

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has proposed converting the Ferron Creek drainage from a rainbow/hybrid cutthroat trout species assemblage to a conservation population of pure Colorado River cutthroat trout with sterile rainbow trout and tiger trout components for sport fishing opportunities. This action has two main purposes; 1) to protect the broodstock population of Colorado River cutthroat trout in Duck Fork Reservoir from possible hybridization and, 2) to create a meta-population of Colorado River cutthroat trout to aid in the rangewide restoration efforts for the species. The proposed change has already been approved by the Emery County Commissioners following three public meetings on the subject, and is also supported by San Pete County.

Several actions have already been done to prepare for the project. Rainbow trout stockings in Willow Lake and Wrigley Springs Reservoir were converted from diploid to triploid fish in 2008 to allow replacement of the diploid fish without requiring chemical renovation of the lakes. Also, the spillway at Ferron Reservoir was modified in fall 2010, with Forest approval, to prevent fish from being able to move from the stream back into the reservoir following treatment.

The UDWR has also been working with the Forest on a Passive Integrated Transponder reader station in lower Ferron Creek. Data from this station will help determine the extent of stream use by the unique lentic population of bluehead suckers in Millsite Reservoir. Eventually a barrier will be necessary to prevent movement of sport fish from the reservoir to the stream, and the PIT tag data will enable us to select a location that will not interfere with bluehead spawning migration.

The next step of the project is to chemically renovate Ferron Reservoir and the associated tributary (Upper Indian Creek) with rotenone in September 2011 and June 2012. The first treatment (September 2011) has already been completed. Two treatments are necessary to ensure complete removal of the current fish population. Simply switching the stocking from diploid rainbow trout to sterile triploid fish, as was done in Willow Lake and Wrigley Springs Reservoir, was not an option for Ferron Reservoir because of the presence of brook trout and non native cutthroat trout in the system.

The treatment project is relatively simple and will require no barrier construction or ground disturbance. Prior to treating the lake, the reservoir volume will be reduced by approximately half. Coordination with the water users in the drainage has already been done and they are aware of the potential increase in water levels in Millsite Reservoir beginning in about July 2011. The small tributary, Upper Indian Creek, should require only one rotenone drip station for about 24 hours to effectively treat the entire stream.

Following the second treatment in 2012, Ferron Reservoir will be refilled and restocked with triploid rainbow trout and pure Colorado River cutthroat trout. Because catchable sized rainbow trout have been requested, sport fishing opportunity should be available immediately after restocking.

Future work in the Ferron Creek drainage will require the construction of barriers. The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources recognizes that these future plans will require

NEPA. Data collection and mapping for the necessary Environmental Assessment will begin in summer 2012.