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# Bull Trout Draft Recovery Plan

## for the Coastal-Puget Sound Distinct Population Segment

**What is recovery?**
Recovery is the process by which the decline of an endangered or threatened species is arrested or reversed, and threats neutralized so that its survival in the wild can be ensured. The goal of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is the recovery of listed species to levels where protection under the Act is no longer necessary.

**What is included in the draft recovery plan released today?**
Each volume of the draft recovery plan for the Coastal-Puget Sound DPS includes an introductory section outlining the overall plan for recovering bull trout within the DPS and describing specific criteria with which to measure recovery of bull trout in both management units, Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound. Each management unit covers a geographic area, such as a watershed or a collection of streams. Each of the management unit chapters can be thought of as a "mini-recovery plan" that contributes to and is consistent with the overall recovery plan for the DPS.

**Why is the draft recovery plan organized this way?**
Because the bull trout population segments occur over a large five-state area, and population segments were listed for protection at different times, a two-tiered approach to developing the draft recovery plan was adopted. The first tier addresses broad aspects of bull trout recovery at the level of recovery across the range of the species. The second tier addresses recovery in smaller areas, such as specific river basin areas or collections of streams within each of the five distinct population segments. These are the recovery units.

Today's announcement includes the draft recovery plan for the Coastal-Puget Sound population segment. For purposes of recovery planning, this segment was divided into two management units: Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula. The Puget Sound Management Unit is addressed in Volume I of the Draft Recovery Plan for the Coastal-Puget Sound Distinct Population Segment of Bull Trout and the Olympic Peninsula Management Unit is addressed in Volume II.

**Who developed this draft bull trout recovery plan?**
The draft recovery plan for bull trout was developed through the collaboration of Federal, State, Tribal, County and City biologists working with representatives of local watersheds, private landowners, industry and conservation organizations.

**How was the draft recovery plan for each unit developed?**
Focusing recovery on smaller areas, such as the management units, is advantageous because bull trout are widely distributed and their habitat and the factors affecting them vary greatly throughout their distribution. For instance, in the Coastal-Puget Sound population, bull trout can be anadromous, an attribute not found in the other bull trout population segments. The more

local scope of this recovery plan allows recovery tasks to be tailored to this specific area and encourages implementation of tasks by local interests. The management units are largely based on watersheds and river basins, in addition to biology, and incorporate existing state plans as much as possible.

**What is the relationship between the draft recovery plan and the critical habitat proposal?**
The draft recovery plan and the critical habitat proposal are closely linked. The information developed by the recovery teams, and the science underlying that information, are the basis for the critical habitat proposals. However, critical habitat is designed to provide for the conservation of a species by identifying those areas occupied by the species that are essential for conservation and require special management, whereas a recovery plan is a much larger blueprint for the eventual recovery and de-listing of a species.

**Who would be affected by recovery efforts?**
A recovery plan is advisory only and carries no regulatory authority. It represents the Fish and Wildlife Service's estimation of actions necessary for the recovery of the species.

**What are the recovery objectives?**
To recover bull trout, the following four objectives have been identified:

- Maintain current distribution of bull trout within core areas as described in recovery unit chapters and restore distribution where recommended in recovery unit chapters. (See the individual management unit summaries for more details.)
- Maintain stable or increasing trends in abundance of bull trout.
- Restore and maintain suitable habitat conditions for all bull trout life history stages and strategies.
- Conserve genetic diversity and provide opportunity for genetic exchange.

**What are the criteria for assessing whether recovery objectives are being achieved?**
Criteria specific to each management unit are defined in that management unit chapter. However, each unit chapter will contain criteria that address the following four objectives:

- The **distribution of bull trout** in identified and potential local populations in all core areas within the management unit.
- The **estimated abundance of adult bull trout** within core areas in the management unit, expressed as either a point estimate or a range of individuals.
- The **presence of stable or increasing trends** for adult bull trout abundance in the management unit.
- The **restoration of passage** at specific barriers identified as inhibiting recovery.

**What actions will be needed to achieve recovery?**
Recovery tasks are detailed in each recovery unit chapter. However, recovery tasks in each unit will address the following seven categories:

- Protect, restore and maintain suitable habitat conditions for bull trout.
- Prevent and reduce negative effects of non-native fish and other non-native species on bull trout.

- Establish fisheries management goals and objectives compatible with bull trout recovery and implement practices to achieve goals.
- Characterize, conserve and monitor genetic diversity and gene flow among local populations of bull trout.
- Conduct research and monitoring to implement and evaluate bull trout recovery activities, consistent with an adaptive management approach using feedback from implemented, site-specific recovery tasks.
- Use all available conservation programs and regulations to protect and conserve bull trout and bull trout habitats.
- Assess the implementation of bull trout recovery by recovery unit and revise recovery unit plans based on evaluations.

**How long will it take to recover bull trout?**
A recovery plan is advisory only and carries no regulatory authority; therefore, it is difficult to determine how long it will take to recover bull trout. Individual management units have different needs and will be recovered at different rates. However, if the actions in the recovery plan are all implemented, we estimate it could take 25 years, or more, to recover bull trout.

**How much will recovery cost?**
Estimating the cost of recovery is difficult and complex, due to many variables and unknowns. However, the Fish and Wildlife Service estimates that the recovery of bull trout throughout their range could cost about $500 million spread over 25 years. This includes estimates of expenditures by local, Tribal, State and Federal governments and by private business and individuals. The estimates are attributed to bull trout conservation but other aquatic species also will benefit. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is soliciting comments from the public on potential costs.

**How can private landowners have a role in recovery?**

The Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to enhancing opportunities for private (non-Federal) landowners to participate in the conservation of listed and imperiled species. One example is the Shared Strategy for Puget Sound (SSPS), a community-based organization representing the State, Tribes, watershed councils, private landowners and representatives of industry and conservation groups. The SSPS is developing a collaborative recovery plan for the region that is guided by clear goals and meets the broad interests for salmon and bull trout in Puget Sound. The shared strategy is an effort to engage local citizens, Tribes, technical experts and policymakers to build a practical, cost-effective recovery plan endorsed by the people living and working in the watersheds of the Puget Sound region.

The Fish and Wildlife Service also offers grants for endangered species conservation and recovery. Working with our State partners, the Fish and Wildlife Service awarded approximately $106 million in Federal funding in Fiscal Year 2002 under five types of endangered species grants. **[For more information on our grant programs, please see our grants web page at http://endangered.fws.gov/grants.]**

**How can I obtain copies of the recovery plan and other documents?**
The documents, along with maps, fact sheets, photographs and other materials may be found on the Pacific Region's website at http://species.fws.gov/bulltrout.

**How can I comment?**
A 120-day public comment period begins July 1, 2004, and closes October 29, 2004. Comments on the draft recovery plan may be mailed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 501 Desmond Drive SE, Lacey, WA 98503. Written comments also may be submitted at a public meeting (schedule below). Two hearings will provide opportunities to submit oral comments on the critical habitat proposal.

**Meetings are hearings are scheduled for:**

**July 12, 2004: Sequim, Washington**
Dungeness Riverside Park
Audubon Meeting Room
6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

**July 14, 2004: Edmonds, Washington**
Edmonds City Hall
4 p.m. to 7p.m.

**Public hearings on the critical habitat proposal are set for:**

**August 10, 2004: near Olympia,Washington**
Tumwater Comfort Inn
Exit 101, off I-5.
1 p.m. to 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

(Information on the draft recovery plan and critical habitat proposal will be available one hour before each hearing.)