

#1

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 10:33:46 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 11:18:37 AM
Time Spent: 00:44:50
IP Address: 184.166.57.90

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jeff Kemp
City/Town:	Bigfork
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	jkemp42@rocketmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I am the Vice President of the Swan Lakers. We are a not for profit organization whose mission is the preservation of water quality in Swan Lake and the Swan River Watershed. We fully support efforts to eradicate lake trout from Swan Lake, and the re-establishment of robust populations of bull trout and kokanee. We observed the earlier gillnetting effort. It's very disappointing that, since 2016,, bull trout and kokanee are less abundant, while lake trout populations have increased. Again, we fully support the proposal to carry out gillnetting for lake trout removal and concurrent monitoring of the impact on bull trout and kokanee populations. We hope that funding and support, in general, will be available for what will be a multi year effort.

#2

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 11:16:18 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 11:19:40 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:21
IP Address: 69.144.16.83

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Chris Nelson
City/Town:	WHITEFISH
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	pinhead001@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I support the proposed removal of lake trout from Swan Lake.

#3

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 2:40:18 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 2:44:31 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:13
IP Address: 161.7.81.166

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Sydney Young
City/Town:	Lolo
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	sydneykate01@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Gillnetting for Lake Trout has proven effective on many other nearby lakes including Lake Yellowstone within the National Park. The plan to remove lake trout for the benefit of bull trout should be approved, however, the Commission/FWP should also detail how the 'removed' Lake Trout will be dispersed and if there will be any public opportunity or angling derbies to encourage selective harvest of lake trout by the public.

#4

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 3:28:28 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, December 26, 2023 3:35:00 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:31
IP Address: 71.36.53.165

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jim Borowski
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	codyco@cyberport.net

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Removal of lake trout in Swan Lake in an effort to save the bull trout is an excellent idea. I strongly support this proposal and similar efforts to improve bull trout survival.

#5

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 8:26:17 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 8:33:28 AM
Time Spent: 00:07:11
IP Address: 161.7.39.7

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Esther Lyon Delsordo
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	esther.lyondelsordo@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I agree that we must investigate the feasibility and environmental impacts of removing lake trout from Swan Lake with gillnetting, in order to protect the bull trout population. I want FWP to consider what is done with the removed fish in the EA. These fish should not be wasted and should be put to good use elsewhere as feed, bait, etc. FWP could also enlist the help of sportsmen to take lake trout and speed up their efforts.

#6

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 9:30:58 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 9:33:23 AM
Time Spent: 00:02:24
IP Address: 216.47.60.225

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Thomas Mccloskey
City/Town:	Superior
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	thomasjmccloskey@outlook.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

i think you should do everything possible to get rid of them

#7

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 11:15:39 AM
Last Modified: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 11:32:56 AM
Time Spent: 00:17:16
IP Address: 174.247.179.148

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Michael Raunig
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	mdraunig@hotmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I live on the lake all summer I have noticed all types of fishing except for perch have gotten worse through the years of netting and studying how are you going to do it ? Poison? We want to know if it even can be successfully? I have owned a cabin on the lake since 1981 I have a fair idea of how the lake is fishing,I don't think it has ever been worse in my time.The swan river is slowly improving how will this affect the improvements that have happened there?

#8

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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 7:42:10 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 7:59:20 PM
Time Spent: 00:17:10
IP Address: 35.150.70.130

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Chris Mischke
City/Town:	Bigfork
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	chris@bigskyfishingcharters.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I don't know why I even comment it doesn't make any difference anyways. You're going to do what you want . You telling me there isn't hardly any by catch is a joke , let me be on the boats when they are gill netting , it won't happen . You have already lost the battle as there are small mouth bass now in the system. You won't stock Kokanee, you won't stock bull trout . Why not just kill the whole dam thing since there is rainbows too . It's a losing battle just leave it alone .

