources must adjust in order to protect fragile native populations. How will fish managers respond to this growth? What role should fish hatcheries play in Montana today? Are fish managers utilizing this conservation tool in the right manner? How much effort should be put into restoring threatened native populations? What attempts should be made trying to increase recreational opportunities throughout the state? The Creston NFH has served a unique role in Montana fish production, constantly changing and evolving, for over seventy years. Creston

has played a support role in several restoration and recreational fishery projects. Some of these have failed and some have created world class fisheries. This talk will focus on the lessons we have learned and how we can put those lessons to use in playing a future role in conserving, protecting, and enhancing Montana's fishery resource.