

Title:

Status of ESA Recovery Plan for Bull Trout

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Summary of Presentation:

Following nearly three years of collaboration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) released its draft recovery plan in November, 2002 for three distinct population segments of bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) in the coterminous United States. A recovery plan is a blueprint for the recovery of a threatened or endangered species which describes a process to remove the threats to the long-term survival and reverse the decline of a listed species. Of the 24 chapters in the plan, each specific to a recovery unit (RU), one is for the Middle Columbia River and is specific to the Yakima River Basin. A team assembled to develop the recovery plan for this RU identified the following four objectives for recovering bull trout: 1) Maintain current distribution and restore distribution of bull trout in previously occupied areas; 2) Maintain stable or increasing trends in the abundance of adult bull trout; 3) Restore and maintain suitable habitat conditions for all bull trout life history stages and strategies; and 4) Conserve genetic diversity and provide opportunity for genetic exchange. Recovery criteria, developed to assess whether actions are resulting in the recovery of bull trout, were: 1) Bull trout are distributed among 16 local populations; 2) Estimated abundance of adult bull trout among all local populations is between 2,550 and 3,050 individuals; 3) Adult bull trout exhibit a stable or increasing trend for at least two generations at or above the recovered abundance level; and 4) Specific barriers to bull trout migration have been addressed. The USFWS estimates that 15-25 years, and possibly longer, will be necessary to recover bull trout in the Middle Columbia River RU at an estimated cost of \$35 million.