THE FORGOTTEN FISH: RECOVERING BULL TROUT

April, 2019
Background & chronology of the USFWS’s bull trout recovery planning efforts to date

• **1999** - Columbia River DPS listed under ESA
• **2002** - Draft recovery plan developed (primarily demographic recovery targets)
• **2010** - Critical habitat designated
• **2013** - USFWS announces draft recovery plan will be available by January, 2014
  – Convenes State and Federal Management Team (“SFMT”)—comprised of USFWS, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Montana—to develop a “revised” recovery plan
• **September 2015** - Final Recovery Plan
Recovery Plan

• The ESA does not require a species, in this case bull trout, to be recovered throughout its historic range or even to a majority of the currently suitable habitat. Instead, the ESA requires that we recover listed species such that they no longer meet the definitions of “threatened species” or “endangered species”, i.e., are no longer in danger of extinction now or into the foreseeable future.
Concerns with the Bull Trout Recovery Plan

- The USFWS excluded tribes from the SFMT
- The final recovery plan contains only threats-based recovery targets; demographic targets have been abandoned entirely
- The SFMT’s threats assessment tool allows too much room for subjectivity
- The USFWS has explicitly said that the bull trout does not need to “to be recovered throughout its historic range or even to a majority of the currently suitable habitat.”
- May lead to the abandonment of bull trout recovery efforts within waters that are important to your particular area of interest
## Delisting Criteria

Table 1. Recovery (Delisting) Criteria: For each recovery unit, number of core areas (and local populations) where threats must be effectively managed; reaching this ‘threshold’ would initiate the delisting evaluation process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recovery Unit</th>
<th>Existing</th>
<th>Threshold</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Number of Extant Core Areas</td>
<td>Total Number of Local Populations within Extant Core Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal RU(^1)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Columbia RU</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Snake RU</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Headwaters RU(^2) (simple core areas)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Headwaters RU(^2) (complex core areas)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klamath RU(^3)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Mary RU</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\)Reintroduced population in Clackamas River core area is considered a potential local population until confirmed as established; if successful, it may contribute toward meeting the Coastal RU thresholds.

\(^2\)For the Columbia Headwaters RU: primary threats are effectively managed in 75 percent of simple core areas and 75 percent of complex core areas.
So how do you move forward recovering Bull Trout with a Recovery Plan you are not happy with?

You move forward
Significant Recovery Efforts in WRIA 62

- **Albeni Falls Dam**
  - Fish Passage Underway.....it’s just not funded
- **Pend Oreille PUD FERC Settlement (Box Canyon Dam)**
  - Restore 164 Miles of Tributary Streams
  - Fish Passage at Box Canyon Dam
- **Seattle City Light FERC Settlement (Boundary Dam)**
  - $392 Million Restoration Deal
  - Restoration of Tributaries in the Project Area
  - Removal of Mill Pond Dam
  - Coldwater Pipe for Sullivan/Outlet Creek
  - Fish Passage at Boundary Dam
- **Kalispel Tribe Fish Accord/BPA Projects**
  - $39.5 Million over 10 years
  - Expansion of Existing Projects
  - Northern Pike Suppression Project
Federal Power Act gives FERC authority to issue licenses

• Non-federal hydropower projects
  – Section 4(e) - mandatory conditions
  – Section 18 - prescribe fish passage

• Adequate protection, mitigation, and enhancement (PM&E) of fish and wildlife
Boundary Dam Fish & Aquatic PM&E’s

• Upstream fish passage at Boundary Dam
• Improvements throughout the watershed
• Culvert replacements in tributaries
• Aquatic invasive species control & prevention
• Structural modification to improve TDG
• Mill Pond Dam removal
• Sullivan Lake cold water release structure
• Conservation hatchery
Fish Passage

- Adfluvial
- Fluvial
- Resident

Photo credit: USFWS
Box Canyon Dam

Pend Oreille PUD
69 mw
62’ in height

Upstream Passage Operational by fall 2019
Box Canyon – Upstream Fish Passage
Fisheries Projects

Instream restoration
Non-native fish removal

Bull trout research
Culvert Removal Projects
Bull Trout Conservation Hatchery

“Decision analysis for the reintroduction of Bull Trout into the lower Pend Oreille River, Washington”

• Joseph R. Benjamin¹, William R. Brignon², and Jason B. Dunham³