



News Release

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Comments Sought on Proposal to Renovate Stillman Lake

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Arizona Game and Fish Department are seeking comments on a proposal to renovate the native fish populations in Stillman Lake. Renovation will remove existing predatory fish from the lake and eventually allow for the stocking of native roundtail chub (a.k.a. Verde trout) and endangered razorback suckers.

"Renovating Stillman Lake would benefit native fishes in the Upper Verde River by eliminating non-native predators and allowing razorback suckers and roundtail chub to grow to a larger size until they are able to disperse downstream during flood events," says Shaula Hedwall of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "This project would help recover razorback suckers, roundtail chub and other unique Southwest aquatic species."

"The Department has worked cooperatively with over 50 partners to develop a statewide conservation agreement for roundtail chub. This action is proposed in the spirit of that agreement to secure the future of roundtail chub in the Upper Verde River," says David Weedman, Aquatic Habitat Coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

A public information meeting on the proposal will be held at the Yavapai College Performing Arts Hall, Green Room, 1100 E. Sheldon Street, Prescott, Arizona from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on March 26.

A draft environmental assessment of the proposed project is available on-line at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/> or by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Written comments on the proposed project should be submitted by April 25 and sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Attn: Stillman Lake, 323 North Leroux, Suite 101, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001, facsimile (928) 266-1099, or e-mailed to StillmanLake@fws.gov.

Stillman Lake is located at the Verde River headwaters south of Paulden, about ¼-mile downstream of Sullivan Dam, in the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Upper Verde River Wildlife Area. A spring complex feeds the upper end of the lake and a sediment berm deposited in the Verde River at the Granite Creek confluence causes the river to back-up in its channel forming a narrow, 3,900 feet-long, 20-acre impoundment.

The preferred method for renovating the lake would be to use a fish toxicant to remove the non-native fishes. Fish would be collected and buried on-site and the toxicant would be chemically neutralized. Prior to treating Stillman Lake, desirable sportfish would be captured using a combination of electrofishing and nets and restocked in areas where anglers may better utilize them. Another alternative being considered would involve temporarily removing the sediment berm, draining the lake, and mechanically removing the non-native fishes.

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