

STAFF SUMMARY FOR OCTOBER 14, 2020

6. WILD TROUT WATERS (CONSENT)**Today's Item****Information** ☐**Action** ☒

Receive DFW recommendation and consider adopting proposed amendments to FGC's Designated Wild Trout Waters policy.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

California Fish and Game Code Section 7260(c), grants FGC the authority to designate Heritage Trout Waters recognizing the beauty, diversity, historical significance, and special value of California's native trout. Designations are limited to waters that support populations that best exemplify indigenous strains of native trout within their historic drainages and that provide anglers with an opportunity to catch native trout in a manner consistent with their conservation. Any stocking of heritage trout waters shall meet the criteria established by Chapter 7.2, commencing with Section 1725, of the California Fish and Game Code.

California Fish and Game Code Section 1727(b) requires that DFW annually submit to FGC a list of no less than 25 miles of stream or stream segments and at least one lake deemed suitable for designation as wild trout waters. Fish and Game Code, Section 1727(c) allows the Commission to remove designated Wild Trout Waters from the wild trout program, but mandates that an equivalent number of miles are added.

DFW proposes removing:

1. East Fork Carson River, from Hangman's Bridge near Markleeville downstream to the Nevada state line (Alpine County).

Rationale for the removal can be found in Exhibit 1.

DFW proposes adding three new waters:

1. Tuolumne River from Wards Ferry Bridge (Don Pedro Reservoir) upstream to the boundary of Yosemite National Park, excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County);
2. Wolf Creek from Forest Service Road 062 crossing to Wolf Creek Lake (Mono County); and
3. Butte Lake (Lassen County).

Exhibit 1 provides more detail on the proposed changes. Exhibit 2 is the Wild Trout Waters Policy text with proposed amendments, and Exhibit 3 provides maps of the proposed waters.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation**

FGC staff: Under a motion to adopt the consent calendar, approve amendments to the Commission Designated Wild Trout Waters policy as described in this staff summary and the DFW proposal.

DFW: Approve the recommended amendments.

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Exhibits

1. [DFW memo, received Oct 7, 2020](#)
2. [Proposed policy text, received Oct 7, 2020](#)
3. [Maps of waters for removal and designation, received Oct 7, 2020](#)

Motion/Direction

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission adopts the staff recommendations for items 4-6 on the consent calendar.

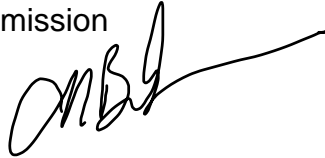
Received October 7, 2020

Memorandum

Date: October 6, 2020

To: Melissa Miller-Henson
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director



Subject: **Agenda Item for the October 14-15, 2020 Fish and Game Commission Meeting: Recommendations for Designation of new Wild Trout Waters and Modification of Current Wild Trout Waters for 2020**

Fish and Game Code, Section 7260(c), grants the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) the authority to designate Heritage Trout Waters which exemplify the uniqueness, beauty, and diversity of California's native trout and the aesthetic habitats in which they are found.

Designated Heritage Trout Waters support indigenous strains of trout within their historic drainages and provide anglers a unique opportunity to catch native trout in a manner that promotes conservation. Stocking of hatchery-origin trout is restricted within designated waters, and angling regulations are implemented that allow trout populations to sustain themselves through natural reproduction.

Fish and Game Code, Section 1727(b), requires the Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to annually prepare a list of no less than 25 miles of stream or stream segments and a least one lake deemed suitable for designation as Wild Trout Waters and to submit this list to the Commission. Fish and Game Code, Section 1727(c) allows the Commission to remove designated Wild Trout Waters from the wild trout program, but mandates that an equivalent number of miles are added. An additional 11 miles are proposed to replace a designation in the East Fork Carson River. To comply with these requirements, the Department proposes the following waters for designation:

Tuolumne River, from Wards Ferry Bridge upstream to the boundary of Yosemite National Park, excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County).