#9

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 8:04:46 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, December 27, 2023 9:15:02 PM
Time Spent: 01:10:15
IP Address: 35.150.70.138

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Ross Ganz
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	rganz5@outlook.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

This gill netting program is absolute garbage. If somebody can make it make sense i will roll over but it hasn't happened yet. I understand the intent (reducing lake trout numbers resulting in increasing bull trout numbers,) but at what cost. Completely destroying the fishery? Perhaps. I remember Flathead Lake back in the 90's, long before I became a professional guide and well before the gill netting program. What a place to fish! Big fattys and lots of them and loads of fun for all. Hey we'd even catch a nice bull trout here and there! Fast forward to present day. I'm still guiding on Flathead and man what a difference these nets have made. The days of lots of healthy fish are gone. Hey we still catch a few bull trout though. Half of witch have gill netting material cutting through there skin as do many of the lake trout for the ones lucky enough to escape. (Have photos of these fish). I Also have collected a healthy pile of gill net material brought up on lures and Downriggers. Took me a couple seasons to figure out what these mysterious pieces of fishing line like material were. I have noticed no actual increase in bull trout catches since the gill netting program started. Doesn't sound like anyone has actually because all the information just shows "lowest recorded bull trout blah blah blah since the last report" you'd think by now we would be hearing about how the bull trout are recovering some after removing literally millions of laketrout from Flathead. The gill nets are absolutely decimating the laketrout as they were meant to do, but I do not believe they are having an equally positive impact on the bull trout and certainly not enough to justify the extermination of the laketrout (which are an amazing fish in their own right) and the actual destruction of what was once a world class fishery. Maybe it's time to try something else you guys, because the gill nets are not the answer to our diminishing bull trout population. Please don't to Swan Lake what was done to Flathead. In addition, the "relatively low bi-catch numbers" in the gill nets is also trash. A tactic that puts the species of concern at risk of death (which is the opposite of what you guys want) should be heavily reconsidered. Let me help you understand....The lake has 100 evil lake trout and 20 saint like bull trout. Insert gill net. Results...50/100 lake trout removed...5/20 bull trout removed. So 50% of the lakers gone and 25% of the precious bull trout. But it's all good because the numbers were "relatively Low" not to mention these bull trout that do end up in the gill nets are considered adult fish...aka spawners. Don't tell me the nets don't kill bull trout because I know they do. I've literally caught a few bull trout now in my professional career with severe net trauma. Another thing to consider is the average lifespan of these fish in comparison. Lake trout on average live much longer than bull trout do and in my experience are a much heartier fish resulting in a lower mortality rate. I swear to god I looked at a bull trout one time and it went belly up. The laketrout are not the enemy! All Fish Matter. YOU'RE GONNA DESTROY SWAN LAKE IF YOU THINK THE GILL NETS ARE THE ANSWER. They data collected suggests there is a better way. Let's find it before it's too late. Step one...abolish gill netting program. Step two....

#10

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, December 28, 2023 3:45:21 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, December 28, 2023 3:50:07 AM
Time Spent: 00:04:45
IP Address: 174.45.138.166

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Morris Miles
City/Town:	Billings
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	morris_miles@msn.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

It is my knowledge that these are native fish. Correct?
Leave them alone.

#11

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, December 28, 2023 1:45:31 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, December 28, 2023 1:51:58 PM
Time Spent: 00:06:26
IP Address: 156.146.51.130

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Chad Cunningham
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	mdbhxzjh@duck.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I am FOR the removal of lake trout from Swan Lake as long as its done in a manner to not negatively impact bull trout and konanee salmon. Removing non native lake trout would improve native bull trout and kokanee salmon populations. Thank you.

#12

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
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Last Modified: Sunday, December 31, 2023 11:17:57 AM
Time Spent: 00:16:08
IP Address: 184.166.48.7

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Rance Hertz
City/Town:	Bigfork
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	woodsbybuilders@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

The kokanee are just as non-native to Swan lake as the lake trout are. FWP should spend less money trying to play God and more time trying to actually help sportsman than operating under some liberal eco terrorism group. Bull trout are an inferior species pretty much set for extermination. It's impossible for them to completely eliminate lake trout from the Swan system so all of the efforts (and FUNDS!!\$\$) are for nothing! Period. Big ass waste of tax payers money so some over educated turd from some liberal university system can pander to his Democrat friends. Quit messing with the fisheries that we love.

#13

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Started: Monday, January 01, 2024 10:46:39 AM
Last Modified: Monday, January 01, 2024 11:16:14 AM
Time Spent: 00:29:35
IP Address: 216.211.181.69

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Beth Gardner
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	cutthroat@montanasky.net

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I strongly support lake trout suppression in Swan Lake. Thank you FWP for showing leadership on this issue.

