

## **CHRIS HUNTER'S INTERPRETATION OF HUGH ZACKHEIM'S HISTORY OF MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS FISHERIES DIVISION 1901-2005**

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The Fisheries Division was created in 1901. The first resident licenses were created at the same time, with more than 30,000 of the \$1 licenses purchased in the first year. For the first 50 years the emphasis of the division was on stocking fish. The first fisheries biologist was hired in 1947. The results of scientific investigations by these biologists led to changes in fish management including changes in stocking policy and increased emphasis on the effect of environmental damage to Montana's fishery resources. A spate of new environmental laws in the 1960s and 1970s made significant progress toward protecting Montana's aquatic environments. In 1974 the Fish and Game Commission adopted the wild trout policy. The 1980s and 90s saw increasing emphasis on native fish, T&E species issues and continuing efforts to secure water for instream flows. There was also an increased emphasis on habitat restoration with the Future Fisheries Program, hydro relicensing and Natural Resources Damages suits. These areas of emphasis have continued into the new millennium. State and national trends for hunting and fishing are clearly on the decline. There is increasing concern about the lack of time our children spend involved in nature related activities. What are the implications for the future of our agencies and the resources we manage?

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