

November 2, 2012 Fisheries Bureau P.O. Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701 406-444-2535

Dear Interested Parties,

Please find enclosed a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). FWP is proposing to acquire through donation, the water rights from Nevada Spring Creek, a tributary of Nevada Creek in the Upper Blackfoot River Drainage. These water rights are currently owned by Nevada Spring Creek Partners (Partners), who have been in negotiations with Trout Unlimited (TU) to purchase the water rights. TU has offered, after purchase, to donate these water rights to FWP for the purpose of converting them to instream flow. The intent of the project is to maintain habitat for salmonids, primarily westslope cutthroat and bull trout in the Upper Blackfoot Fishery. This proposed project is located on property owned by the Partners and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, approximately 2 miles north of the town of Helmville in Powell County, MT.

The EA may also be viewed on FWP's Internet website http://fwp.mt.gov ("Submit Public Comments," beginning November 2), or can be obtained by mail from FWP, Attn: Fisheries, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701; by phoning 406-444-1229; or by emailing SBegley@mt.gov.

Any comments you may have must be received by FWP no later than 5:00 pm on December 3, 2012, and should be mailed to FWP at the address listed above or emailed to the email address listed above. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Stephen Begley at (406) 444-1229.

Please note that I expect to issue the Decision Notice for this draft EA soon after the comment period has ended, and that the Draft EA will be considered as final if no substantive comments are received by the deadline listed above. The acceptance of these donated water rights would also be contingent upon final approval being granted by the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Commission.

Sincerely.

Bruce Rich Bureau Chief Fisheries Bureau

Fish & Wildlife Division