

# MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FWP SEEKS COMMENT ON CUTTHROAT TROUT MANAGEMENT GOAL**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is seeking public comment on a draft management goal for westslope cutthroat trout, Montana's state fish which has been petitioned to be listed as a threatened or endangered species.

"Overall, the goal recognizes the importance of maintaining the genetic diversity and life history strategies represented by the remaining local populations," said Chris Hunter, who is in charge of special projects for FWP's fisheries division.

The draft management goal is divided into two parts: (1) to preserve, protect and where possible expand existing wild populations; and (2) to establish nine wild populations in at least 50 miles of interconnected habitat. The goal seeks to enhance or establish wild populations in the Kootenai, Flathead, Clark Fork, and upper Missouri river drainages. Each of these drainages

have historically harbored westslope cutthroat trout.

The westslope cutthroat trout shares the title of Montana's state fish with Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The fish was once widely distributed in the Clark Fork, Kootenai, and upper Missouri river. While westslope cutthroats are doing better west of the Continental Divide, they are still greatly reduced in both their numbers and their range.

Hunter said the goal would result in westslope cutthroat trout populations that demonstrate a stable or increasing trend for at least three westslope cutthroat trout generations and provide for angler use.

The draft management goal will be the centerpiece of the forthcoming westslope cutthroat trout management plan being developed by FWP, with the assistance of the Westslope Cutthroat Trout Working Group and the Westslope Cutthroat Trout Scientific Group.

Comments deadline is December 12. To comment or to receive a copy of the draft document, write to: Chris Hunter, FWP Fisheries Division, Box 200201, Helena, MT 59601-0701. Or comment via FWP's Internet site at "fwp.mt.gov."