#14

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, January 05, 2024 8:07:32 AM
Last Modified: Friday, January 05, 2024 8:09:04 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:31
IP Address: 71.36.53.165

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jim Borowski
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	codyco@cyberport.net

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I strongly support this project. Badly needed, long overdue.

#15

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Friday, January 05, 2024 9:55:40 AM
Last Modified: Friday, January 05, 2024 10:02:11 AM
Time Spent: 00:06:30
IP Address: 69.145.41.18

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	gocatsWF1956@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Please accept the following comments on behalf of the Flathead Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Our Chapter, with over 400 members, has been actively advocating for Native Trout (Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout) in the Flathead ecosystem since our inception in the 1970's. There are very few places on the planet and Montana where the option to manage with a priority on wild native trout still exists. When the Swan Valley Bull Trout Working Group (SVBTWG) was formed in 2005, FVTU was a founding member. The SVBTWG made some very positive strides in limiting the unchecked expansion of Lake Trout in Swan Lake in the period 2005-2016. Importantly, they learned where the spawning locations for Lake Trout were and pioneered gillnetting techniques to limit Lake Trout expansion. Sadly though, those efforts were not enough.

We are somewhat perplexed by the circumstances surrounding the Commission revisiting this issue in 2024. You will recall that in May of 2021 the Commission conducted an extensive review of projects that would remove fish from Montana waters. At that time, Swan Lake was listed with the purpose of: "Maintenance removal of lake trout in Swan Lake for the benefit of listed bull trout." Gill netting was listed as the preferred method.

After review and extensive public comment (which we participated in), the Commission in June, 2021 approved all of the projects going forward. As was documented in the Commission Meeting transcript and subsequently highlighted in the Press reports: "Commissioner Patrick Byorth asked if the commission would have to approve multi-year projects again next year. Fisheries chief Eileen Ryce said all the projects need only an initial approval, even if they require several years to complete." Missoula Current, 6/24/21 article by Laura Lundquist

For that reason, we view the current consideration of the Swan Lake project as redundant with past Commission actions. Nonetheless, the only thing that has changed with this project since 2021 is that the circumstances for native Bull Trout have become increasingly dire. Swan Lake Bull Trout redd counts in 2020 were 244. Since then, Swan redd counts declined to 219 in 2021, 160 in 2022, and an unprecedented new low of 135 in 2023. A population that was estimated to exceed 5,000 adult Bull Trout by MFWP as recently as 2007 is likely down to fewer than 1,000 fish in 2024. It appears certain that the decline is likely to continue and the result may well be that what was once considered one of Montana's top 2 or 3 Bull Trout sanctuaries at the time of the ESA Threatened listing in 1998 could instead become a liability preventing any consideration of future delisting.

For these reasons, Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited strongly endorses the Department actions to develop a new plan to suppress lake trout in Swan Lake. We further note that while gill nets were the primary method used to reduce lake trout in the past, we should continue to seek methods less likely to kill Bull Trout in the bycatch, including traps or other techniques.

Wade Fredenberg, President, Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited

#16

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, January 07, 2024 7:14:27 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, January 07, 2024 7:32:36 AM
Time Spent: 00:18:08
IP Address: 184.166.184.21

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Darcy Thomas
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	darcy424@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Hi and thank you for listening to my comments. I don't know a lot about fish but I do belong to a couple few conservation organizations such as Flathead Audubon and Flathead Land Trust. I learned about the introduction of non-native species to lakes such as Lake Trout and the decline of Bull Trout and Kokanee because of that along with other problems like the introduction of mysis shrimp. I also know Bull Trout are culturally important to Salish and Pend d'Oreille peoples. I am in favor of having the Fish and Wildlife Commission initiate a public MEPA process to evaluate the impact of removal of lake trout from Swan Lake on the environment. If there is a way we can remove lake trout and increase the population of bull trout and other native fish we may also benefit eagles and other wildlife. Thank you,
Darcy

#17

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Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, January 07, 2024 1:29:16 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, January 07, 2024 1:49:00 PM
Time Spent: 00:19:43
IP Address: 97.139.133.106

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jens Gran
City/Town:	Polson
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	jgran@centurytel.net

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

In addition what actions F&G has in mind, I suggest :

2. Include Swan lake and river in the Macdays

1. Put a bounty on the lakers, like Idaho has. Large enough that it

#18

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, January 14, 2024 6:18:59 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, January 14, 2024 6:20:44 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:44
IP Address: 64.25.135.181

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Mark Faroni
City/Town:	Dixon
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	mfaroni@blackfoot.net

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I am in total support of FWP taking all steps necessary to remove Lake Trout from Swan Lake.