The proposed Wild Trout Water designation incorporates approximately 33 miles of perennial stream habitat, most of which are located on public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, Stanislaus National Forest. The Tuolumne River and its tributaries contain self-sustaining populations of Coastal Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout, and is a quality fishery with trophy trout (>18") potential. The Tuolumne River watershed is of state and national importance with Wild and Scenic River designations, making this fishery a unique resource in the state and a quintessential candidate for Wild Trout Designations.

The Department has conducted direct observation (snorkel) and intermittent angling surveys of this portion of the Tuolumne River drainage, both of which support designation as a high-quality stream fishery with robust populations of Coastal Rainbow Trout and Brown Trout. The Department has consulted with the Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors and Merced Fly Fishers angling club regarding this candidate designation and has received verbal support with letters to follow.

Wolf Creek, from Forest Service Road 062 crossing to Wolf Creek Lake (Mono County)

The proposed Heritage Trout designation incorporates approximately 4 miles of perennial stream habitat, most of which are located on public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service, Inyo National Forest. The Department has conducted intermittent backpack electrofishing surveys, angling surveys, and collects Angler Survey Box data for this location, all of which support designation as a high-quality, fast-action fishery. This stream section is comprised of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout within their native range which qualifies it as a Heritage Trout Water. The Department has consulted with the U.S. National Forest Service, Mono County Board of Supervisors, Trout Unlimited, and other angling groups regarding this candidate designation and has received verbal support with letters to follow.

Butte Lake (Lassen County)

Butte Lake is located in an easily accessible, but remote and scenic setting within the north east section of Lassen Volcanic National Park. Butte Lake incorporates approximately 208 surface acres of aquatic habitat. The Department has conducted boat electrofishing surveys and has recently installed an Angler Survey Box at this location. Current boat electrofishing data support this designation as a high-quality fishery with a robust population of Coastal Rainbow Trout with trophy potential (>18”), and some Brook Trout. The Department has consulted with the U.S. National Park Service, local author and conservationist, Bob Madgic, and local angling groups regarding this candidate designation and has received verbal support with letters to follow.

Current Heritage and Wild Trout Designation Modifications:

Wild Trout Waters designated by the Commission should provide the angler with an opportunity to fish in aesthetically pleasing and environmentally productive waters with trout populations whose numbers or sizes are largely unaffected by angling. Designated waters are required to be: physically accessible by anglers; open for public angling; able to support wild trout populations of sufficient magnitude to provide satisfactory trout catches in terms of number or size of fish; and, be free of domestic strains of catchable-size trout. To comply with these requirements, the Department recommends removing the following current designation:

Melissa Miller-Henson, Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission
October 6, 2020
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East Fork Carson River, from Hangman's Bridge near Markleeville downstream to the Nevada state line (Alpine County) – Requested Action: Remove

Although the 11 miles of the East Fork Carson River below Hangman's Bridge is a designated Wild Trout Water, extensive stocking in the upstream sections and associated tributaries has resulted in a mixed stock fishery consisting of large stocked rainbow trout and smaller wild trout. The Department has conducted direct observation (snorkel), angling surveys, and monitored Angler Survey Box data for this section of the East Fork Carson River, all of which document domestic strains of catchable-sized trout throughout the reach to the Nevada state line. The Department supports its current objective to manage this stream section as a mixed stock fishery and intends to continue its own stocking and support supplemental stocking by Alpine County. The Department requests that the Commission remove this Wild Trout Water designation.

COMMISSION DESIGNATED WILD TROUT WATERS

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission to:

I. Designate certain state waters to be managed exclusively for wild trout. Commission designated wild trout waters should provide a quality experience by providing the angler with an opportunity to fish in aesthetically pleasing and environmentally productive waters with trout populations whose numbers or sizes are largely unaffected by the angling process.

