

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE - SPOTLIGHT SPECIES ACTION PLAN

[4/1/09 draft]

Common Name: Bull Trout

Scientific Name: *Salvelinus confluentus*

Lead Region: Region 1

Lead Field Office: Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office

Species Information:

Status: Threatened

Recovery Priority Number or Listing Priority Number: 9C

Recovery Plan or Candidate Assessment Form: Draft recovery plan completed July 1, 2004

Most Recent 5-year Review: April 25, 2008

Other: Critical Habitat final rule, September 26, 2005

Threats: Habitat loss, invasive species

Target: Species status improved by continuing to reduce and remove threats from habitat impacts and invasive species competition and introgression, including restoring connectivity for migration, reducing water temperatures and stream sediment input, and limiting populations and distribution of invasive species. Enhance partnerships to accomplish actions, in part by finalizing the recovery plan.

Measure: Change in Recovery Priority Number by improving recovery potential through clearer identification of recovery criteria and enhanced partnerships to meet those criteria, and decreasing threats by continuing to work with partners under a finalized recovery plan to remove migration barriers, restore habitat, and reduce invasive species threats.

Actions:

1. Improve habitat quality over next five years by:
 - a. Increase habitat connectivity by removing 50 fish migration barriers (e.g., road culverts, diversion dams) and reducing risk of entrainment in 25 water diversion structures.
 - b. Increase habitat quality over 50 miles of streams and lake shore by reducing water temperatures and stream sediment input through increased stream shading and stream bank protection.
2. Reduce threats from invasive species over next five years by:
 - a. Control invasive species in lakes and streams where most feasible and necessary, including at least two major lake systems, and on one stream.

- b. Reduce the risk of spread by invasive species by control or erecting barriers in at least 2 streams.
3. Finalize recovery plan with partners, and use to guide recovery actions more precisely and effectively.

Identify responsible parties for the actions: State fish and wildlife management agencies, federal land management agencies, Tribal entities, and private landowners with formal agreements with the Service are already taking various levels of responsibility for implementing actions, and will likely continue to do so. The Service's greatest opportunity to continue to leverage these resources in support of bull trout recovery lies in identifying clear, attainable recovery criteria in a final recovery plan; clear, logical critical habitat requirements; and support for our land- and species-management partners in achieving those criteria and requirements. The Service will also continue to directly support implementing recovery actions, including helping fund and staff habitat conservation and invasive species control efforts.

Estimated costs of the actions: Costs for habitat quality improvements will be approximately \$2 million (\$20,000/action). Costs for invasive species control will be approximately \$3 million (\$1.25 million/lake action, plus \$50,000 for one stream action). Costs for finalizing the recovery plan will be approximately \$500,000 for staff time within the Service, and among Service partners.

Role of other agencies: Other agencies are, and will remain critical partners for implementing species and habitat management actions to conserve bull trout, including restoring habitat on federal, state, Tribal, and private lands, controlling invasive species, and supporting completion of the recovery plan (see "*Identify responsible parties for the actions*" above).

Role of other ESA programs: Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation will continue to facilitate conservation actions on federal lands, which harbor much of the most important bull trout habitat, and for other federal actions that may affect habitat connectivity. The Service has approved several Habitat Conservation Plans for species including bull trout on private and state lands that will continue to support bull trout conservation. The Service has cooperative agreements under Section 6 with all five states with bull trout, and will continue to work in partnership with states under this authority to support their implementation of bull trout recovery actions. The Service will continue to support enforcement of take prohibitions under Section 9, when and where appropriate.

Role of other FWS programs: The Fisheries Bureau of the Service will continue to play an important role in providing scientific support for identifying and implementing recovery actions, identifying recovery criteria, tracking progress towards achieving recovery goals, and completing recovery planning.

Additional funding analysis: Additional funding for bull trout conservation would be used to secure habitat improvements and reduce invasive species threats. For example, approximately \$3 million could help remove the last major remaining threat to bull trout in the St. Mary River drainage in Montana – a large, costly fish migration barrier - enabling achievement of recovery criteria for that unit, and potential reclassification and delisting. In this case, the state of Montana and federal Bureau of Reclamation would be the responsible parties. Similarly, additional funding for bull trout recovery could be targeted at specific, more expensive and critical projects throughout the range of bull trout to facilitate big strides in achieving recovery criteria, reducing

threats and leading to recovery and delisting sooner. Such large-scale, expensive projects are difficult to fund with annually available recovery dollars.