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strategy for improving middle school qual-  
 ty.

Committee reports were completed dur-  
 ing the fall. Since then, middle school prin-  
 cipals have been working on the plan.

# Agencies Plan Kills To Save Rare Trout

By Marjie Lambert  
 Bee Correspondent

In an effort to create a home for a rare  
 species of trout, state and federal agencies  
 want to poison other types of fish in about a  
 dozen lakes and streams and replace them  
 with the Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Most of the fish to be killed with the  
 chemical rotenone are more aggressive  
 species of trout, such as brook and rainbow  
 trout, and non-game fish which have  
 crowded the Lahontan cutthroat out of its  
 native habitat in the eastern Sierra, said  
 Eric Gerstung, a fishery biologist who is  
 coordinating the project for the state De-  
 partment of Fish and Game.

Two of the sites proposed for chemical  
 fish kills are Meiss Lake, located south of  
 South Lake Tahoe near Carson Pass, and  
 the upper three miles of the Upper Truckee  
 River. The other proposed locations are in  
 Mono County and western Nevada.

Although the Lahontan cutthroat once  
 thrived, it cannot co-exist with non-native  
 trout which have been transplanted to the  
 eastern Sierra, Gerstung said.

As a result, it exists in only a few lakes  
 and streams and in 1975 was placed on the  
 federal endangered species list as a "threat-  
 ened" species, a step further from extinc-  
 tion than an endangered species.

"The feeling is, even though we have a  
 couple populations, these populations could  
 be wiped out overnight by a cloudburst, a  
 drought or some kind of man-made disas-  
 ter. We almost lost them in 1977 in the  
 drought," Gerstung said.

The proposal is still in the environmental  
 review process. The federal, California and  
 Nevada agencies sponsoring the project  
 must take public comment before taking  
 final action on the plan, probably this  
 summer.

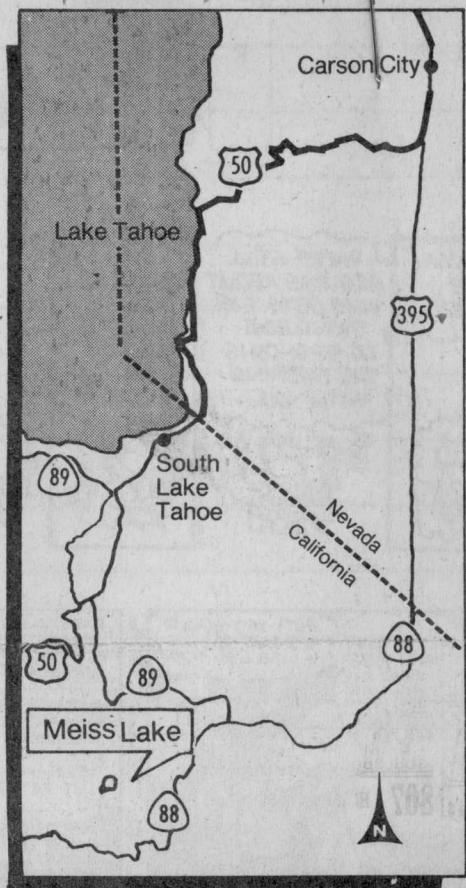
The fish to be killed are in no danger of  
 extinction, Gerstung said, adding that brook  
 trout breed so fast that they are stunted in  
 size.

"The brook trout is in 1,500 Sierra Neva-  
 da lakes and several thousand miles of  
 streams, while the Lahontan cutthroat trout  
 is nearly extinct, in only a few miles of  
 streams and a couple lakes."

Keeping the threatened species alive is

core teaching system.  
 Task force blueprints call for implemen-  
 tation of the program in three middle

Sacramento Bee  
 April 6, 1984



Bee Graphic

crucial, Gerstung said, because the species  
 may have scientific or economic value to  
 people. For example, he said, Lahontan  
 cutthroat are able to survive in warm or  
 alkaline water that would kill most other  
 trout.

Bob McDowell, wildlife staff officer for  
 the Tahoe unit of the U.S. Forest Service,  
 said there appears to be agreement among  
 government agencies that the program is  
 needed.

"Our charge with threatened species is to  
 build up their population so they aren't  
 threatened anymore," he said. "Conceptual-  
 ly, it's a good idea. Right now the major  
 concerns are the effect on the fishery: If it  
 kills all the fish, how long will it take to re-  
 establish it?"

There is also concern, McDowell said,  
 over the potential health hazard caused by  
 rotenone, which kills fish by depriving  
 them of oxygen. McDowell and Gerstung  
 both said the amount of the chemical need-  
 ed to kill fish is not high enough to pose a  
 danger to humans or other mammals.

Gerstung said rotenone can be chemical-  
 ly neutralized so it does not affect fish out-  
 side a specific area.

## Nuclear-Free Zone Area