

STAFF SUMMARY FOR DECEMBER 9-10, 2015

29. WILD TROUT WATERS POLICY**Today's Item****Information** **Action**

Addition of waters to the list of FGC-designated Wild Trout Waters.

Summary of Previous/Future Actions (N/A)**Background**

Existing law (Fish and Game Code Section 1727) requires DFW to annually submit to FGC a list of no less than 25 miles of stream or stream segments and at least one lake deemed suitable for designation as wild trout waters. DFW proposes the addition of two new waters:

1. Little Kern River drainage, including tributaries, from the confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).
2. Maggie Lake (Tulare County)

DFW proposes that Little Kern River drainage also be designated as a Heritage Trout Water, which is a further designation by the Commission to recognize the beauty, diversity, historical significance, and special values of California's native trout.

Significant Public Comments (N/A)**Recommendation**

FGC staff: Approve these amendments as recommended by DFW.

DFW: Approve the recommended amendments.

Exhibits

1. [DFW memo](#)
2. [Commission Designated Wild Trout Waters Policy text with proposed amendments](#)
3. [Section 1727, Fish and Game Code](#)

Motion/Direction

Moved by _____ and seconded by _____ that the Commission approves the proposed amendments to the Commission Designated Wild Trout Waters Policy.

2015 NOV 30 PM 3:06

Memorandum

Date: November ³⁰10, 2015

To: Sonke Mastrup
Executive Director
Fish and Game Commission

From: Charlton H. Bonham
Director



Subject: **Agenda Item for the December 9-10, 2015 Fish and Game Commission Meeting: Recommendations for designation of new Wild Trout Waters by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for 2015, as required by Fish and Game Code, Section 1727(b).**

Fish and Game Code, Section 1727(b), requires the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) to prepare a list of no less than 25 miles of stream or stream segment and at least one lake deemed suitable for designation as wild trout waters and to submit this list to the Commission. To comply with these requirements, the Department proposes the following waters:

Little Kern River drainage, including tributaries, from the confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County). This proposed designation incorporates 137 miles of perennial stream habitat, the majority of which are located on public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Sequoia National Forest. The Little Kern River contains a self-sustaining population of Little Kern Golden trout within their native drainage and is a fast-action fishery (> 2 fish per hour) located in the remote and scenic Golden Trout Wilderness area. Little Kern golden trout are endemic to this drainage and found nowhere else in the world, making this fishery a unique resource in the state and a candidate for designation as a Heritage Trout Water. The Heritage and Wild Trout Program (HWTP) has conducted extensive fisheries and habitat assessments across the Little Kern drainage since 2012, including barrier assessments, population estimates, angling surveys, age and growth analyses and post-fire impact evaluations.

Maggie Lake (Tulare County). "Maggie" Lake (the northeastern-most of the cluster of three Maggie Lakes located in the Little Kern River drainage at 9032' elevation and at the latitude/longitude of 36.27812N, 118.62107W, approximately one mile north of Maggie Mountain) is a fast-action fishery (>2 fish per hour). It is unknown whether the fish population in this lake is hybridized with rainbow trout and, until further genetic analyses are conducted, we propose designation as a Wild Trout Water since it may not meet the criteria for designation as a Heritage Trout Water. Maggie Lake encompasses approximately four surface acres and is located in a remote and scenic wilderness setting. This lake was singled out of the three Maggie Lakes for proposed designation as it supports a more robust sport fishery than the other two lakes in this complex.

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The HWTP has conducted angling assessments, gill net surveys and visual reconnaissance of spawning habitat, all of which support designation as a high quality lake fishery.

The recommended streams and lakes meet existing criteria to satisfy the requirements for designation as Wild Trout Waters and no changes in angling regulations are necessary at this time.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Stafford Lehr, Chief, Fisheries Branch at (916) 327-8840 or via email at Stafford.Lehr@Wildlife.ca.gov.

Attachments

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Proposed Changes to the Commission Designated Wild Trout Waters Policy

It is the policy of the Fish and Game Commission to:

- I. Designate certain state waters to be managed exclusively for wild trout. Commission designated wild trout waters should provide a quality experience by providing the angler with an opportunity to fish in aesthetically pleasing and environmentally productive waters with trout populations whose numbers or sizes are largely unaffected by the angling process.

Waters designated by the Commission for wild trout management shall meet the following criteria:

- A. Angler Access:
 1. Open for public angling with unrestricted access when of sufficient dimensions to accommodate anglers without overcrowding; or
 2. Open for public angling with controlled access under a plan approved by the Commission setting forth the number of anglers and the method of distribution.
 - B. Able to support, with appropriate angling regulations, wild trout populations of sufficient magnitude to provide satisfactory trout catches in terms of number or size of fish.
- II. Wild trout waters shall be managed in accordance with the following stipulations:
 - A. Domestic strains of catchable-sized trout shall not be planted in designated wild trout waters.
 - B. Hatchery-produced trout of suitable wild and semi-wild strains may be planted in designated waters, but only if necessary to supplement natural trout reproduction.
 - C. Habitat protection is of utmost importance for maintenance of wild trout populations. All necessary actions, consistent with State law, shall be taken to prevent adverse impact by land or water development projects affecting designated wild trout waters.
 - III. The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) shall prepare and periodically update a management plan for each water designated as a wild trout water.

