



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

August 8, 2012

To: Governor's Office, Mike Volesky, 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
Jack Jones, 3014 Irene St., Butte, MT 59701
Jack Atcheson, 2309 Hancock Avenue, Butte MT 59701
Beaverhead Conservation District, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725
U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Helena
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Helena
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 420 Barrett Street, Dillon, MT 59725
Big Hole Watershed Committee, P.O. Box 931, Butte, MT 59703
Montana Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 7186, Missoula, MT 59807
Dan Vermillion, FWP Commissioner, Livingston MT
Earnest and Colleen Bacon, 2215 Fishtrap Creek Road, Wisdom, MT 59761
Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 730 N. Montana Street, Dillon, MT 59725-9424
George Grant Chapter of Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 563, Butte, MT 59703
Skyline Sportsmen, P.O. Box 173, Butte, MT 59703
Anaconda Sportsmen, 2 Cherry, Anaconda, MT 59711

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Decision Notice proposes to restore native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in the North Fork of Doolittle Creek and Sixmile Creek. Barriers precluding upstream fish movement have already been constructed or are proposed. Brook trout present in the streams upstream of the fish barriers are proposed for removal using the piscicide rotenone in the formulation of CFT Legumine (5% rotenone). The non-hybridized WCT present in the North Fork Doolittle and Sixmile Creek would be captured using electrofishing prior to fish removal, held in non-treated waters and used to repopulate their respective streams following brook trout removal. Fish from non-hybridized populations may be used to repopulate these streams if westslope cutthroat trout are at very low density. Tailed frog tadpoles would be captured and salvaged from the streams prior to treatment and released back to the streams after brook trout are removed. Public comment was received from 1 individual during a 30-day comment period ending at 5:00 pm on July 27th, 2012. This comment was from the Montana Historical Society and indicated that because of the Forest Service involvement they may need to perform a Section 106 inventory. It will be the Forest Service's determination as to whether a Section 106 inventory should be performed. FWP will comply with that decision and any mitigation before moving forward with any ground-disturbing activity. A cultural inventory of the Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area has been previously performed and was referenced in the Environmental Assessment. No culturally significant resources were identified in the area proposed for barrier construction in Sixmile Creek.

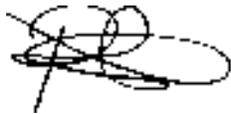
It is my decision to proceed with the proposal to restore westslope cutthroat trout in the North Fork of Doolittle Creek and Sixmile Creek upstream of the fish migration barriers.

Questions regarding these Decision Notices should be mailed to:

Jim Olsen
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1820 Meadowlark Lane
Butte, MT 59701
Or email at: jimolsen@mt.gov

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick J. Flowers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

RANGE EXPANSION OF WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT IN THE NORTH FORK OF DOOLITTLE CREEK AND IN SIXMILE CREEK, BIG HOLE RIVER DRAINAGE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Region Three, Bozeman
August 8, 2012**

Proposed Action

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) proposes to restore native westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) in the North Fork of Doolittle Creek and Sixmile Creek. Barriers precluding upstream fish movement have already been constructed or are proposed. Brook trout present in the streams upstream of the fish barriers are proposed for removal using the piscicide rotenone in the formulation of CFT Legumine (5% rotenone). The non-hybridized WCT present in the North Fork Doolittle and Sixmile Creek would be captured using electrofishing prior to fish removal, then held in non-treated waters and used to repopulate their respective streams following brook trout removal. Fish from non-hybridized populations may be used to repopulate these streams if westslope cutthroat trout are at very low density. Tailed frog tadpoles would be captured and salvaged from the streams prior to treatment and released back to the streams after brook trout are removed.

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, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed for the proposed project by FWP and released for public comment on June 26th, 2012.

Public comments on the proposed project were taken for 30 days (through July 27th, 2012). The EA was mailed to 27 individuals and groups; legal notice was printed in the Montana Standard (Butte) newspaper. A draft EA was posted on the FWP webpage: <http://fwp.mt.gov/publicnotices/>. A total of one comment on this project was received.

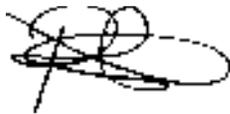
Summary of Public Comment

Comment: Montana Historical Society, “Based on the USDA Forest Service involvement in the above-referenced project, we believe it may constitute a Federal undertaking as defined under 36 CFR 800.16y. Therefore, we anticipate the USDA Forest Service’s fulfillment of all Section 106 inventory, documentation and consultation requirements prior to any ground disturbing activities.”

Response: The Forest Service involvement in ground-disturbing activities will be limited only to contractual blasting that will occur in Sixmile Creek on the state-owned Mount Haggin Wildlife Management Area. Barrier construction on the North Fork of Doolittle Creek was completed previously. FWP feels it has met its obligations to protect culturally significant resources from impacts of the proposed action by conducting a cultural resources inventory of the Wildlife Management Area, which did not identify any culturally significant resources that could be impacted by the proposed action. It will be the Forest Service’s decision as to whether Section 106 inventory should be performed and if such an inventory is deemed necessary. FWP will not proceed with any ground disturbing activities until the inventory is completed and any potential mitigation is performed.

Decision

Based on the Environmental Assessment, public comment, and benefits and risks associated with this project, it is my decision to go forward with the proposed action of restoring WCT to the North Fork of Doolittle Creek and Sixmile Creek upstream of the fish barriers. 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.



Patrick J. Flowers
Region Three Supervisor
