

VOICE OF THE RIVER

FALL NEWSLETTER 2017

HFF's 2017
Summer Interns

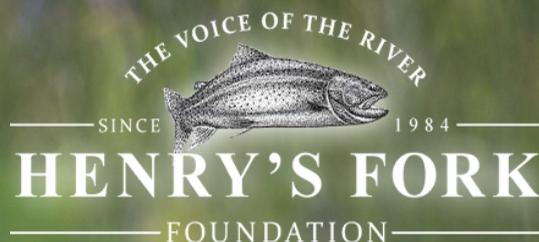
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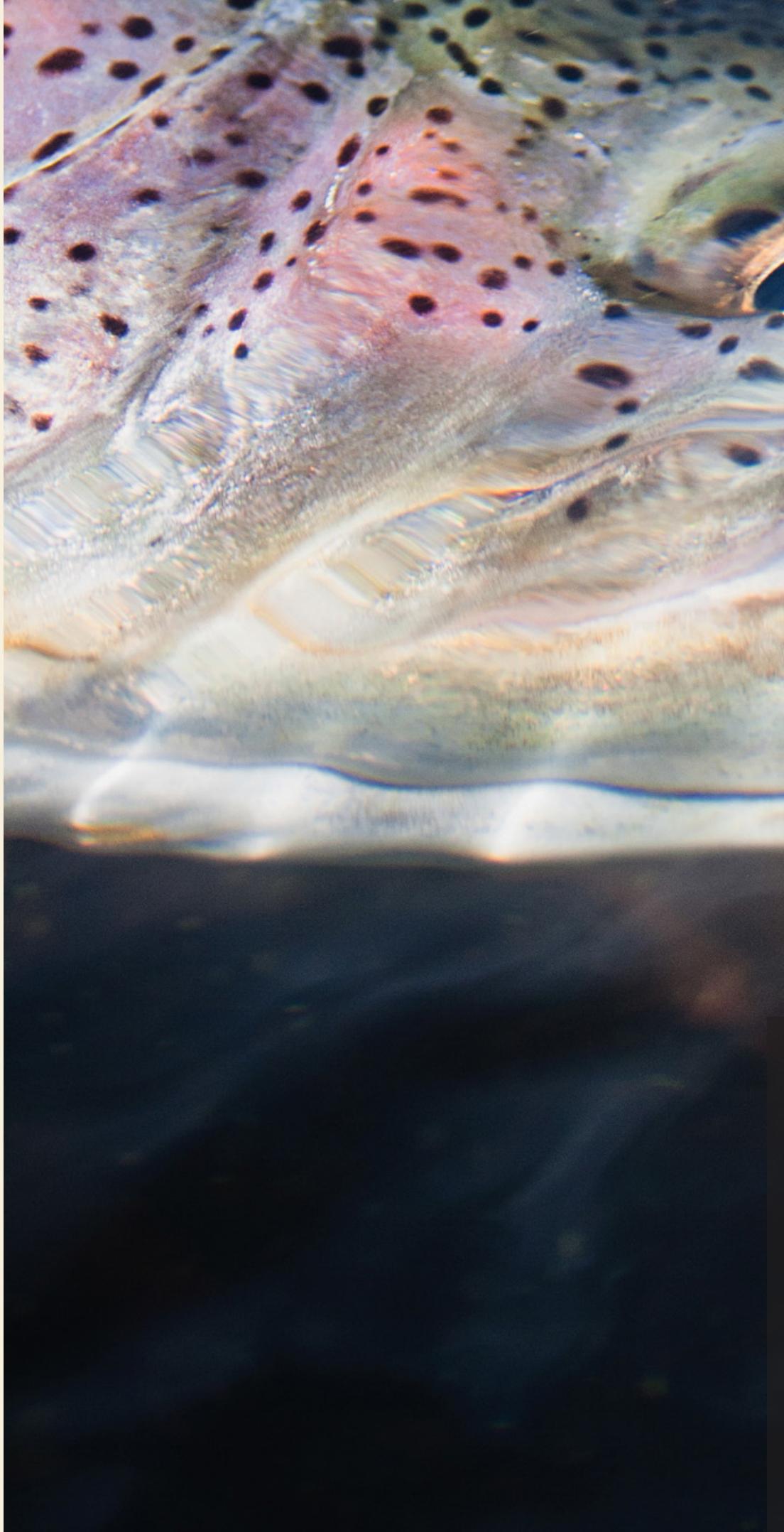
Coming Soon:
HFF's Community Campus

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Conserving Historic Harriman
State Park

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Cover photo by James Chandler

Gill Lice Study Continues on the Henry's Fork

In 2016, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the Henry's Fork Foundation launched a study investigating gill lice in the Upper Snake River region after receiving reports of anglers observing gill lice on Rainbow Trout in the Henry's Fork. With the help of local guides and anglers, we've been able to collect data on the severity, fish-species susceptibility, and distribution of gill lice in the Upper Snake River region. Since the inception of the study, we've found that gill lice have been found exclusively on Rainbow Trout and that the Harriman Ranch reach of the Henry's Fork has the highest reported incidence of gill lice. Roughly 37 percent of Rainbow Trout caught in the Harriman Ranch Reach in 2016 had gill lice. For the rest of the Henry's Fork and Snake River Region, gill lice were scarce, with roughly 10 percent of

Rainbow Trout sampled having gill lice.

In 2017, the presence of gill lice on Rainbow Trout in the Harriman Ranch Reach dropped to 20% while the frequency of gill lice on Rainbow Trout in other reaches of the Henry's fork remains roughly the same. It is likely that higher winter and spring flows in 2017 helped reduce crowding of trout during critical periods and cooler April and May temperatures slowed the reproductive cycle of gill lice during periods of increased crowding (i.e. during spawning), leading to the observed decrease in gill lice in 2017. This study is on-going so visit the Henry's Fork Foundation website if you want to learn more on gill lice and how you can help collect data! 



HFF's 2017 Summer Interns

Just as anglers come from all across the country to experience the Henry's Fork, it is important that we provide that same opportunity to college students who may not otherwise visit our corner of the world. This year, HFF was lucky enough to host five college interns from schools all across the country. All five interns contributed to our core field work, including water-quality monitoring, creel and economic value surveys, fish ladder monitoring and maintenance, as well as assisting Indiana University graduate student Jack McLaren with his analysis of Island Park Reservoir water quality.

Then, each intern conducted an independent project chosen based on their interests and skills. Maggie Dunn, from Colgate University in New York, assisted Rob with



analysis of water rights relevant to habitat restoration in Gray's Lake. Elliot Martin, from St. Lawrence University in New York, created a new mobile website to streamline



HFF's ability to share information with anglers while they are out on the river. Sam Cochran, from Washington and Lee University in Virginia, created an access site directory to catalog current conditions at access sites on the Henry's Fork. Zac Espinosa, from Stanford University in California, finished a project started by last year's Stanford intern Justin Appleby. The end product is real-time transmission of water-quality data from HFF's monitoring network to a new website hosting all of HFF's water quality and hydrologic data. Finally, Gary Anderson, from BYU-Idaho in Rexburg, Idaho, is in charge of monitoring and maintenance of our riparian fencing system that protects the banks of the Henry's Fork from degradation by cattle. 🐟



Box Canyon Rainbow Trout Population Up 29 Percent

Every year the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) conducts fish-population surveys on various river reaches in the Upper Snake River region. These surveys provide valuable information on abundance, age-class structure, fish size, and species composition within the fishery. Results from this year’s Box Canyon Rainbow Trout survey shows a 29 percent increase in total abundance over that in 2016 and a size distribution that suggests increased stability in fish size for upcoming years.

This year’s Rainbow Trout population estimate of 2,913 fish per mile is close to the 1994-2016 average of 3,040 fish per mile for the Box Canyon reach. While the abundances aren’t as good as the pre-1994 era when this reach was either directly stocked or being supplemented by stocked trout in the reservoir, these numbers are better than we anticipated given the tough water conditions the last three years.

This is particularly true with abundances of age-2 Rainbow Trout. Using a model that takes combined mean flows out of Island Park Dam and Buffalo River during the coldest 90-day period to predict abundances of age-2 Rainbow Trout, there were 715 more age-2 Rainbow Trout in the survey than predicted by the model. The 2017 size structure is also encouraging in that we have a fairly

uniform distribution of fish sizes. While we all love to catch big fish, it is important that we have good abundances in younger cohorts since they will eventually grow into the 16+ inch fish that anglers are looking to catch. 🐟

