

STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Ross Leonard, Director

COMPLETION REPORT
A FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION PROJECT
W 89-D-9
A Pittman-Robertson Project

SAND CREEK

DEVELOPMENT

*Mentions cleaning
irrigation canals
& channels.*

2-29-60

Supervision

A full-time refuge manager (Richard Wilson) was stationed on the area to administer it in the best interest of wildlife. Records were kept on wildlife and sportsman use of the management area. Elk were tagged during the fall migration. Beaver complaints in the immediate area were serviced. Fences were patrolled and kept in repair. Domestic livestock was kept off the area. Big game migrations through the management area to the Juniper winter range were observed and recorded as to numbers and dates, and also the feeding habits and routes taken to winter range were noted. Year around observations of moose and elk that migrate through the management area involve quite a bit of time off the area, particularly in the vicinity of the Juniper winter range.

Two men were hired from May through December. An extra man was hired from November through December. Elk trapping and tagging was done utilizing permanent Department employees.

Wildlife Utilization

Big Game. Deer, elk and moose migrating from their winter range in the Juniper area reached the management area on April 10 and most of them had left the area for the higher summer range by June 20. During April, May and June, approximately 136 elk, 150 deer and 20 moose were on the area. Approximately 50 deer, 15 elk and 6 moose were on and adjacent to the area during the summer months. On September 15, elk started feeding on the standing grain and by October 15 there were 136 head of elk on the area. On January 1, approximately 300 elk were on the area, but on January 12, 200 head left for the Juniper area. Moose started leaving for the Juniper winter range about January 1 and deer left for the same general area at about the same time.

Waterfowl. During the month of April approximately 20,000 mallards and pintails fed in the grain fields. Three pairs of geese nested and raised 18 young on the area. Six pairs of sandhill cranes raised eight young. The area produced about 50 broods of mallards and 8 broods of green-winged teal. Two trumpeter swans stayed on the area most of the summer and 83 non-nesting geese stayed on the area until molting time. In the fall of the year, approximately 3,000 mallards stayed on the area until freeze-up time. These afforded good hunting but there were few hunters.

Public Use

During the month of June 738 fishermen were checked with a total of 1,004 fish. Fishing dropped off through July, August and September, but it is estimated that 300 fishermen enjoyed the area during this period, and also, about 75 people

about 50 big game hunters stopped during big game season seeking information. Ninety-three fishermen were observed on the area during the month of October. Approximately 1,300 people visited the area this summer.

Cooperative Work on Other Projects

Considerable time was spent on the Market Lake Wildlife Management Area, Project W 116-D. Due to shortage of machinery on that area, Sand Creek equipment and manpower was used to prepare and dike ground for 40 acres of wheat and 30 acres of barley. Thirty-eight days were spent on building a dike to protect the farmland and a man was provided in the fall to help complete the work.

A permanent deer trap was built on the south slope of the Juniper winter range during the fall months. Approximately 1,200 deer winter in this area, but little is known about their migration habits and it was deemed advisable to catch and tag a portion of the population to help determine this information.

Law enforcement and public relations work is much needed in this area and as the need arose time was devoted to these activities. Many other odd jobs, such as moving personnel and using the snow-cat or the all-wheel drive vehicle in rougher areas were accomplished.

Buildings

An exhaust fan was installed over the kitchen stove and an exhaust vent installed over the gas refrigerator. The septic tank was pumped out and sewer lines were cleaned. Buildings and grounds were kept in the best condition possible. Two fire extinguishers were purchased; one was installed in the house, the other in the garage. Two screen doors were installed on the power house to keep birds out. A door was installed for the office space in the basement and doors were put on the shelves in the office.

Dams, Dikes and Levees

No maintenance work was necessary on the Blue Creek Reservoir dam. Two beaver dams in the waterfowl impoundment dike were destroyed and filled in. Three hundred feet of dike on the west side of the waterfowl impoundment was raised three feet. This work was done with Fremont County equipment. The County allowed us to use their equipment in return for obtaining gravel from the management area.

Canals and Channels

Dirt from a new drain ditch was leveled for a road base to improve administrative access to the Sand Creek water control structure. All canals and channels were cleaned and maintained for irrigation purposes.

Roads

Interior roads were maintained and the road to Blue Creek Reservoir was widened and rock spots covered. This work was done utilizing equipment from North Lake Management Area. The main access road from the cattle guard to the headquarters site was maintained by Fremont County.

Fences

One-half mile of boundary fence was rebuilt on the west side and the balance of the fence was maintained to keep it up to Department standards. One mile of fence on the north end which was to be replaced with a rail fence was not done because of the lack of time.

A five-acre game and livestock enclosure was built in the Juniper area. This was based on a land use agreement with the University of Idaho Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Because surveying work could not be completed on the east boundary line, one-fourth mile of fence was not built as anticipated.