- IV. Certain designated wild trout waters may be further designated by the Commission as "Heritage Trout Waters", to recognize the beauty, diversity, historical significance, and special values of California's native trout. Heritage Trout Waters shall meet the following additional criteria:
- A. Only waters supporting populations that best exemplify indigenous strains of native trout within their historic drainages may qualify for designation.
 - B. Heritage Trout Waters shall be able to provide anglers with the opportunity to catch native trout consistent with the conservation of the native trout present.
- V. Recognizing the importance of native trout to California's natural heritage, the Department shall emphasize education and outreach efforts to inform the public about our native trout, their habitats, and the activities for restoration of native trout when implementing the Heritage Trout Program.
- A. Implement a Heritage Trout Angler Recognition Certificate through which anglers will have the opportunity to have their catches of California native trout recognized by the Commission. The criteria for receiving the formal recognition shall be maintained by the Department's Heritage and Wild Trout Program. To receive a certificate of recognition, anglers shall submit an application with supporting materials to the Department for review.

The following waters are designated by the Commission as "wild trout waters":

1. American River, North Fork, from Palisade Creek downstream to Iowa Hill Bridge (Placer County).
2. Carson River, East Fork, upstream from confluence with Wolf Creek excluding tributaries (Alpine County).
3. Clavey River, upstream from confluence with Tuolumne River excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County).
4. Fall River, from Pit No. 1 powerhouse intake upstream to origin at Thousand Springs including Spring Creek, but excluding all other tributaries (Shasta County).
5. Feather River, Middle Fork, from Oroville Reservoir upstream to Sloat vehicle bridge, excluding tributaries (Butte and Plumas counties).
6. Hat Creek, from Lake Britton upstream to Hat No. 2 powerhouse (Shasta County).
7. Hot Creek, from Hot Springs upstream to west property line of Hot Creek Ranch (Mono County).
8. Kings River, from Pine Flat Lake upstream to confluence with South and Middle forks excluding tributaries (Fresno County).
9. Kings River, South Fork, from confluence with Middle Fork upstream to western boundary of Kings Canyon National Park excluding tributaries (Fresno County).

10. Merced River, South Fork, from confluence with mainstem Merced River upstream to western boundary of Yosemite National Park excluding tributaries (Mariposa County).
11. Nelson Creek, upstream from confluence with Middle Fork Feather River excluding tributaries (Plumas County).
12. Owens River, from Five Bridges crossing upstream to Pleasant Valley Dam excluding tributaries (Inyo County).
13. Rubicon River, from confluence with Middle Fork American River upstream to Hell Hole Dam excluding tributaries (Placer County).
14. Yellow Creek, from Big Springs downstream to confluence with the North Fork of the Feather River (Plumas County).
15. Cottonwood Creek, upstream from confluence with Little Cottonwood Creek, including tributaries (Inyo County).
16. Klamath River, from Copco Lake to the Oregon border (Siskiyou County).
17. McCloud River, from Lake McCloud Dam downstream to the southern boundary of Section 36, T38N, R3W, M.D.B. & M. (Shasta County).
18. Deep Creek, from confluence with Green Valley Creek downstream to confluence with Willow Creek (San Bernardino County).
19. Middle Fork Stanislaus River, from Beardsley Afterbay Dam to Sand Bar Diversion Dam (Tuolumne County).
20. Truckee River, from confluence with Trout Creek downstream to the Nevada State line (excluding the property owned by the San Francisco Fly Casters Club) (Nevada and Sierra counties).
21. Sespe Creek, a 25-mile section between the Lion Campground and the boundary of the U.S. Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest (Ventura County).
22. East Fork Carson River, from Hangman's Bridge near Markleeville downstream to the Nevada state line (Alpine County).
23. Bear Creek, Bear Valley Dam (impounding Big Bear Lake) downstream to the confluence with the Santa Ana River (San Bernardino County).
24. Lavezolla Creek (Sierra County).
25. Laurel Lake #1 and Laurel Lake #2 (Mono County).
26. Middle Fork San Joaquin River - Northern boundary of the Devils Postpile National Monument downstream to the Lower Falls (3.6 miles); and footbridge just above the confluence with Shadow Creek downstream to the footbridge just above upper Soda Springs Campground (4 miles) (Madera County).
27. South Fork Kern River watershed from its headwaters downstream to the southern boundary of the South Sierra Wilderness (Tulare County).
28. Golden Trout Creek drainage, including tributaries, from confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).
29. Eagle Lake, north of Susanville (Lassen County).
30. Upper Kern River, from the Forks of the Kern, upstream to Tyndall Creek in Sequoia National Park (Tulare County).
31. Heenan Lake, near Markleeville and Monitor Pass, Pass (Alpine County).