Waters designated by the Commission for wild trout management shall meet the following criteria:

A. Angler Access:

1. Open for public angling with unrestricted access when of sufficient dimensions to accommodate anglers without overcrowding.

or

2. Open for public angling with controlled access under a plan approved by the Commission setting forth the number of anglers and the method of distribution.

B. Able to support, with appropriate angling regulations, wild trout populations of sufficient magnitude to provide satisfactory trout catches in terms of number or size of fish.

II. Wild trout waters shall be managed in accordance with the following stipulations:

A. Domestic strains of catchable-sized trout shall not be planted in designated wild trout waters.

B. Hatchery-produced trout of suitable wild and semi-wild strains may be planted in designated waters, but only if necessary, to supplement natural trout reproduction.

C. Habitat protection is of utmost importance for maintenance of wild trout populations. All necessary actions, consistent with State law, shall be taken to prevent adverse impact by land or water development projects affecting designated wild trout waters.

III. The Department shall prepare and periodically update a management plan for each water designated as a wild trout water.

IV. Certain designated wild trout waters may be further designated by the Commission as "Heritage Trout Waters", to recognize the beauty, diversity, historical significance, and special values of California's native trout. Heritage Trout Waters shall meet the following additional criteria:

A. Only waters supporting populations that best exemplify indigenous strains of native trout within their historic drainages may qualify for designation.

B. Heritage Trout Waters shall be able to provide anglers with the opportunity to catch native trout consistent with the conservation of the native trout present.

V. Recognizing the importance of native trout to California's natural heritage, the Department shall emphasize education and outreach efforts to inform the public about our native trout, their habitats, and the activities for restoration of native trout when implementing the Heritage Trout Program.

A. Implement a Heritage Trout Angler Recognition Certificate through which anglers will have the opportunity to have their catches of California native trout recognized by the Commission. The criteria for receiving the formal recognition shall be maintained by the Department's Heritage and Wild Trout Program. To receive a certificate of recognition, anglers shall submit an application with supporting materials to the Department for review.

The following waters are designated by the Commission as "wild trout waters":

1. American River, North Fork, from Palisade Creek downstream to Iowa Hill Bridge (Placer County).
2. Carson River, East Fork, upstream from confluence with Wolf Creek excluding tributaries (Alpine County).
3. Clavey River, upstream from confluence with Tuolumne River excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County).
4. Fall River, from Pit No. 1 powerhouse intake upstream to origin at Thousand Springs including Spring Creek, but excluding all other tributaries (Shasta County).
5. Feather River, Middle Fork, from Oroville Reservoir upstream to Sloat vehicle bridge, excluding tributaries (Butte and Plumas counties).
6. Hat Creek, from Lake Britton upstream to Hat No. 2 powerhouse (Shasta County).
7. Hot Creek, from Hot Springs upstream to west property line of Hot Creek Ranch (Mono County).
8. Kings River, from Pine Flat Lake upstream to confluence with South and Middle forks excluding tributaries (Fresno County).
9. Kings River, South Fork, from confluence with Middle Fork upstream to western boundary of Kings Canyon National Park excluding tributaries (Fresno County).
10. Merced River, South Fork, from confluence with mainstem Merced River upstream to western boundary of Yosemite National Park excluding tributaries (Mariposa County).
11. Nelson Creek, upstream from confluence with Middle Fork Feather River excluding tributaries (Plumas County).
12. Owens River, from Five Bridges crossing upstream to Pleasant Valley Dam excluding tributaries (Inyo County).
13. Rubicon River, from confluence with Middle Fork American River upstream to Hell Hole Dam excluding tributaries (Placer County).
14. Yellow Creek, from Big Springs downstream to confluence with the North Fork of the Feather River (Plumas County).
15. Cottonwood Creek, upstream from confluence with Little Cottonwood Creek, including tributaries (Inyo County).
16. Klamath River, from Copco Lake to the Oregon border (Siskiyou County).
17. McCloud River, from Lake McCloud Dam downstream to the southern boundary of Section 36, T38N, R3W, M.D.B. & M. (Shasta County).
18. Deep Creek, from confluence with Green Valley Creek downstream to confluence with Willow Creek (San Bernardino County).
19. Middle Fork Stanislaus River, from Beardsley Afterbay Dam to Sand Bar Diversion Dam (Tuolumne County).
20. Truckee River, from confluence with Trout Creek downstream to the Nevada State line (excluding the property owned by the San Francisco Fly Casters Club) (Nevada and Sierra counties).
21. Sespe Creek, a 25-mile section between the Lion Campground and the boundary of the U.S. Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest (Ventura County).
- ~~22. East Fork Carson River, from Hangman's Bridge near Markleeville downstream to the Nevada state line (Alpine County).~~
- ~~23~~22. Bear Creek, Bear Valley Dam (impounding Big Bear Lake) downstream to the confluence with the Santa Ana River (San Bernardino County).
- ~~24~~23. Lavezolla Creek (Sierra County).
- ~~25~~24. Laurel Lake #1 and Laurel Lake #2 (Mono County).

