

PROTECTING THE WATER, WILDLIFE AND OUTDOOR HERITAGE OF THE CROWN OF THE CONTINENT.



Bull Trout
are listed as "threatened" by the USFWS. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) survey of bull trout nests (redds) indicate they are "stable". (Photo Credit: Joel Sartore/ngs stock with Wade Fredenberg)



West Slope Cutthroat Trout
are also threatened. FWP's and USGS researchers are working to reduce hybridization with rainbow trout and predation by lake trout. (Photo Credit: Michael Ready/iLCP)



Grey Wolf in the North Fork Flathead
Four to five packs roam the North Fork Transboundary Flathead. Home range sizes (+200sq. mi.) and wild terrain makes determining population and pack numbers difficult. (Photo Credit: [Howling for Justice](#))



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Wildlife Research Continues in North Fork Flathead **"North Fork Interlocal" Discusses ongoing Federal and State Activities**

February 19, 2013

Dear Friend:

Twice a year - in July and February - interested residents of the North Fork River and Flathead valleys and state and federal land and wildlife agencies personnel get together to keep in touch at the **North Fork Interlocal**. The latest *Interlocal* meeting was held last Wednesday at the Glacier Park Community Center. Over 50 people attended. We heard some interesting reports on wildlife research going on throughout the watershed.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Bull Trout: Mark Deleray, Fisheries biologist for FWP's, reported that his team is engaged in a comprehensive count of bull trout redds (nests) over the next 3-5 years. This count occurs at regular intervals (4 years) and encompasses 24 drainages and over 20 observers in the field. The trend count over the last 12 years is "stable", which is an improvement with more than twice the redd count of the 1990s. *The Middle Fork count is higher than the North Fork, leading biologists to speculate that fish handling by anglers may be having an impact on bull trout success in the North Fork Flathead.* Durae Daniels reported that FWP is looking to continue habitat improvement in the South Fork of Coal Creek.

West Slope Cutthroat Trout: Mark also reported on a new environmental assessment (EA) for the [Flathead River Hybrid Trout Suppression Project](#) open for public comment. This project proposes the reduction of rainbow trout and other measures to control hybridization between rainbow and the "threatened" west slope cutthroat trout. The public has until March 8, 2013, to comment on this EA.

Wolves: Tim Thier and Kent Laudon with FWP's reported on wolf activity in and around the North Fork Flathead. There are 4 or 5 packs roaming the area, including several packs that range back and forth between British Columbia and Montana. Pack names include: **Kintla Pack, Akokala Pack, Dutch Pack, Smoky Pack, and Red Meadow Pack**, a potentially new pack. Wolf numbers by pack vary, with some packs currently uncountable because of their remote location. A wolf's home range can be in excess of 200 square miles. So a firm wolf count does not exist. FWP authorized a two-wolf quota for trapping and hunting in the North Fork. Only one wolf has been taken to date. Thirty-six wolves have been trapped in FWP Region 1 in the past hunting and trapping season.

U.S. Geological Survey

Lake Trout: Vince D'Angelo with USGS based in Glacier Park reported on efforts to severely reduce lake trout numbers in Quartz Lake in the park. Lake trout migrated up from Flathead Lake and have become well established in Quartz. Lake trout eat the "threatened" west slope cutthroat. Suppression efforts entail netting for lake trout **between 10pm and 3am**. Biologists hope that the netting will "crash" that population, allowing bull trout to survive in greater numbers.



Netting for Lake Trout

USGS scientists at Quartz Lake in Glacier Park are gill netting lake trout to "crash" that population. Bull trout should then survive in higher numbers. [Click photo for Daily Inter Lake story details.](#) (Photo Credit: Clint Muhlfeld)



New USFS Ranger

Rob Davies was appointed District Ranger for Hungry Horse and Glacier View ranger districts. [Click image for Daily Inter Lake story.](#) (Photo Credit: Patrick Cote/Daily Inter Lake)



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Other Agency Activity

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Rox Rogers with USFWS talked about helping land owners in the Flathead and Tobacco valleys with riparian restoration and fencing poultry operations to help keep grizzly bears from getting in trouble.

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC): Brain Manning, director for the Stillwater and Coal Creek state forests reported that DNRC will be implementing a new Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) approved by the USFWS to help mitigate for land management impacts to grizzly, lynx and bull trout. DNRC will reduce some road access to meet grizzly guidelines. The HCP may be found [here](#).

U.S. Forest Service: Glacier View and Hungry Horse ranger districts have a new District Ranger, **Rob Davies**. Read more about Rob in the [Daily Inter Lake](#).

Headwaters Montana will report to you in more detail about several of these studies in upcoming issues of this e-newsletter.

~ We Thought You'd Like to Know!

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