32. Upper Truckee River, including tributaries, upstream from the confluence with Showers Creek (El Dorado and Alpine counties).
33. Sacramento River, including tributaries, from Box Canyon Dam downstream to Scarlett Way in Dunsmuir (Siskiyou County) and from the county bridge at Sweetbriar downstream to Lake Shasta (Shasta County).
34. Long Lake (Plumas County).
35. Piru Creek, including tributaries, upstream of Pyramid Lake (Ventura and Los Angeles counties).
36. Upper Stony Creek including tributaries, upstream from Mine Camp Campground (Colusa, Glenn, and Lake counties).
37. Lower Honeymoon Lake (Fresno County).
38. Upper East Fork San Gabriel River, including tributaries, upstream from Heaton Flat (Los Angeles County).
39. Royce Lake # 2 (Fresno County).
40. Lower Yuba River, from Englebright Dam to the confluence with the Feather River (Yuba and Nevada counties).
41. Parker Lake (Mono County).
42. South Fork San Joaquin River and all tributaries from Florence Lake upstream to the boundary of Kings Canyon National Park including the Piute Creek drainage (Fresno County).
43. Sallie Keyes Lakes (Fresno County).
44. Sacramento River from Keswick Dam downstream to the Red Bluff Diversion Dam (Shasta and Tehama counties).
45. Pauley Creek from the confluence with the Downie River upstream to the headwaters (Sierra County).
46. Caples Creek from the confluence with the Silver Fork American River upstream to Caples Lake Dam (El Dorado and Alpine counties).
47. Putah Creek from Lake Solano upstream to Monticello Dam on Lake Berryessa (Solano and Yolo counties).
48. Lake Solano (Solano and Yolo counties).
49. Milton Reservoir (Nevada and Sierra counties).
50. Gerle Creek Divide Reservoir (El Dorado County).
51. Manzanita Lake (Shasta County).
52. Maggie Lake (Tulare County).
53. Little Kern River drainage, including tributaries, from the confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).

The following "wild trout waters" are further designated by the Commission as "heritage trout waters".

1. Clavey River, upstream from confluence with Tuolumne River, excluding tributaries (Tuolumne County).
2. Golden Trout Creek drainage, including tributaries, from confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).
3. Eagle Lake, north of Susanville; (Lassen County).

4. Upper Kern River, from the Forks of the Kern, upstream to Tyndall Creek in Sequoia National Park (Tulare County).
5. Heenan Lake, near Markleeville and Monitor Pass (Alpine County).
6. Upper Truckee River, including tributaries, upstream from the confluence with Showers Creek (El Dorado and Alpine counties).
7. Piru Creek, including tributaries, upstream of Pyramid Lake (Ventura and Los Angeles counties).
8. Upper Stony Creek including tributaries, upstream from Mine Camp Campground (Colusa, Glenn, and Lake counties).
9. Upper East Fork San Gabriel River, including tributaries, upstream from Heaton Flat (Los Angeles County).
10. Lower Yuba River, from Englebright Dam to the confluence with the Feather River (Yuba and Nevada counties).
11. Little Kern River drainage, including tributaries, from the confluence with the Kern River upstream to the headwaters (Tulare County).

(Amended: 01/04/94; 06/22/95; 03/06/97; 11/06/98; 04/02/99; 12/08/00; 04/03/03; 12/12/08, 11/04/09, 10/21/10, 11/17/11; 11/07/12, 11/06/13, 12/03/14, 12/10/15)

PROPOSED

Section 1727, Fish and Game Code

- (a) In order to provide for a diversity of available angling experiences throughout the state, it is the intent of the Legislature that the commission maintain the existing wild trout program, and as part of the program, develop additional wild trout waters in the more than 20,000 miles of trout streams and approximately 5,000 lakes containing trout in California.
- (b) The department shall prepare a list of no less than 25 miles of stream or stream segments and at least one lake that it deems suitable for designation as wild trout waters. The department shall submit this list to the commission for its consideration at the regular October commission meeting.
- (c) The commission may remove any stream or lake that it has designated as a wild trout fishery from the program at any time. If any of those waters are removed from the program, an equivalent amount of stream mileage or an equivalent size lake shall be added to the wild trout program.
- (d) The department shall prepare and complete management plans for all wild trout waters not more than three years following their initial designation by the commission and update the management plan every five years following completion of the initial management plan.