2625. Middle Fork San Joaquin River - Northern boundary of the Devils Postpile National Monument downstream to the Lower Falls (3.6 miles); and footbridge just above the confluence with Shadow Creek downstream to the footbridge just above upper Soda Springs Campground (4 miles) (Madera County).

2726. South Fork Kern River watershed from its headwaters downstream to the southern boundary of the South Sierra Wilderness (Tulare County).

2827. Golden Trout Creek drainage, including tributaries, from confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).

2928. Eagle Lake, north of Susanville (Lassen County).

3029. Upper Kern River, from the Forks of the Kern, upstream to Tyndall Creek in Sequoia National Park (Tulare County).

3130. Heenan Lake, near Markleeville and Monitor ~~Pass~~, Pass (Alpine County).

3231. Upper Truckee River, including tributaries, upstream from the confluence with Showers Creek (El Dorado and Alpine counties).

3332. Sacramento River, including tributaries, from Box Canyon Dam downstream to Scarlett Way in Dunsmuir (Siskiyou County) and from the county bridge at Sweetbriar downstream to Lake Shasta (Shasta County).

3433. Long Lake (Plumas County).

3534. Piru Creek, including tributaries, upstream of Pyramid Lake (Ventura and Los Angeles counties).

3635. Upper Stony Creek including tributaries, upstream from Mine Camp Campground (Colusa, Glenn, and Lake counties).

3736. Lower Honeymoon Lake (Fresno County).

3837. Upper East Fork San Gabriel River, including tributaries, upstream from Heaton Flat (Los Angeles County).

3938. Royce Lake # 2 (Fresno County).

4039. Lower Yuba River, from Englebright Dam to the confluence with the Feather River (Yuba and Nevada counties).

4140. Parker Lake (Mono County).

4241. South Fork San Joaquin River and all tributaries from Florence Lake upstream to the boundary of Kings Canyon National Park including the Piute Creek drainage (Fresno County).

4342. Sallie Keyes Lakes (Fresno County).

4443. Sacramento River from Keswick Dam downstream to the Red Bluff Diversion Dam (Shasta and Tehama counties).

4544. Pauley Creek from the confluence with the Downie River upstream to the headwaters (Sierra County).

4645. Caples Creek from the confluence with the Silver Fork American River upstream to Caples Lake Dam (El Dorado and Alpine counties).

4746. Putah Creek from Lake Solano upstream to Monticello Dam on Lake Berryessa (Solano and Yolo counties).

4847. Lake Solano (Solano and Yolo counties).

4948. Milton Reservoir (Nevada and Sierra counties).

5049. Gerle Creek Divide Reservoir (El Dorado County).

5150. Manzanita Lake (Shasta County).

5251. Maggie Lake (Tulare County).

5352. Little Kern River drainage, including tributaries, from the confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).

