



News Release

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest
Supervisor's Office
1200 Franklin Way
Sparks, NV 89431

Contacts: Ed Monnig (775) 355-5304
Gary Schiff (775) 882-2766

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Paiute Cutthroat Trout Recovery Project Decision Upheld

Sparks, Nevada...The Chief of the Forest Service today upheld a May 2004 Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact to restore the Paiute cutthroat trout to its native range by Intermountain Regional Forester Jack Troyer. Paiute cutthroat trout have been listed under the Endangered Species Act since 1975. This now-affirmed Decision will allow this project to move forward and safeguard the Paiute cutthroat trout's long-term survival and remove it from the Endangered Species list. The project was appealed in June.

One of the principal points of appeal was the effect that the fish toxicant would have on the macro-invertebrate population. Macro-invertebrates are water-born insects that fish eat. Forest Service studies show that the streams will amply repopulate with invertebrates. For example, the invertebrates will be washed down stream. The Chief upheld the Forest's analysis of the predicted impacts. The Chief's appeal opinion also requires that the California Department of Fish and Game obtain a permit from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board before applying the fish toxicant.

The project was proposed by the California Department of Fish and Game and based on a US Fish and Wildlife Service recovery plan. The project goal is to totally recover one of the rarest trout species in the world. The entire native range of the Paiute cutthroat trout is in the Forest Service's Carson-Iceberg Wilderness near Markleeville, California. The Regional Forester's decision approves the California Department's Fish and Game's request for use of mechanical tools in the wilderness as well as fish toxicants. The Chief upheld this decision.

"I am looking forward to working with the California Department of Fish and Game and the US Fish & Wildlife Service to recover this threatened species," said Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest Supervisor Bob Vaught. The next phase of the project, application of the fish toxicant, will begin this fall. The US Fish & Wildlife Service recently finished a Paiute Cutthroat Trout Recovery Plan outlining this project as the final step to recovery of the species. According to US Fish & Wildlife Service's Fishery Biologist Chad Mellison, "It's the culmination of a huge effort on the part of three agencies to recover the species."

The decision allows Fish and Game officials to move forward with the process of removing the remaining non-native trout from 11 miles of Silver King Creek, its tributaries, and Tamarack Lake and replace them with the native Paiute cutthroat trout. Last year, the California Department of Fish and Game, together with the Forest Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Trout Unlimited volunteers, relocated approximately 500 nonnative fish from these waters.

California Department of Fish and Game officials have indicated that they hope to open a few tributaries above the project area with adequate Paiute populations to catch-and-release fishing in the near future. "It would be the only place in the world where anglers will be able to catch-and-release the Paiute cutthroat trout," Schiff said.

The Paiute cutthroat trout has striking orange-red markings below the gills. "It is a remarkably rare and beautiful fish," Schiff said. The Decision Notice/Finding of No Significant Impact can be viewed at www.fs.fed.us/htnf or a copy can be provided by contacting Carson Ranger District Natural Resource Staff Officer Erick Walker at (775) 884-8120. Further information about this news release can be obtained by

contacting either Deputy Forest Supervisor Ed Monnig at the above contact number or Schiff at (775) 882-2766.

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