

## *UGP biologist contributes to sturgeon release effort*

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If his efforts to help revive an endangered fish species have any impact at all, **Ted Anderson**, a wildlife biologist and environmental specialist in UGP’s Billings office, will be more than a little pleased.

In August, Anderson, along with representatives of various state and Federal agencies and environmental organizations, released 250 endangered pallid sturgeon into the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers in North Dakota. Another 1,250 were released in five other river locations in Montana.

“The release went well as planned,” Anderson said. “I will work with researchers this fall to help track them. It’s a long-term project that should restore them to their natural habitat in the years to come.”

Initiated in 1990, the recovery project—to halt the fish’s probable extinction—brought Anderson together with representatives from the states of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation.

“Western was asked to be part of the project because our agency markets power from the dams,” Anderson said, noting that the recent pallid sturgeon release took place in Williston, N.D., about 170 miles south of the Fort Peck dam.

Leading up to the historic August release, which created intense news media interest, Anderson worked with the agencies to help capture the endangered fish. The fish were then studied to learn the best ways to help them recover from habitat-destroying effects of dam-building that began in the 1930s.

Western also agreed to support the project with long-term funding, Anderson said. However, the primary tasks of ensuring the fish’s survival belong to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because there are so few wild, no-longer-breeding pallid sturgeon left, efforts are now centered on raising young fish in hatcheries and then releasing them—1,500 annually for the next six years—into appropriate habitat.

Anderson, who will help track the released fish and continue working with researchers as needed, said everyone involved has high hopes for the long-term success of the project.

