

ACT NOW TO PROTECT BULL TROUT HABITAT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released a new proposed critical habitat for bull trout throughout its five-state range. The proposal includes 21,694 miles of stream habitat in Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Nevada, 985 miles of marine shoreline in the Olympic peninsula and Puget Sound in western Washington, and 533,426 acres of reservoirs and lakes. Unlike the previous critical habitat designations that were challenged by Friends of the Wild Swan and Alliance for the Wild Rockies because they were sparse and fragmented, this proposal includes federal lands, reservoirs and unoccupied habitat that is necessary for migration and foraging.

Bull trout need cold, clean water with little fine sediment to successfully spawn and rear. At about two years of age they migrate from their spawning stream and mature in lakes or rivers, traveling as far as 150 miles. They return to their natal stream to spawn but unlike salmon make the journey between stream and lake many times in their life. Their stringent habitat requirements make them an excellent indicator of water quality. A critical habitat designation that incorporates the five C's: Clean, Cold, Complex, Connected and Comprehensive will facilitate the survival and recovery of bull trout. The current proposal will go a long way towards that goal.



Please take a minute to contact the Fish and Wildlife Service.

- Let them know that you support the proposed critical habitat designation. If areas are not included but should be - give them as much information as you can about the stream, river or lake such as bull trout current status and habitat threats.
- Let them know that federal lands **MUST** be included in a final designation. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management plans are not a surrogate for critical habitat.
- Tell them you support unoccupied habitat in the final designation. Maintaining connectivity or reconnecting core areas is crucial to recovering bull trout.

A comprehensive critical habitat for bull trout provides benefits to other aquatic species and protects or restores water quality for people.

For more information go to: <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/bulltrout> or wildrockiesalliance.org

To submit comments by March 15, 2010:

Mail: Public Comments Processing, Attn: *RIN 1018-AW88*; Division of Policy and Directives Mgmt.; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the "Enter Keyword or ID" box enter the docket number which is FWS-R1-ES-2009-0085. Check the "Open for Comment/Submission" box and then click the Search button. You should then see an icon that reads "Submit a Comment."

**Friends of the Wild Swan, P.O. Box 5103, Swan Lake, MT 59911
Alliance for the Wild Rockies, wildrockiesalliance.org**