State of California
Department of Fish and Wildlife

M e m o r a n d u m

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To: Kevin Thomas
Senior Environmental Scientist (Supervisor)
North Central Region

From: Sarah Mussulman
Environmental Scientist – High Mountain Lakes
North Central Region

Cc: Region 2 Fish Files

Subject: Fisheries Monitoring in El Dorado County – Schuler Lake (13794).

On July 8-9, 2014, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) conducted fisheries and amphibian monitoring surveys at Schuler Lake (CA Lakes ID 13794, Fig. 1). An overnight gill net was set for 13.0 hours and returned no fish. The majority of the lake is shallow and may not provide overwintering habitat for fingerling trout, therefore CDFW will not resume fish plants at Schuler Lake.

Figure 1: Schuler Lake looking east on July 9, 2014 (CDFW).

INTRODUCTION

Schuler Lake was planted with fish through 1999. Although a visual fish survey conducted in 2004 observed no fish, due to the size and depth of the lake its fish status was uncertain. Schuler Lake is one of seven currently or formerly stocked lakes east of Loon Lake on the northern edge of the Desolation Wilderness with uncertain fish status (Fig. 2). Lake Winifred, Sixteen Shot and Schuler Lakes were surveyed in 2014; Spider, Buck Island, Fawn and Rockbound will be surveyed as funding and workloads permit. As directed by the Hatchery Operations EIS/EIR (Jones and Stokes 2010) CDFW is currently evaluating the location and status of stocked and formerly stocked backcountry fisheries. All data gathered as part of this study is incorporated into the High Mountain Lakes database and made available to both federal and state agencies. Data from this

memorandum will benefit the Department in future efforts for fish stocking and wild trout management in the North Central Region.

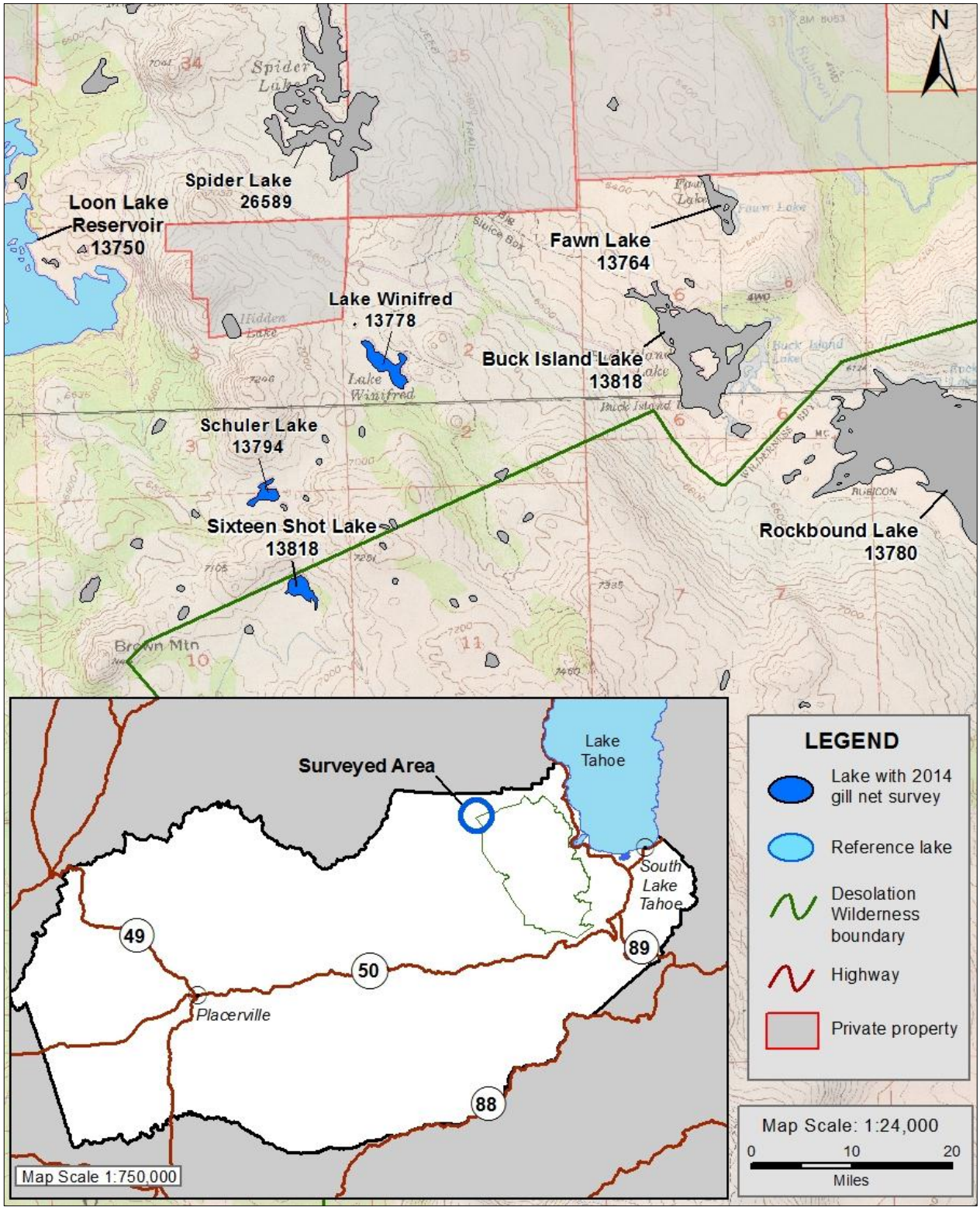

Figure 2: Location of the survey area in northeastern El Dorado County. Dark blue lakes had gill net surveys in 2014.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Schuler Lake has a surface area of 0.91 hectares and a maximum recorded depth of 4.2 meters. Aquatic vegetation is present around the edges of the lake and littoral habitat consists of a mixture of silt, woody debris, cobbles, boulders and bedrock. Surveyors observed a tributary flowing out of the lake but no inlets. Terrestrial habitat consists of mixed conifer forest and meadows at an elevation of approximately 2100 meters above mean sea level. Access to Lake Winifred is via well-maintained dirt roads and at least a five mile hike, partially cross-country. The watershed drains into the Rubicon River and eventually into the Middle Fork American River. Eldorado National Forest manages the land in the watershed.

RESULTS

On July 8-9, 2014 CDFW set an overnight gill net for 13.0 hours and captured no fish; due to the gill net survey results as well as the size and depth of the lake, CDFW believes the lake is fishless. Schuler Lake was planted with brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) between 1957 and 1999. Due to the shallow character of the lake and its relative remoteness plants will not be resumed at Schuler Lake and CDFW will not actively manage the lake.

Incidentally, CDFW conducted amphibian monitoring surveys at Lake Winifred on July 8, 2014 and observed 79 Pacific tree frog larvae (*Psuedacris regilla, Hyla regilla*). Water temperature at the surface of the lake was 23° C at the time of survey.

LITERATURE CITED:

Jones & Stokes. 2010. Hatchery and Stocking Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement. State clearinghouse #2008082025.