

**Project # 199701100**

**Enhance and Protect Habitat and Riparian Areas on the DVIR**

Response to ISRP Preliminary Review FY-03 Proposals (ISRP 2002-02)

**More detail needed on how sites will be evaluated and standards for success.**

With the aid of the Tribal Environmental Protection Program whose director is a certified fluvial geomorphologist and has an environmental engineer on staff. We will monitor the ongoing work (exclosure sites) for water chemistry and biological indicators. The springs will be tested on these exclosures and new springs will be tested accordingly and a monitoring schedule set for these sites. This monitoring will enable us to track trends in water quality and quantity over time as well as make comparisons between protected and non-protected springs. Also, we will begin conducting Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessments on the streams of the reservation. These assessments will aid us in prioritizing springs for enhancement and protection. The PFC training will be set up through the National Riparian Service Team out of Nevada. In completing PFC on the waterways of the DVIR in coordination with the Project 2000079 habitat data collected and the salmonid abundance and density information, we can develop an assessment of what protection and enhancement needs to be complete.

To evaluate success of these projects we will utilize plant species diversity studies inside the exclosure vs. outside the exclosure. We will monitor the water quality and quantity to determine if the exclosures are making a difference in the water chemistry, temperature, DO, BOD, COD, and flows from the springs. Water quality will be measured through laboratory testing (Analytical Labs, Boise, Idaho) of the spring water and the streams the springs flow into. Also we will begin to assess the success of the exclosure themselves on the range conditions and riparian areas using "Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health" (version 3, Technical Reference 1734-6 2000) published by the U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture (BLM, USGS, USDA, NRCS, ARS). We will be using this document as a guide and evaluation of our range exclosures in order to be consistent with other Federal land management agencies operating in the areas surround DVIR. And to be consistent with the way they evaluate their enhancement activities. Standards for success will include but not limited to: 1) lower water temperature in streams adjacent to springs and exclosures, 2) increased abundance of native fish in these streams, 3) increase/no decrease in plant species diversity of the exclosure area, 4) increase in riparian vegetation in protected area of streams (through PFC assessment, HEP evaluation)

**Apparently no watershed assessment has been completed as proposed in FY-00.**

There was a Unified Watershed Assessment (UWA) completed by the Tribal Environmental Protection Program (TEPP) and a Non-point Source (NPS) Assessment of the DVIR (1999) completed by the same department. These two documents are still in the "draft" stages and have not been accepted by the Tribal Council to date. Also a "draft" NPS Management Plan (1999) was developed. These plans were necessary to receive treatment as a state designation from the USEPA for the CWA Section 319(h) Program. These documents are all on file at the TEPP office and will be distributed when finalized.

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Also, part of the assessment is to assess the resident fish of the DVIR, which has begun and a portion of it is to be complete in August 2002 (see response for project 2000079). The assessment, once finalized and approved by Tribal Council will be used to help prioritize other work needed on the DVIR. These documents have already been utilized in house to prioritize the TEPP non-point source project locations such as stream crossings and possible sites of contamination to waters of the DVIR (Rio Tinto Mine, East Fork Owyhee River).

**Tasks completed to date do not appear to be providing significant cost-effective benefits to fish and wildlife.**

Work to date has consisted of protecting 5 miles of headwaters on 3 suspected redband trout streams on the DVIR. We have also protected 18 springheads that provide cold (10° C) water to tributaries of the Owyhee and Bruneau Rivers. These cold-water refuges provide pool habitat for trout in the late summer months. Redband were observed in one of these areas on Little Sheep Creek during late August of 2001. The stream was dry in over 90% of its length except for the areas where the springheads were protected and flowing into the stream.

Also with the spring protection we have observed Mule deer and various bird species utilizing the drinking troughs added to supply water for stock and to keep them away from critical riparian areas. Through photos of the exclosure areas it is possible to see the benefits when observing the area inside vs. outside the exclosure.

Critical fisheries and habitat information has also been collected under this project. This information was crucial in identifying streams that have salmonid (redband/rainbow) populations. The data collected in this project aided us in being able begin collecting samples for project 2000-079. Fisheries data from project 1997011 aided us in locating streams with salmonid populations, locating possible fish barriers, locating areas for enhancement and protective measures, and supplied employment and training for Tribal members.

All reports are up-to-date with annual reports having been uploaded to BPA web server.