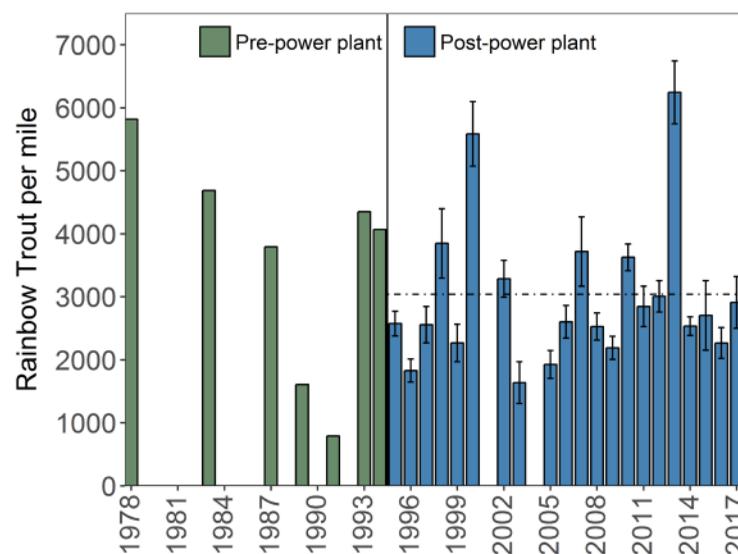


Figure 1. Density of Rainbow Trout per mile in the Box Canyon reach of the Henry's Fork River prior to construction of the Island Park Hydroelectric Facility ("Pre-power plant") and after the construction of hydroelectric facility ("Post-power plant"). Prior to the hydroelectric facility, reservoir trout regularly supplemented the Box Canyon Rainbow Trout population. After construction, Rainbow Trout passage from the reservoir to Box Canyon was greatly reduced. The dashed line represents the mean number of Rainbow Trout per mile from 1995-2016.

Conserving Historic Harrim



As the most iconic stretch of the Henry's Fork, the Harriman reach or "the Ranch" is near and dear to many anglers' hearts. These 8 river miles are surrounded by Harriman State Park (HSP), a former private cattle ranch gifted to the state of Idaho in 1961 and fully transferred in 1977 by the Harriman family. Permittees still graze cattle in the park and the Henry's Fork Foundation (HFF) established a riparian fencing program in 1984 to help protect the banks of the river from erosion. Over 30 years later, conservation work conducted by HFF, Harriman State Park, the Friends of Harriman State Park (FHSP), grazing permittees, and volunteers continues to protect this famed stretch of river.

The first of these is HFF's fencing program. Beginning at

the very start of HFF's history in 1984, the riparian fencing program has grown and evolved over time, but centers on 3 miles of fence that HFF monitors each year (1.5 miles at Wood Road 16 and 1.5 miles across from Last Chance). In late spring, HFF puts up the two sections of barbed wire fence and in late fall, once cattle are no longer grazing in the park, staff return to lay the fence back down for the winter.

This fencing program gave the banks of the Henry's Fork time to recover, but an increase in reports of cattle in the river in 2015 led HFF to revisit our fencing plan. After meeting with HSP managers and a half dozen grazing permittees, a partnership was formed with a commitment to rebuild sections of fence inside the park and to designate

Harriman State Park



an intern to the continued monitoring of fence line in crucial summer and fall months. The hope was that more frequent monitoring would prevent cattle from getting into the river and, by walking the fence line two or three times per week, our fencing intern has greatly reduced the number of calls received about cattle in the river.

In the summer of 2016, HFF also partnered with HSP, grazing permittees, and nearly 30 volunteers to rebuild 6 miles of fence line from the LogJam/Bing Lempke parking lot to Osborne Bridge. The new fence primarily consisted of 3- and 4-strand barbed wire fence, but also included a number of wildlife-friendly sections to relieve pressure on certain lengths of fence line that were heavily used as crossing points for elk and deer.

In addition to these barbed wire sections, Harriman State Park has an iconic jack fence along its border with Highway 20. From the early days of the Railroad Ranch, the historic jack fence has served as a landmark, the gateway to the Island Park area. Originally used for its practical style over lava rock terrain, the jack fence has taken on its own character and has become a part of the community itself. The Railroad Ranch jack fence has served as a familiar sight to visitors and the community for more than 100 years.

With depleting park budgets, the fence began to show its age. To preserve the landmark jack fence, Friends of Harriman State Park in cooperation with Harriman State Park, created the “Buy-A-Buck” campaign. People were

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able to purchase a buck (one section of jack fence) for \$100 and have their name branded on it to signify support for this heritage. Thanks to generous community support through financial contribution and volunteerism, the last build phase was completed on September 23, 2015.

