

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
South Fork Flathead Westslope Cutthroat Trout
Conservation Program**

**Update for April 2005
BMWC annual LAC meeting in Seeley Lake, Montana**

Bonneville Power Administration, US Forest Service and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks are nearing the completion of the Environmental Impact Statement for this conservation program.

Public scoping of the draft EIS occurred in June 2004. We received comments from 40 individuals, organizations and agencies. An analysis of these 40 produced 561 comments that covered 13 resource categories.

The three agencies have identified a no-action alternative and three action alternatives to meet the objectives of the project;

- Alternative A: No Action – status quo management
- Alternative B: (proposed action) – Fish toxins with combined motorized and traditional delivery and application methods.
- Alternative C: Fish toxins – Motorized/mechanized delivery and application methods.
- Alternative D: Suppression techniques and genetic swamping.

The three agencies believe Alternative B offers the greatest chance of achieving the objectives of the project.

Many factors would be used to determine the sequence of lake treatments identified under Alternative B including social issues, logistics, complexity, economics, and biological issues. During the first few years of this program the proposal is to treat small lakes that area not as complex and offer the least amount of social impact, then work progressively toward more complex treatments. Blackfoot Lake would be treated during the first year, followed by Bighawk Lake and Lick Lake during the second year. The remaining sequence has not been determined, but would include approximately two lakes per year. A tentative schedule would be presented in the agencies respective Records of Decision. This program would begin in October 2005, and would continue for the next 10 to 12 years.

From 2001 through 2005 MFWP has attended and/or sponsored at least 21 meetings with special interest groups, sportsman groups and agencies relating to this proposal. During that time MFWP is aware of at least 28 newspaper articles, news releases, radio shows and news letters that have covered this proposal.

MFWP is on schedule to complete their portion of the Final EIS by May 2005. A decision would follow shortly thereafter.