



MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

February 10, 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to construct a fish barrier on Reservoir Creek near Dillon to protect an unaltered population of westslope cutthroat trout (WCT) from nonnative trout. In the Beaverhead River sub-basin, WCT presently occupy less than 4% of their historic habitat. Reservoir Creek is one of eight streams within the Beaverhead watershed that still supports an unaltered WCT population; however, the population is only seasonally protected by intermittency. Multiple other WCT populations which were believed to be protected by seasonal flow barriers have recently become altered or lost. Over the past decade, 18 projects to protect WCT from non-native trout were implemented in 5 sub-basins that increased WCT distribution by 250 miles; however, about 100 miles of genetically unaltered WCT were also lost during that period. Once protected, WCT from Reservoir Creek can be used to repopulate other projects in the upper Missouri basin. WCT have been petitioned for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and Montana state law authorizes FWP to manage candidate species to prevent the need for listing under the ESA. FWP Region 3 (Upper Missouri River) has a goal of restoring WCT (>90% pure) to 20% of their historic range in order to prevent listing under the ESA.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks invites you to comment on the attached proposal. The public comment period will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. March 12, 2022. Comments should be sent to the following:

Ryan Kreiner
Native Fish Biologist
730 ½ Montana Street
Dillon, MT 59725

Or e-mail to rkreiner@mt.gov

Sincerely,

Marina Yoshioka
Region 3 Supervisor

Attachment