Inside Harriman State Park, the FHSP are leading an effort to restore the historic stock bridge. Originally built in 1921 by Island Park Land and Cattle Company ranch hands, the bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In fact, rails from E.H. Harriman's Union Pacific Railroad



large volumes of diversion water (35 cfs), the practicality and cost of a fish screen did not make sense in the short or long term. Monitoring and management of fish in the canal will be undertaken by HSP and HFF to ensure that Harriman Canal does not have a negative impact on the trout population. Initial plans also called for a rebuild of the angler trails leading from the observation deck. Thankfully, the canal repair has dried out the existing trails and alleviated much of the trail erosion problem. HSP and HFF staff will continue to monitor this and other projects in and around the historic Harriman reach and make future recommendations for the benefit of both the Henry's Fork and Harriman State Park's natural resources. 🐟

were placed on the upstream side of the bridge to protect the piers from ice jams and debris, and may be a significant reason why the bridge still stands 96 years later. Recently closed by the Park, FHSP will be working in collaboration with Idaho Dept of Parks and Rec to secure its future and the community connection it represents.

Finally, the first phase of the Harriman Canal restoration project is now complete! Concerns about a leaky canal and degraded/eroded/braided angler access trail south of the Logjam initiated the project. The fencing work described earlier kicked off the project and helped to protect both the canal banks and the wet sections of the trail. A coordinated effort by HSP and HFF, heavily assisted by Forsgren and Associates of Rexburg, Idaho led to 400 yards of material trucked in to rebuild the west side of the canal, plug holes, and properly convey water to either irrigated pastures or back into the Henry's Fork. Much of the old canal bank reminded everyone of walking on a water-bed!

An investigation of the diversion structure indicated that with proper maintenance that HSP could continue to utilize existing gates. The original project also called for a fish screen. Between a lack of elevation fall and the





Summer of 2017 Brings Good Streamflows and Water Quality

As we projected back in April and reported in our summer newsletter, water supply during 2017 was above average, requiring very little delivery of irrigation water out of Island Park Reservoir. As it turned out, near-record precipitation in April added to an already-strong snowpack, and cool temperatures in May left most of that snow on the ground at the higher elevations. Streamflow in Fall River and Teton River was above average during June, July and August, satisfying the majority of demand through the middle of irrigation season.

Delivery of irrigation water from Island Park Reservoir did not begin until July 14, and peak delivery lasted only six days—July 19 through July 24. Maximum delivery

during this time period was only 1,080 cfs. By the beginning of August, outflow from Island Park Dam had been reduced to 640 cfs—not much higher than reservoir inflow. Because of repairs made to the flow-control and oxygenation systems at the Island Park hydroelectric plant, the plant has operated all summer, and only a small amount of water was delivered through the west-side dam gates. As a result of these outflow conditions and high reservoir volume, turbidity and suspended sediment concentrations downstream of the dam were very low all summer.

As of September 1, we expect the reservoir to remain above 80 percent full, which will allow winter outflow of around 400 cfs, the highest since the winter of 2011-2012.

Henry's Fork Foundation Community Campus

Coming Soon!



We are transforming Ashton, Idaho's long-shuttered hospital into a new center for watershed education and science.



Please help us expand and enhance:

Education: A 1,300 square foot Interpretive Center will include the following exhibits: Aquatic Web of Life, Library and History of Fly Fishing, Hydrology and Water, Agriculture, Hydropower, and Local History, and an interactive map of the Henry's Fork Watershed

Collaborative Water Management: An 1,100 square-foot Conference Center

Wild Trout Habitat: A state-of-the-art water quality lab

Training Future Scientists: A dormitory to house interns and seasonal employees

Synergy and Innovation: 14 offices will enhance workflow and collaboration between staff, interns, and seasonal employees

For information about naming opportunities contact Brady Taylor at brady@henrysfork.org or 208-652-3567.

You Can Help Us Build A Future for the River!

Contributions: April 1, 2017 - June 30, 2017

\$5,000+

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In Memoriam

Roger Thomas
John Wenisch



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Keynote Speaker:
Thomas Dixon

Tom is the grandson to E. Roland and Gladys Harriman, who donated to the state of Idaho what is now known as Harriman State Park or the Railroad Ranch.

Come hear Tom speak firsthand about fishing Harriman State Park and the history this special place holds.

SAN FRANCISCO RECEPTION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3
6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.

ST. FRANCIS YACHT CLUB
99 Yacht Road, San Francisco

EVENING EVENTS
Silent Auction, Dinner,
and a Live Auction

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call HFF at 208-652-3567 or
Email kristen@henrysfork.org

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