



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

August 18, 2004

TO: Governor's Office, Todd O'Hair, State Capitol, Room 204, POB 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, POB 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, POB 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

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| Director's Office | Legal Unit | Parks Division |
| Wildlife Division | FWP Commissioners | Design & Construction |
| Enforcement Division | Lands Division | Fisheries Division |

MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, POB 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202

MT State Parks Association, POB 699, Billings, MT 59103

MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., POB 201800, Helena, MT 59620

James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, POB 1184, Helena, MT 59624

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, POB 595, Helena, MT 59624

George Ochenski, POB 689, Helena, MT 59624

Jerry DiMarco, POB 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771

Montana Wildlife Federation, POB 1175, Helena, MT 59624

Wayne Hurst, POB 728, Libby, MT 59923

Skyline Sportsman's Association, POB 173, Butte, MT 59701

Anaconda Sportsman's Club, #2 Cherry, Anaconda, MT 59711

George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 563 Butte, MT 59703

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Attached is the decision notice for the Dyce Creek Brook Trout Relocation Project to conserve native westslope cutthroat trout in the upper Dyce Creek drainage. This project proposes to secure a westslope cutthroat trout population in over 10 miles of stream in the upper Dyce Creek drainage by removing nonnative brook trout from about four miles of Dyce Creek and its East and West Forks. No public comments were received after the draft Environmental Assessment was distributed on July 21, 2004.

It is my decision to proceed with the removal of brook trout from upper the Dyce Creek drainage as described in the Environmental Assessment. Further details are included in the attached decision notice.

Questions regarding this project should be directed to Brad Shepard, Montana FWP, 1400 South 19th, Bozeman, Montana 59718; phone - (406) 994-3243; e-mail - bshepard@montana.edu.

Sincerely,

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

Decision Notice

Dyce Creek Brook Trout Relocation Project

Proposal

The proposed project is intended to help secure a westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) population in the upper Dyce Creek drainage by reducing competition from nonnative trout. Nonnative brook trout will be removed from over 4 miles of Dyce Creek using mechanical removal methods including electrofishing and trapping. A temporary barrier to upstream migration will also be constructed at the lower end of the project to prevent nonnative trout reinvasion. The project is part of a variety of efforts within the overall Dyce Creek drainage to protect and enhance westslope cutthroat trout.

Environmental Policy Act Process

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is required to assess potential impacts of the proposal to the human and physical environment. In compliance with requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), an Environmental Assessment (currently available from Brad Shepard, (406) 994-3243) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on July 21, 2004.

Public comments on the project were taken for 26 days and due to a lack of public interest, no public meeting was held. The Environmental Assessment was mailed to 63 individuals and groups on the FWP MEPA mailing list. Legal notices announcing the availability of the EA were published in the Dillon Tribune and Helena Independent Record. The EA was also available on the FWP website.

The public raised no additional issues during the public comment period on the draft EA. Since no public comments were received, there are no modifications to the Draft Environmental Assessment based on public comment, and the Draft Environmental Assessment and this Decision Notice together serve as the final document for this proposal.

Summary of Issues Addressed in the Environmental Assessment

The Environmental Assessment lists the issues in detail. These include:

- Threats to WCT in Montana and in the Dyce Creek drainage
- Current distribution of WCT and brook trout in upper Dyce Creek drainage
- Methodology of nonnative brook trout removals
- Restoration objectives for WCT in the upper Dyce Creek drainage

Summary of Public Comment

FWP received no public comments.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and the risk of further population decline of westslope cutthroat trout in Dyce Creek, it is my decision to proceed with the removal of nonnative brook trout from Dyce Creek. This project is consistent with statewide conservation and restoration strategies, goals and objectives as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding and Conservation Agreement for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Montana signed in 1999.

I find there to be no significant impact on the human or physical environment associated with this project, except to promote the long-term persistence of westslope cutthroat trout in Dyce Creek. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



Patrick J. Flowers
Regional Supervisor