



File Code: 2670-2

Date: March 13, 2003

Tom Pettengill
Chair BVCTAT and CRCTAT
Division of Wildlife Resources
1594 West North Temple, Suite 2110
Salt Lake City, UT 84114

Dear Tom:

I appreciated the opportunity to discuss the Sanford Fire and its effects to aquatic resources on and off the Dixie National Forest yesterday. I regret that I was unable to have this discussion at the 2002 fall meeting, as I believe it was important to brief the Committee on what transpired before, during and after the fire. Unfortunately, other commitments prevented me from attending. Hopefully yesterdays meeting helped folks gain a better understanding of what happened and why decisions were made the way they were. I appreciated the questions that were asked – especially those that related to fire suppression and how to become better informed and involved in fire management activities on National Forests.

As I said at the meeting, it is very important for biologists to become involved before a wildfire occurs rather than during or after. For **this** reason, the following information may be useful to the Committee and biologists:

Prior to the fire season, each National Forest is required to complete a Fire Management Plan (FMP) that basically describes the process and policies we will follow in managing the fire program. Fire Management Units (FMU's) within the **FMP** contain specific descriptions of geographic areas on each Forest (the Dixie has 21). The FMU contains a description of fuel types, fire history, resource objectives, resource concerns, etc. These latter two areas are where the biologists can be most effective. I would suggest that UDWR biologists work with their Forest counterparts to incorporate any resource concerns that they into each FMU.

The benefits of pre-planning become evident when a wildfire occurs. When a wildfire cannot be controlled within 24 hours the Forest prepares a Wildland Fire Situation Analysis (WFSA) that includes incident objectives and a selected alternative to guide fire suppression actions. Within the WFSA, specific resource concerns such as valuable fisheries or wildlife habitats can be highlighted. Depending on the behavior of the fire, these concerns can influence suppression strategies and tactics. Due to the urgency in completing the WFSA, the more information that we have on hand, the better such concerns can be considered. The information contained in the FMU description is very beneficial in that it can be easily retrieved and incorporated into the WFSA. This improves our ability to make better decisions when managing a fire. A Forest Fire Management Officer can explain this better ~~than I~~ - you might want to consider inviting one to your fall committee meeting. I would be more than happy to make my Fire Management Officer available if you'd like.



I also appreciated the opportunity to discuss my perception of the letters that were sent to myself and to the Regional Forester. I apologize if I came across as a bit sensitive or defensive. It was a timing issue and the incorrect use of some examples and phrases that were bothersome to me. I'm sure these were unintentional but they were perceived as misstatements by myself and others who read them. I fully understand the need to write letters, but would suggest that a phone call in the future might be helpful in clarifying issues and concerns. I know we all agree that the most effective way to recover Bonneville and Colorado River cutthroat trout populations is by maintaining and fostering good interagency relationships.

Again I want to thank you and the Committee for providing me time to discuss these issues. I look forward to the fall meeting and sharing the resource recovery progress being made within the Sanford Fire area. Please feel free to come down and visit if you have the time this summer!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen R. Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

STEPHEN R. ROBERTSON
Acting Forest Supervisor

cc: Daniel Duffield



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March 17, 2003

Mr. Steve Robertson
Dixie National Forest
1789 North Wedgewood Lane
Cedar City, Utah 84720

Dear Steve:

Thanks so much for taking the time to come up to Salt Lake City and talk to the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Conservation Team last week. Everyone really appreciate you and Mary taking the time to brief the group.

We would like to invite you or a representative from the Dixie National Forest to come back on November 6, 2003 to inform the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Conservation Team on habitat recovery progress made since the 2002 fires. The meeting will begin at 9 am on Thursday, November 6. We will be meeting in Room 2000 in the Utah DNR/DWR building, 1594 W. North Temple, Salt Lake City. I could schedule you or your representative early on the agenda.

Please let me know if you or a representative would like time on the agenda.

Thanks again for coming to our recent meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", written over a large, sweeping flourish that extends to the left.

Thomas D. Pettengill
Chair, Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Conservation Team

Cc: Dan Duffield