

COMMENTS:

Appendix I-2
GENERAL TAHOE PROJECT PROPOSAL

Project Name: Restoration/Recovery of Lahontan Cutthroat Trout in
Fallen Leaf Lake

EIP # 10125

Lead Agency: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Contact: Lisa G. Heki

Co-Lead: Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Phone Number: (775)861-6354

Threshold: Lahontan Cutthroat Trout
Reintroduction

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Threshold Standard: Fisheries 4 (F4)

Total Project Cost: \$1.75 Million

Round 6 Funding requested: \$260,000

Is this a multi-year project? Yes

Project Description:

A plan to re-establish Lake Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) into historic lake habitats. The plan specifically identifies implementation of a reintroduction demonstration project for Fallen Leaf Lake. The Short-Term Action Plan for LCT in the Truckee River Basin was developed through an interagency team and public stakeholder process. A Tahoe Recovery Implementation Team is currently being formed to develop a Short-Term Action Plan specific to the Basin. LCT were re-introduced to Fallen Leaf Lake beginning in 2002. The project will produce, tag, and stock 30,000 to 50,000 fingerlings and ten inch LCT annually into Fallen Leaf Lake during September and October.

Describe the purpose and need for the project:

The Fallen Leaf Lake project is considered by the Recovery Implementation Team and the Management Oversight Group as an historic first step leading to the eventual reestablishment of a strain of Lahontan cutthroat trout native to the Truckee River Watershed on a small, manageable scale. From this initial effort we will further our understanding of the threats or limitations the species faces in a modified habitat, in particular the impacts of lake trout predation.

Results of this ongoing reintroduction program will enhance our understanding of the conservation needs of the lake form of Lahontan cutthroat trout. In particular, this project will expand our understanding of the life history characteristics of a known wild lake strain of this sub-species, and improve the likelihood for successful establishment and recovery in other priority lake environments such as Lake Tahoe.

Describe the goals and objective of the project:

- 1) Utilize Lahontan cutthroat trout from the Pilot Peak strain broodstock, the only strain in captivity believed to be native to the Truckee River basin. Establish a monitoring program that evaluates growth, size and longevity of this strain in historic lake habitat. The Pilot Peak strain exhibits promising growth and reproductive characteristics for introduction into lake environments.
- 2) Expand the research into habitat utilization by Lahontan cutthroat trout and potential overlap with Lake Trout. Determine through investigation and research, appropriate tracking technology and other non-lethal sampling methods that will allow us to monitor the seasonal habitat preferences of Lahontan cutthroat trout and Lake Trout in Fallen Leaf Lake.
- 3) Apply the knowledge obtained during the first three year study, and any additional information or strategies determined from goal 2, to mechanically suppress the impact of the larger age classes of Lake Trout on both stocked and eventually naturally reproduced Lahontan cutthroat trout.
- 4) Continue ongoing creel census throughout the fishing season to evaluate angler harvest, growth rates, and angler satisfaction.
- 5) Continue seasonal gill net and minnow trap sampling efforts to monitor species composition and size of fish from representative habitats.

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- 6) Investigate spawning potential of Lahontan cutthroat trout in Glen Alpine Creek and Taylor Creek. Investigate and monitor the use of streamside incubation technologies at these two stream locations using eyed-up eggs from Lahontan NFH. Apply mass marking technologies for future identification.
 - 7) Complete an assessment of the existing fish passage at the outflow of Fallen Leaf Lake to Taylor Creek and make recommendations for improvement.

Describe the anticipated project accomplishments:

Establish an understanding of the survival, growth rate, longevity and reproductive potential of Lahontan cutthroat trout in Fallen Leaf Lake. Investigate streamside incubation technologies to initiate natural reproduction in Glen Alpine and Taylor Creeks. Monitor seasonal habitat utilization of Lahontan cutthroat trout. Assess angler response to this native trout fishery and refine our production commitments based on angler harvest levels.

Describe the “readiness” of this project to move forward (environmental documentation, etc.):

This is an ongoing project in which all authorization, consultations, and permits have been acquired. The public and specifically the community of Fallen Leaf Lake were involved during the initial project development and continue to be involved in the implementation. Most of the monitoring protocols were established in the first three years of the project and are being refined for this phase.

Describe partnerships for this project (include documentation):

Partners with the Fish and Wildlife Service and Tahoe Basin Management Unit include, the Fallen Leaf Lake Community Association, Trout Unlimited, and California Department of Fish and Game, and all parties to the Management Oversight Group Memorandum of Understanding.

Describe the anticipated project effectiveness monitoring program for use with adaptive management framework:

The combination of rigorous research and fishery management protocols were established and implemented during the first two years of the Fallen Leaf Lake Project. Further, monitoring protocols established during the first two years will be refined using the third year of data and applied to monitoring protocols for this project. Researchers with expertise in native fish population dynamics will be contracted to investigate specific questions and hypothesis related to Lahontan cutthroat trout life history. Researchers from the University of Nevada –BRRC will be contracted to assist with this program. Adaptive management has been applied to all recovery efforts initiated in the Truckee and Tahoe Basins. The Short-Term Action Plan speaks specifically about the use of adaptive management as a tool to continuously and expeditiously revise and update management and recovery strategies for Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Include an 8 ½ X 11 map depicting the project, or research/study area.

See below.