5453. Hilton Lake #1 (Davis Lake) (Mono County).

5554. South Fork Smith River, from the confluence with Blackhawk Creek upstream to the Island Lake Trail crossing, including the following tributaries: Buck

Creek, Quartz Creek, Eight Mile Creek, Williams Creek, Harrington Creek and Prescott Fork and excluding all other tributaries (Del Norte County).

5655. South Fork Smith River, from the confluence with Goose Creek upstream to Blackhawk Creek, including Goose Creek and Hurdygurdy Creek and excluding all other tributaries (Del Norte County).

5756. Hilton Lake # 2 (Mono County).

5857. South Fork Smith River, from the confluence with Craigs Creek upstream to the confluence with Goose Creek, including Craigs Creek, Rock Creek, and Coon Creek and excluding all other tributaries (Del Norte County).

5958. Hilton Lake # 4 (Mono County).

6059. Hilton Lake # 5 (Mono County). Hilton Lake #5 is located at the latitude/longitude of 37°28'37.99"N, 118°45'39.39"W and elevation of 10,700 feet, in the Hilton Creek drainage, near Tom's Place.

60. Tuolumne River, from Wards Ferry Bridge upstream to the boundary of Yosemite National Park, excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County).

61. Butte Lake (Lassen County).

The following "wild trout waters" are further designated by the Commission as "heritage trout waters".

1. Clavey River, upstream from confluence with Tuolumne River, excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County).

2. Golden Trout Creek drainage, including tributaries, from confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).

3. Eagle Lake, north of Susanville, (Lassen County).

4. Upper Kern River, from the Forks of the Kern, upstream to Tyndall Creek in Sequoia National Park (Tulare County).

5. Heenan Lake, near Markleeville and Monitor Pass (Alpine County).

6. Upper Truckee River, including tributaries, upstream from the confluence with Showers Creek (El Dorado and Alpine counties).

7. Piru Creek, including tributaries, upstream of Pyramid Lake (Ventura and Los Angeles counties).

8. Upper Stony Creek including tributaries, upstream from Mine Camp Campground (Colusa, Glenn, and Lake counties).

9. Upper East Fork San Gabriel River, including tributaries, upstream from Heaton Flat (Los Angeles County).

10. Lower Yuba River, from Englebright Dam to the confluence with the Feather River (Yuba and Nevada counties).

11. Little Kern River drainage, including tributaries, from the confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).

12. South Fork Smith River, from the confluence with Blackhawk Creek upstream to the Island Lake Trail crossing, including the following tributaries: Buck Creek, Quartz Creek, Eight Mile Creek, Williams Creek, Harrington Creek and Prescott Fork and excluding all other tributaries (Del Norte County).