#19

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, January 14, 2024 7:27:23 AM
Last Modified: Sunday, January 14, 2024 7:31:39 AM
Time Spent: 00:04:16
IP Address: 216.211.180.244

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Gregg Letourneau
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	letourneau68@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I am in favor of FWP removing lake trout from Swan Lake.

#20

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 3:05:26 PM
Last Modified: Wednesday, January 17, 2024 3:07:32 PM
Time Spent: 00:02:05
IP Address: 65.131.193.8

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Friends of the Wild Swan
City/Town:	Bigfork
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	arlene@wildswan.org

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Friends of the Wild Swan is a non-profit conservation organization with a 36 year history of advocacy to protect and restore bull trout in Montana and throughout its range.

Lake trout have been a threat to the Swan lake and river watershed. It is imperative that suppression efforts resume to protect native bull and westslope cutthroat trout.

We urge the commissioners to implement the lake trout removal proposal and promptly proceed with a MEPA analysis before bull trout are extirpated in the Swan.

#21

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, January 18, 2024 9:57:11 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, January 18, 2024 9:58:18 AM
Time Spent: 00:01:07
IP Address: 65.131.193.8

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: Arlene Montgomery
City/Town: Swan Lake
State/Province: MT
Email Address: arlene@wildswan.org

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Friends of the Wild Swan is a non-profit conservation organization with a 36 year history of advocacy to protect and restore bull trout in Montana and throughout its range.

Lake trout have been a threat to the Swan lake and river watershed. It is imperative that suppression efforts resume to protect native bull and westslope cutthroat trout.

We urge the commissioners to implement the lake trout removal proposal and promptly proceed with a MEPA analysis before bull trout are extirpated in the Swan.

#22

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, January 18, 2024 10:22:23 AM
Last Modified: Thursday, January 18, 2024 10:25:38 AM
Time Spent: 00:03:15
IP Address: 71.36.53.217

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Keith Hammer
City/Town:	KALISPELL
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	keith@swanview.org

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Please do resume efforts to suppress Lake Trout in order to protect native Bull Trout as soon as possible. Please proceed promptly with the MEPA process and get this done before Bull Trout are extirpated in the Swan watershed!

#23

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Thursday, January 18, 2024 12:54:44 PM
Last Modified: Thursday, January 18, 2024 1:06:37 PM
Time Spent: 00:11:53
IP Address: 154.27.111.40

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name: **steve kelly**
City/Town: **bozeman**
State/Province: **MT**
Email Address: **troutcheeks@ gmail.com**

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Dear Commissioners:

We support your approve of the proposal to removal of lake trout from Swan Lake. This management action would be a great benefit to bull trout, cutthroat trout and kokanee salmon. If FWP could proceed expeditiously with MEPA compliance and implement full management action in 2024 a lot more lake trout would be removed before they again multiply.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Steve Kelly
PO Box 4641
Bozeman, MT 59772

#24

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Sunday, January 21, 2024 9:37:21 PM
Last Modified: Sunday, January 21, 2024 10:12:03 PM
Time Spent: 00:34:42
IP Address: 69.145.151.220

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Bruce Farling
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	brucefarling@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Dear Commissioners:

I strongly urge you to support FWP again engaging in suppression of lake trout at Swan Lake, preferably employing strategic gillnetting as occurred in previous years until other suppression methods prove effective. I was involved for years in previous collaborative efforts at Swan Lake involving FWP, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Trout Unlimited, Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited, Montana DNRC, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Montana State University and conservation-minded anglers. Those efforts deployed gillnetting with follow-up monitoring, while also studying potential alternative suppression methods for Swan Lake. Data collected, including demographic and abundance information, was used in modeling by MSU researchers and others that indicated it is possible to shrink the population to a point of either population collapse, or, at least to a point where population abundance and spawning would be low enough to allow for a rebound in bull trout and perhaps Kokanee salmon populations. This latter situation would require occasional, cost-effective lake trout reduction efforts much reduced from what is needed now.

