



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

July 22, 2013

To: Governor's Office, Sheena Wilson, State Capitol, Room 204, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801
Environmental Quality Council, State Capitol, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620-1704
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation, P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks:

Director's Office Parks Division Lands Section FWP Commissioners
Fisheries Division Legal Unit Wildlife Division Design & Construction
MT Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, P.O. Box 201202, Helena, MT 59620-1202
MT State Parks Association, P.O. Box 699, Billings, MT 59103
MT State Library, 1515 E. Sixth Ave., P.O. Box 201800, Helena, MT 59620
James Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624
Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624
George Ochenski, P.O. Box 689, Helena, MT 59624
Jerry DiMarco, P.O. Box 1571, Bozeman, MT 59771
Montana Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624
Wayne Hurst, P.O. Box 728, Libby, MT 59923

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice has been prepared for the Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of Nonnative Hybrid rainbow x cutthroat and brook trout with Rotenone. The project proposal was to remove hybridized cutthroat and brook trout from 15.5 miles of Greenhorn Creek, and re-found with pure westslope cutthroat trout from up to six populations. Two public comments were received during a 30-day comment period ending 21 July 2013.

Based on the Environmental Assessment and need to conserve westslope cutthroat trout, it is my decision to proceed with the Greenhorn Creek westslope cutthroat trout conservation project.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Thank you for your interest.
Sincerely,

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of
Nonnative Hybrid Rainbow x Cutthroat and Brook Trout with Rotenone

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region 3, Bozeman
July 22, 2013

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has proposed this project to facilitate conservation of native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in Southwest Montana. Genetically “pure” WCT are estimated to only persist in 4% of their historic range in the upper Missouri River drainage, and most remaining populations are considered “*at-risk*.” The proposed project, located in Greenhorn Creek (near Alder), includes the use of a piscicide (rotenone) to remove non-native trout that threaten WCT and transfer of WCT into stream reaches where nonnative trout have been removed. This project is designed to reduce threats to WCT populations considered *at-risk*, to increase the overall distribution of WCT, and to conserve the genetic legacy of existing WCT populations.

Montana Environmental Policy Act

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess significant potential impacts of a proposed action to the human and physical environment. In compliance with MEPA, a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared by FWP for the proposed project and released on June 21, 2013 for a 30-day public comment period. The draft EA was titled: Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of Nonnative Hybrid Rainbow x Cutthroat and Brook Trout with Rotenone. The draft EA was circulated to a standard FWP Region 3 contact list and was also posted and remains available for viewing on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices>. Legal notice indicating release of the EA was sent to the *Madisonian*.

Summary of Public Comment and FWP response

Two written public comments were received during the 30-day EA review period ending July 21, 2013. Both comments were classified as supportive of the proposal.

Final Environmental Assessment for the EA titled: Reintroduction of Native Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Greenhorn Creek by removal of Nonnative Hybrid Rainbow x Cutthroat and Brook Trout with Rotenone.

There are no modifications necessary to the Draft Environmental Assessments based on public comment. The Draft Environmental Assessment, together with this Decision Notice, will serve as the final document for this proposal.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and the need to conserve WCT in the Missouri River drainage of SW Montana, FWP's decision is to proceed with the proposed WCT conservation project in the Greenhorn Creek drainage.

I find there to be no significant impacts on the human and physical environments associated with this project. Therefore, I conclude that the Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis, and that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. J. Flowers', with a large, sweeping flourish underneath.

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor