



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

In reply refer to: KEC-4

May 5, 2006

To: People Interested in the South Fork Flathead Watershed Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Program.

Enclosed are Records of Decision documenting decisions by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (MFWP) and the Flathead National Forest (FS) for the proposed South Fork Flathead Watershed Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Program. The purpose of this conservation program proposed by MFWP is to preserve the genetic purity of westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*) populations in the South Fork of the Flathead River drainage.

BPA's Administrator has decided to fund the alternative identified as the Proposed Action (Alternative B) in the South Fork Flathead Watershed Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0353, July 2005). This funding is part of BPA's effort to mitigate for impacts to fisheries resulting from the construction and operation of Hungry Horse Dam.

MFWP has decided to implement the Proposed Action in the EIS as the appropriate strategy for conserving the westslope cutthroat trout in the South Fork Flathead River drainage. MFWP has jurisdiction and responsibility to manage all fish and wildlife resources that occur on state, federal and private lands of Montana.

The FS has decided to authorize management actions under its jurisdiction that were identified in the EIS as the Proposed Action (Alternative B). The FS decision is subject to administrative appeal. Details of the appeal process are described at the end of the FS Record of Decision (Section X. Appeal Provisions and Implementation). Additionally a copy of the FS Notice of Decision is attached.

Each ROD contains the information that each agency's respective decision maker used to make the decision, including consideration of public comment. Additionally each agency is committing to all mitigation outlined in the Mitigation Action Plan for the project. Mitigation Action Plans are attached to each agency's ROD.

Additional Information: This program is part of the effort to mitigate for impacts to fisheries resulting from the construction and operation of Hungry Horse Dam.

The program is designed to preserve the genetically pure fluvial and adfluvial westslope cutthroat trout populations in the South Fork drainage of the Flathead River. To accomplish the goals, MFWP is proposing to remove hybrid trout from identified lakes in the South Fork Flathead drainage on the Flathead National Forest and replace them with genetically pure native westslope cutthroat trout over the next 10-12 years. Some of these lakes occur within the Bob Marshall Wilderness and Jewel Basin Hiking Area. Currently, 21 lakes and their outflow streams with hybrid populations have been identified and are included in this proposal. Other lakes may also be incorporated as additional information is discovered.

Additional Copies: If you would like additional copies of any of these RODs, or of the EIS, please call our toll-free document request line: 1-800-622-4520. Leave a message naming this project and giving your name and complete mailing address. The RODs and other documents related to this proposal are also available on our website at http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/South_Fork_Flathead/

For More Information: If you need more information or have any questions, please call me at 503-230-5756 or toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, or e-mail me at caspierring@bpa.gov.

We would like to thank all the tribes, agencies and individuals who provided information and comments to inform these decisions.

/s/ Colleen Spiering _____
Colleen Spiering
Environmental Project Manager

Enclosure:
Bonneville Power Administration ROD
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks ROD
Flathead National Forest ROD
Flathead National Forest Notice of Decision