



North Central Region
1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
www.dfg.ca.gov
916-358-2900

March 20, 2009

TO: Responsible Agencies, Interested Agencies and Individuals

RE: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE PAUIE CUTTHROAT TROUT RESTORATION PROJECT

DRAFT EIR/EIS: Notice is hereby given that, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIS/EIR) has been prepared by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the proposed Paiute Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project. The Draft EIS/EIR addresses the potential environmental effects that could result from implementation of this Project.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION: Silver King Creek, near the crest of the central Sierra Nevada, is a tributary to the Carson River. The project area includes a 2.9 mile reach of Silver King Creek bounded by Llewellyn Falls at the upper end and Silver King Creek Valley at the lower end. The area includes about 11 stream miles, including Tamarack Lake and six tributaries. The project area is in the Carson-Iceberg Wilderness Area of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and lies entirely within Alpine County.

CDFG is the lead agency for purposes of CEQA and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board is a responsible agency. USFWS is the lead agency for NEPA purposes, and the U.S. Forest Service, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is a cooperating agency.

CDFG and USFWS propose to eradicate non-native trout from the project area using the piscicide rotenone, to neutralize the rotenone downstream of Silver King Canyon at its confluence with Snodgrass Creek using potassium permanganate and to restock Silver King Creek with the native Paiute cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki seleniris*), a federally threatened species. The agencies are also evaluating the necessity of removing fish from Tamarack Lake at the headwaters of Tamarack Lake Creek, a tributary of Silver King Creek, if fish are present.

The project is needed to prevent Paiute cutthroat trout from going extinct and to conserve the species and restore it to a level that would allow it to be removed from the federal threatened species list. The project would restore Paiute cutthroat trout to its historic range, making it the only trout species in Silver King Creek above Silver King Canyon. The project would implement a portion of the USFWS Revised Recovery Plan, which lists actions to restore, recover, and ultimately de-list the species. By expanding the populations and range of the species, the project would also reduce threats from genetic bottlenecking and stochastic events.

Three project alternatives are evaluated in the Draft EIS/EIR:

- (1) The No Action alternative;
- (2) The Proposed Action, which involves the application of liquid rotenone to eradicate non-native trout from Silver King Creek and possibly Tamarack Lake;
- (3) Combined Physical Removal which involves use of a range of manual methods to eradicate non-native trout from Silver King Creek and Tamarack Lake.

The Draft EIS/EIR evaluates the impact all the alternatives could have on physical, biological, human and environmental resources. The analysis found the project would have significant environmental effects to water resources and aquatic resources. Some of the significant impacts can be mitigated by proposed measures described in the Draft EIS/EIR. Monitoring activities are proposed for many of the proposed project activities. In addition, the Draft EIS/EIR finds there will be significant unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources and water quality. The project area does not include any hazardous waste sites.

PUBLIC REVIEW: The Draft EIS/EIR and supporting documents are available at the California Department of Fish and Game, 1701 Nimbus Road, Suite A, Rancho Cordova and upon request at 916-358-2900. It may also be viewed online at: www.dfg.ca.gov. Copies are also available for review at the Alpine County Library, Markleeville Branch, 270 Laramie Street, Markleeville, CA 96120, at the USFS Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, Carson Ranger District, 1536 South Carson Street, Carson City, NV 89701 and at the Nevada U.S. Fish and Wildlife Office, 1340 Financial Blvd, Suite 234, Reno, NV 89502.

PUBLIC MEETINGS: No further public meetings on this project are scheduled to be held by CDFG and USFWS.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Written comments should be received during the public review period which begins on **March 20, 2009 and ends at 5 p.m. on May 4, 2009**. Comments must be postmarked or received by May 4. Please mail, email, FAX, or hand deliver comments to DFG and USFWS at:

Pauite Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project
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North Central Region
1701 Nimbus Road
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FAX (916) 358-2912
Attn: Stafford Lehr, Senior Environmental Scientist
Email: SilverKingPublicComment@dfg.ca.gov

-Or-

Robert D. Williams
Nevada State Supervisor
Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
1340 Financial Boulevard, Suite 234
Reno, NV 89502

For additional information, please contact the DFG at 916-358-2900



Sandra Morey
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