Additional data collected during these efforts back in the 2010s revealed spawning locations, which greatly enabled successful gillnetting efforts aimed at reproductive-age fish — one of the key objectives of lake trout suppression. Swan Lake is small enough and accessible enough that with enough effort it is possible to provide for successful suppression of lake trout to a point resulting in reduced predation and competitive pressures on native bull trout and perhaps Kokanee. Succeeding in this would enable FWP to better meet its twin obligations of conserving important rare species as well as providing sport fish opportunities. Succeeding in improving bull trout numbers in the Swan Lake system can help FWP demonstrate that indeed it should be permitted to manage dwindling federally listed species — a message that unfortunately runs counter to how the agency is often portrayed in the public when it comes to wolf and grizzly bear management. Please support this important project at Swan Lake.

#25

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, January 22, 2024 10:00:42 AM
Last Modified: Monday, January 22, 2024 10:14:43 AM
Time Spent: 00:14:00
IP Address: 184.166.170.90

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	LaVerne Sultz
City/Town:	Kalispell
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	lgsultz@charter.net

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

We now know that the 2009-2016 netting of lake trout in Swan Lake was successful in that the rapid increase in the lake trout population since 2000 was slowed or stopped. Once netting was halted the lake trout population reverted to a rapid increase and bull trout and kokanee began what can best be described as a crash.

I strongly support restarting the planning and netting process on Swan Lake to insure that our children and grandchildren will be able to experience our native fishes in the Swan Drainage. This project needs proper funding and a long time period to ensure success. It won't be accomplished in a short period of time and it will be costly. We need to go into the process knowing that since we have allowed the problem to continue for 35 years, there is not going to be an easy or quick solution. I look forward to seeing the netting plan and the MEPA documents. Thanks for taking my comments.

#26

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Monday, January 22, 2024 1:01:00 PM
Last Modified: Monday, January 22, 2024 1:30:03 PM
Time Spent: 00:29:02
IP Address: 174.45.84.0

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Scott Vollmer
City/Town:	Gallatin Gateway, MT
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	vollmerscott@yahoo.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Dear Madame Chair and Commissioners,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Montana Outfitters and Guides Association as the current MOGA Vice President. MOGA stands in support of the removal of lake trout from Swan Lake. With this support comes a recognition from MOGA that the removal of lake trout from Swan Lake would necessarily mean the removal of angling opportunities for lake trout in Swan Lake. There currently are MOGA members who take advantage of this angling opportunity in Swan Lake, so the support of this proposal is not considered lightly as it may impact outfitters in our State. However, it is the belief of MOGA that overriding the short-term loss of lake trout angling opportunities is the potential long-term gain of increased angling opportunities in Swan Lake for kokanee and bull trout. Furthermore, MOGA recognizes the need to do right by our native fisheries and seek ways to enhance these native fisheries whenever and wherever possible. The proposal before you to remove lake trout from Swan Lake is a perfect example of efforts to help enhance the survival of native fisheries in places where they have historically thrived. For this reason, MOGA stands in full support of the proposed removal of lake trout from Swan Lake. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Scott Vollmer
MOGA Vice President
MT Outfitter #26303

#27

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:54:58 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:14:27 PM
Time Spent: 00:19:29
IP Address: 161.7.39.7

Page 1

Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Mike Anderson
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	michaelanderson@mt.gov

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Dear Commission Chair Robinson and members of the Fish and Wildlife Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Lake trout removal proposal in Swan Lake pending review by the Commission at the February 16, 2024, meeting. Please consider this letter in broad support of the proposal.

Montana DNRC is a participant in the Swan Valley Native Fish Work Group, developed and finalized a Habitat Conservation Plan on forested state trust lands that includes bull trout, and is a participant in the Montana Bull trout inter-agency recovery team. As land managers, DNRC is primarily focused on the habitat aspects necessary to sustain native fish populations, however, management of these species is frequently reliant on the ability to conduct targeted removals of introduced species in cooperation with MFWP to improve population status and distribution across their historic range.

