



Beaver Management

Succeeding in the Business of Politics to Restore Beaver



Caribou-Targhee National Forest

Lee Mabey

Acknowledgements

- Beaver expertise provided by wildlife biologists: Bryan Aber and Betsy Hamann
- Study conducted by: Derek Blandford

Process

- Lack of beaver was Identified as an Issue
- Assembled an Interagency Group
- Education and Outreach
- Conducted Study
- Education and Outreach
- Rule Changes
- Implementation

Issue Identified

- A watershed analysis of the area identified water quality and stream function as an issue.
- Past surveys indicated that a lack of beaver may be leading to the decline of stable functioning streams.
- A key question was identified asking what are the status of the beaver populations and the trends of those populations.

Interagency Partners

- Idaho Fish and Game
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
- Teton Soil Conservation District
- Greater Yellowstone Coordinating Committee
- Natural Resource Conservation Service

Interagency Meeting

- Established buy in and commitment
- Developed network of contacts
- Established approach for education and outreach
- General approval of study approach

Buy in and Commitment

- They put in time and wanted to see some results
- Signed challenge cost share agreement
- Assisted in study design helped on agreement with results
- Were aware of efforts the Forest had put in felt need to support those efforts

Network of Contacts

- Irrigation companies
- Soil Conservation District Board
- County Commissioners
- Fish and Game Commissioner
- Trappers
- Henrys Fork Watershed Council

Outreach and Education

- Worked from the “Bottom Up”
- Before study began, Met with the local Soil Conservation District Board to understand their concerns, present ideas, and get their feed back as well as support before proceeding

Acknowledged Nuisance Beavers & Right to Control



- Plug irrigation diversions, ditches canals, culverts and other structures
- Flood roads, trails, and other improved lands
- Overuse food supply or cut desirable trees

Study Goal and Objectives

- Use beaver as a management tool to restore stream and hydrologic function.
- Survey all tributaries to the Teton River within the Caribou Targhee National Forest.
- Make Management recommendations based upon those findings.

Study Approach

- Habitat Suitability
- Social Factors
- Biological / Ecological

Habitat Suitability



- ½ Mile of suitable stream habitat
- Adequate willows within 100'
- Aspen within 200-300'
- Stream flow > ½ cfs
- Valley widths > 150'
- Stream gradient < 6%

Social Issues



- Roads
- Culverts
- Trails
- Diversions
- Poaching
- Campgrounds

Biological or Ecological Effects



- Fish and wildlife impacts
- Channel Conditions
- Current and historic use
- Water Table
- Riparian Trend

Methodology

- Streams were broken into half mile units using a GPS unit.
- Units were numbered starting at the forest boundary.

Methodology

- Each unit was surveyed in its entirety when possible or warranted.
- Surveys were conducted on 80 miles of streams during June to October.
- Photos and notes on general conditions were taken.

Methodology

- Measurements of forest plan guidelines for temperature, large woody debris, width, bank stability, and pool frequency were recorded.

Methodology

- Each variable was given a positive neutral or negative rating, and written comments.
- Recommendations for Beaver enhancement were made based on rating, personal recommendation, and landowner input.

Outreach and Education - *Post Study*

- Gave presentations to Teton SCD., Henrys Fork Watershed Council, and Field Tour.
- Talked with County Commissioner, Fish and Game Commissioner, trappers, and irrigation Co. representatives.
- Prepared two articles for county wide distribution by the Teton SCD.

Rule Changes

- Met with IDFG to discuss results of study
- Identified 3 streams for a pilot study
- Agreed to make rule changes on those three streams to provide protection from legal harvest
- Met with local Conservation Officer to get input and buy in (visited sites, identified nuisance areas for source animals)

Implementation 2 years later



- Move whole colonies
- Relocate in May
- Hold in pens till whole colony is trapped
- Release in groups ½ mile apart

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