Wild Fish Habitat Initiative: Technical Resources on Habitat Restoration for Resource Professionals and Project Managers[AFS]

M. Boucher, W.C. Fraser, and M.D. White
Montana Water Center, Montana State University
101 Huffman, Bozeman, MT 59717
mboucher@montana.edu, wfraser@montana.edu, mdwhite@montana.edu

Habitat degradation is one of the principal reasons for the listing of wild fish as "threatened" or "endangered" under the Federal Endangered Species Act and can exacerbate the detrimental effects of fish predators, exotic competitors, and diseases such as whirling disease. In addition, land values are diminished by habitat degradation and the subsequent loss of wild fish populations. In recent years, many fish habitat enhancement and restoration techniques have been implemented; project results, however, have not been shared widely and their efficacy is not well understood. The *Wild Fish Habitat Initiative* seeks to augment the success of habitat restoration programs by conducting targeted research related to habitat restoration techniques, and by implementing a technology transfer program to share

information on project results and to provide technical information to land owners and project managers. Research projects administered through the Initiative include investigations on thermal tolerances of westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhymcus clarki lewisi*), the epidemiology and control of Bacterial Coldwater Disease, and the effectiveness of irrigation diversions in western Montana. The technology transfer program includes online bibliographic and restoration manual resources, as well as a case history database of restoration projects implemented in the intermountain west.