DNRC has provided funding for, and participated in, fish removal projects including previous Lake trout suppression efforts in Swan Lake. Illegal introduction of Lake trout into Swan Lake has had a significant adverse impact on the Bull trout population in the Swan River watershed, with populations decreasing substantially following Lake trout establishment. Bull trout designated critical habitat is present in approximately 20 miles of stream on the Swan River State Forest, which annually supports over 40 percent of the Bull trout spawning in the watershed. Continued declines in the abundance of Bull trout are likely to occur in the absence of active suppression as a result of the increasing Lake trout population in Swan Lake, highlighting the importance of the proposed project.

Montana DNRC looks forward to continued collaboration with MFWP in restoration of native fish species in Montana and appreciates the opportunity to comment as a part of this review process.

Sincerely,

Mike Anderson
Forest Management Bureau Fisheries Biologist

#28

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:23:53 PM
Last Modified: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 12:28:13 PM
Time Spent: 00:04:20
IP Address: 172.56.200.168

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Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jason ORear
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State/Province:	MT
Email Address:	j7.orear@gmail.com

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

I am for any action to keep the Bull trout to thrive in the wild and removal of Lake trout that are currently harming them and their habitat.

#29

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 11:08:41 AM
Last Modified: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 4:35:18 PM
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Q1

Contact information:

Name:	Jeff Lukas
City/Town:	Missoula
State/Province:	MT
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Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

The Montana Wildlife Federation approves of the initiative to remove invasive Lake Trout from Swan Lake, but we are skeptical of the action's efficacy. We are also concerned with the amount of Bull Trout as by-catch that are taken with nets set out to catch Lake Trout. Removing predatory invasive fish is extremely difficult ,and we applaud FWP's stance on protecting native fishes, but we look at other lakes around the country and have not seen many positive results when agencies attempt to remove invasive Lake Trout. Again, we support the removal of Lake Trout from Swan Lake, but solid data needs to be compiled so that the long-term efficacy of this project can be determined. Thank you.

#30

COMPLETE

Collector: Web Link 1 (Web Link)
Started: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 3:54:22 PM
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Q1

Contact information:

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Email Address:	mike@foam-mt.org

Q2

Please comment on Lake Trout Removal - Swan Lake

Commissioners and Director,

On behalf of the board of directors and over 1,000 professionally-licensed guide and outfitter members of the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM), I am writing to support the Fish and Wildlife Commission's (Commission) approval of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) planned management action to remove lake trout to benefit bull trout and kokanee salmon at Swan Lake. While FOAM supports the management and control of lake trout in the Swan Lake drainage system, we have concerns regarding bycatch and urge a complete MEPA compliance and thorough analysis of specific techniques and timing of removal efforts prior to the implementation of the full management action in 2025.

Non-native lake trout represent a substantial threat to the Swan Lake bull trout population. From 2009 to 2016, Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and other state, federal, and NGO partners conducted an eight-year experimental lake trout removal project to examine if gillnetting efforts can reduce lake trout abundance to improve bull trout and kokanee salmon populations. Results from this study demonstrated that gillnetting increased mortality of age 3 and age 4 lake trout as well as adult lake trout on known spawning areas although incidental bycatch of other species during the study was relatively low.

Since 2016, Swan Lake bull trout and kokanee abundances have declined while lake trout has increased considerably. Bull trout redd counts in 2023 revealed the lowest number on record. Additional lake trout population assessment and modeling since 2016 has shown that increased gillnetting effort to remove lake trout could positively influence bull trout abundance. FWP intends to increase lake trout monitoring in 2024 before implementing a full management action in 2025. Management action includes substantially increased gillnetting efforts to remove multiple cohorts of lake trout with concurrent monitoring of bull trout and kokanee to ensure negative impacts to bull trout abundance is minimized and to improve kokanee abundance. FWP will determine specific techniques and timing of removal efforts of this management action following MEPA compliance.

FOAM has always supported the conservation and protection of our wild cold-water fisheries while promoting and supporting the outfitting and guiding communities that are strong economic drivers throughout our state. In this light, we support the Commission approving FWP's planned management action to remove lake trout to benefit bull trout and kokanee salmon at Swan Lake.

Respectfully,

Michael A. Bias, Ph.D.
Executive Director