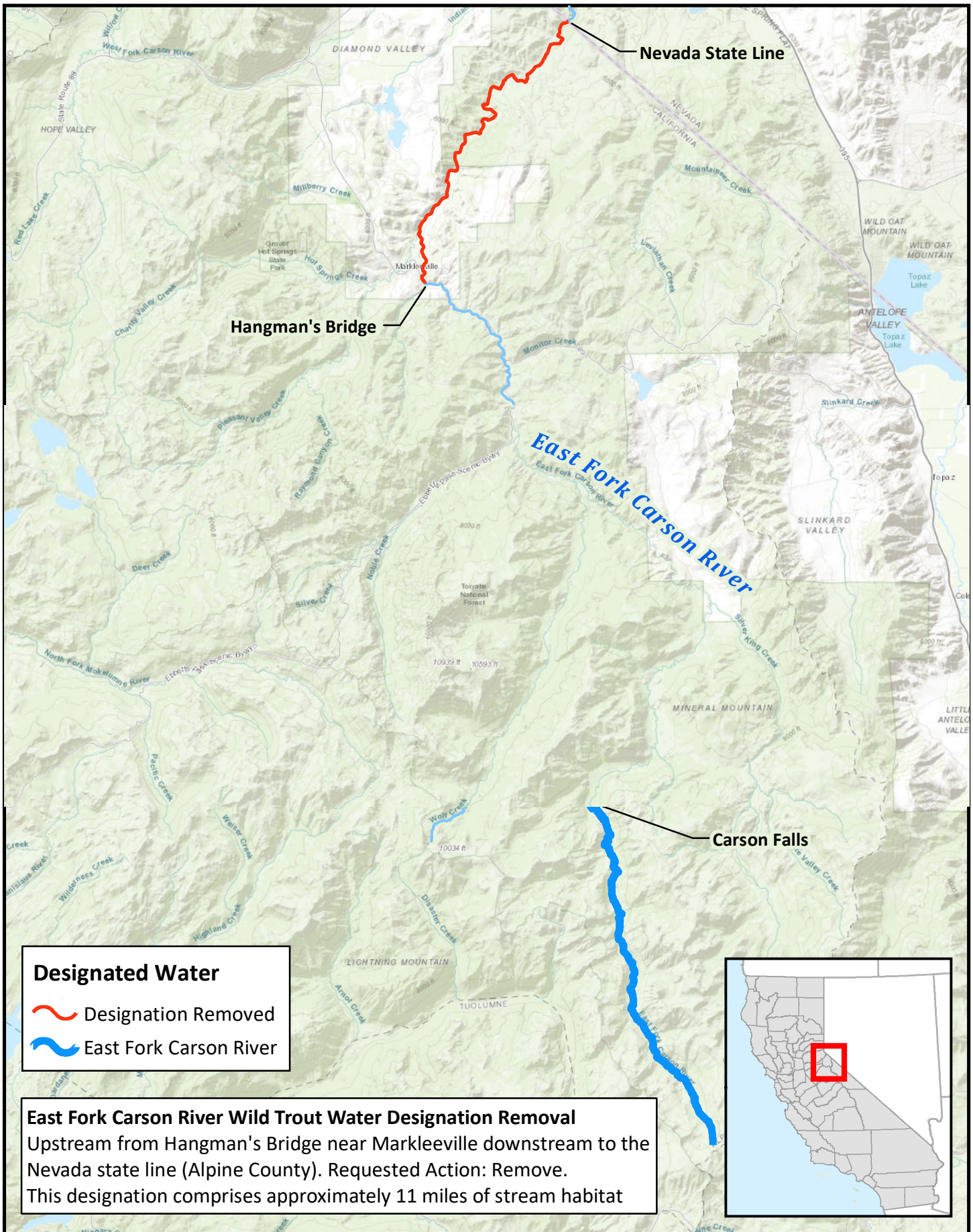
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14. South Fork Smith River, from the confluence with Craigs Creek upstream to the confluence with Goose Creek, including Craigs Creek, Rock Creek, and Coon Creek and excluding all other tributaries (Del Norte County).

15. Wolf Creek, from Forest Service Road 062 crossing to Wolf Creek Lake (Mono County)

(Amended: 01/04/94; 06/22/95; 03/06/97; 11/06/98; 04/02/99; 12/08/00; 04/03/03;
12/12/08; 11/04/09; 10/21/10; 11/17/11; 11/07/12; 11/06/13; 12/03/14; 12/10/15;
10/20/16; 12/06/17; 12/13/18; 02/21/20; 10/14/20)

East Fork Carson River Designated Wild Trout Water - 2020 Modification



0 1 2 4 Miles



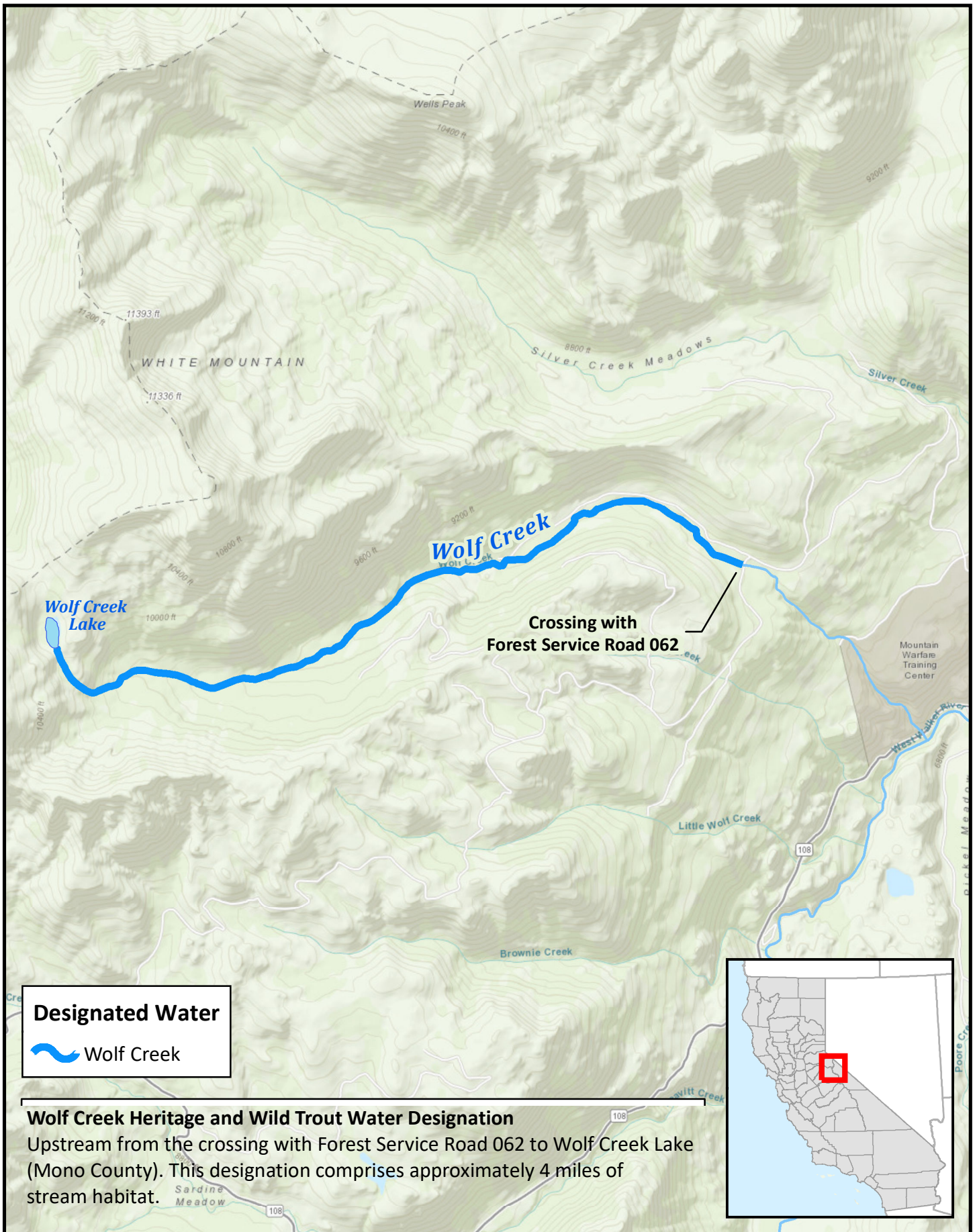
Tuolumne River Designated Wild Trout Water - 2020



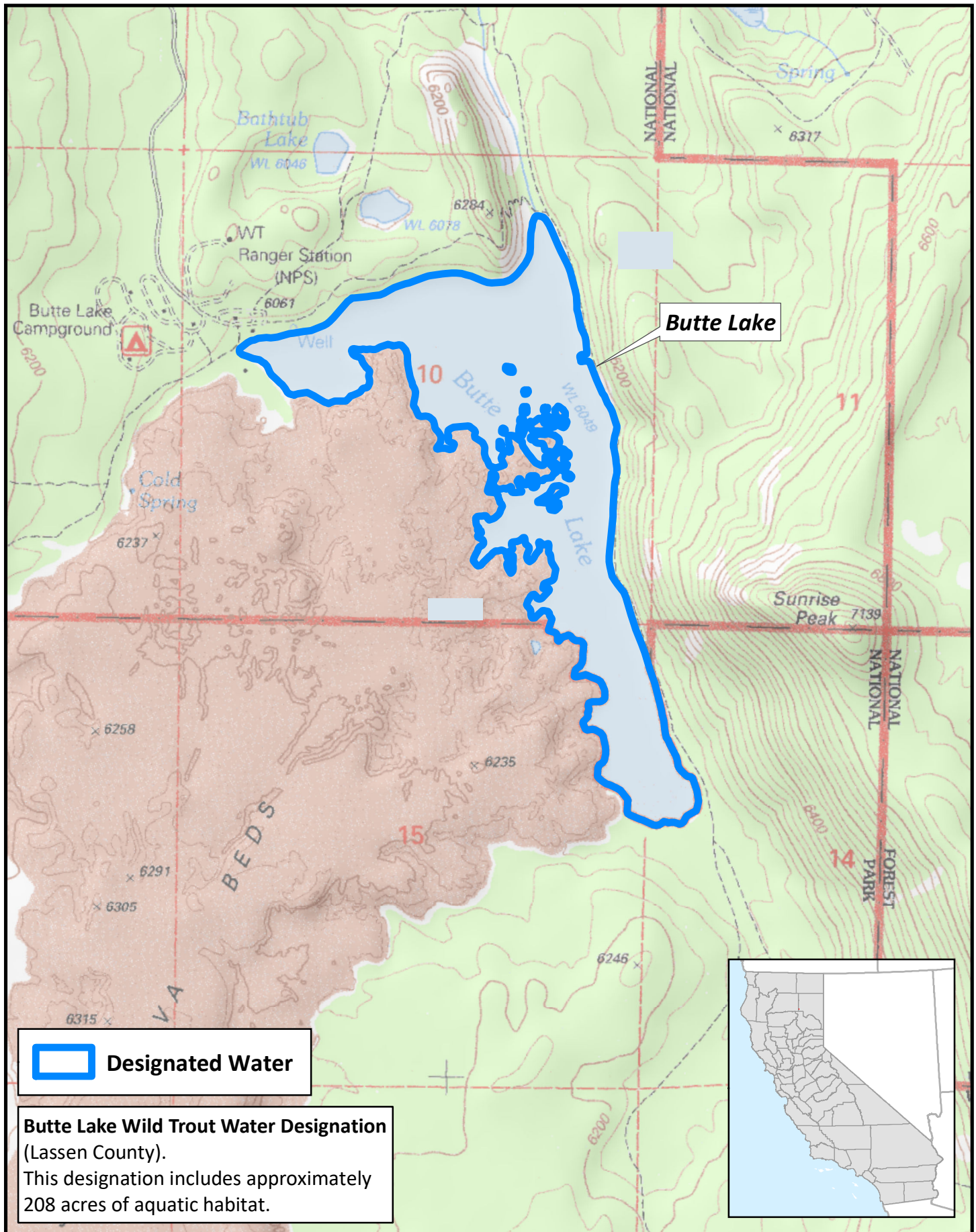
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Fisheries Branch GIS, September 2020
Basemap source: Esri



Wolf Creek Designated Heritage and Wild Trout Water - 2020



Butte Lake Designated Wild Trout Water - 2020



0 0.5 Miles