

## ***FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET***

**Meeting Date:** April 14, 2011

**Agenda Item:** Cherry and Granite lakes temporary waiver of daily and possession limits

**Division:** Fish and Wildlife (Fisheries)

**Action Needed:**

**Approval of Proposed (Tentative) Rule**       **Approval of Final Rule/Action**

**Endorse Course of Action**       **None - information only**

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 15 minutes

**Background:**

FWP plans to restore non-hybridized westslope cutthroat trout to Cherry Creek, a tributary to the Big Hole River by using rotenone to remove brook trout and hybridized trout. These fish are slated to be removed from the stream and the two headwater lakes in late August 2011. FWP is proposing to remove the limits (5 daily, 10 in possession) on these lakes effective immediately until September 1, 2011. Both lakes are accessible by foot or ATV.

**Public Involvement Process & Results**

Prior to the release of the EA, the project was scoped with 4 private landowners, the USFS and BLM. Also, the Anaconda Sportsmen, Skyline Sportsmen, Geroge Grant Chapters of Trout Unlimited, the Big Hole Watershed Committee and the Big Hole River Foundation were presented with the project and allowed to provide feedback. All parties consented to the proposal. The EA is being published for 30 days with public meetings in Dillon and in Butte.

**Alternatives and Analysis**

No Action: Leave the current regulations (5 trout/day and 10 in possession) in place. This would not allow the public to maximize fish harvest before treatment which creates “waste” in the public’s mind and may generate more public resistance to these types of projects in the future.

Proposed Action: Waive limits on Cherry and Granite lakes: This would maximize fish removal by anglers prior to removal with rotenone and it would satisfy the public’s desire to minimize waste. This could create the enforcement problems since other lakes in nearby drainages would not have limit waivers. However, this effort has been coordinated with FWP enforcement and will not likely to be a significant problem because Cherry and Granite lakes are the only lakes in with cutthroat trout accessible via the Cherry Creek Road.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:**

Limit waivers create public good will and support and enhances to a degree the chance to achieve the project goal of fish removal. Similar waivers have been successfully used in other projects such as the South Fork of Flathead.

**Proposed Motion:**

I move the daily and possession bag limits for Cherry and Granite lakes be removed effective immediately through September 1, 2011.