

PhD Research Brings New Understanding of Fish Habitat

Island Park Nutrient Assessment by Jack McLaren



Jack McLaren is a former HFF graduate student intern and is now working towards his PhD at Utah State University.

His research aims to better understand the upper Henry's Fork fishery (upstream of Island Park Reservoir), specifically, which factors could be having an impact on fish growth and survival.

This year, Jack led snorkel surveys to answer the question "What is the connection between fish and submerged aquatic plants in the upper river?" The answer wasn't exactly what he expected. Results showed that fish preferred to rest and feed in deeper water mostly free of submerged plants, but near locations that had lots of these underwater aquatic plants.

Jack will continue to collect data and analyze how aquatic vegetation plays a role in the productivity of the fishery, including the role nutrients play in growing both this vegetation and big fish. His data and findings will be shared with fisheries and water managers with the aim of improving the health of the fishery, fish habitat and fishing conditions.