

From: Bob Winters [mailto:r.s.winters@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, October 21, 2014 8:10 AM
To: Ashbrook, Charmane E (DFW)
Subject: Fwd: Need your approval of the final letter on brook trout limits....

charmane: please let me know if you receive this and if there anything else I need to do to get our club's comments included in the record. thanks--rob winters

TEXT OF WENATCHEE VALLEY FLY FISHERS COMMENTS ON PROPOSED COLUMBIA BASIN REGULATIONS

While we endorse catch and release practices, the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers supports proposed increases in daily limits on Eastern Brook Trout where appropriate to enhance the survival of native fish such as West Slope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout.

Eastern Brook Trout are a prolific breed widely transplanted in Eastern Washington. Today self-sustaining populations (in many cases, overabundance) of Brook Trout compete with our native fish for resources. They are also capable of interbreeding with Bull Trout, reducing the viability of Bull Trout stocks. Increased limits offer a means of promoting and conserving our native fish.

For example, the potential value of higher limits is illustrated by the Department of Fish and Wildlife's effort to bolster/enhance Westslope Cutthroat populations in the Upper Entiat River basin. The department has worked with local volunteers to stock supplemental cutthroat fry raised at the Chelan hatchery into the upper Entiat River as well as various tributaries thereof. The fry come from our original fish stocks so these hatchery fish are a native species. Supporting these efforts, the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers have funded signs for the Department to educate anglers about these fish and to promote removal of Brook Trout. Members of our club have also reported angler catch figures to the Department in an effort to track potential shifts in species composition as a result of these stocking efforts as well as current daily limit regulations.

Initial catch reports over the past couple of years show what appears to be a growing population of Westslope Cutthroat in the upper Entiat but one that is by no means dominant. Brook Trout compete with this native fish for food and shelter, especially as river flows drop. Removing more Brook Trout from the river gives Cutthroat access to more resources.

Raising the limit on Brookies gives the Department a means of reducing numbers of an invasive species without the use of toxins or more extreme measures. Our club hopes you will adopt higher limits on Brook Trout in the interest of enhancing native fish populations.

Best regards,

Robert S. Winters
President, Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers