

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

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TO: Jodi STrok Lund
BPA Fish + wildlife

Date: 7/19/96

FAX No: _____

FROM: EASTY

SUBJECT: ALTANUM creek Bull Trout / upper
wip Per your request

NUMBER OF PAGES (including this page): 3

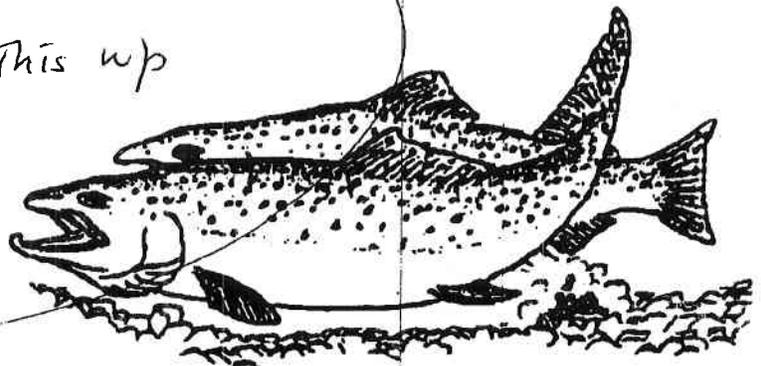
MESSAGE: Hope this is what you wanted ---

Let me know if its NOT + I CAN try to
get you more. Sorry I had to fax this.
The computer order has been turned in + maybe
we'll have E-mail by LABOR DAY!

CC: Eric Anderson

Hope I didn't screw this up
CHICKEN MAN!

Easty





Washington
Department of
**FISH and
WILDLIFE**

Yakima Screen Shop, P.O. Box 9155, Yakima, WA 98909
Phone: (509)-575-2733 Fax: 454-4139

July 19, 1996

TO: Jodi Stroklund, BPA Fish & Wildlife Div.

FROM: John Easterbrooks

SUBJECT: Ahtanum Creek Bull Trout / Upper WIP Phase 2 Screen Project

Per your request, I have summarized what I know about Ahtanum Creek bull trout. As you can see from this voluminous memo, we do not know very much about bull trout life history or distribution in the Ahtanum Basin.

District fish biologist, Eric Anderson, discovered bull trout in the basin in 1993. Electroshocking surveys confirmed bull trout presence in the Middle and North Forks and in a tributary, Shellneck Cr. The areas sampled are in the upper basin, 15 miles or more upstream of the Upper WIP diversion. Mainstem Ahtanum Cr. below Tampico and the South Fork were not sampled in 1993. We have no information on population abundance or status (increasing/decreasing?). Eric told me the fish were "**stream-resident**" type, meaning that these bull trout spend their entire lives in smaller, high elevation streams and do not migrate long distances, even within the Ahtanum Basin. Adult "resident-type" fish seldom exceed 30 cm (12 inches) because of cold water (short growing season), limited food supply and a diet consisting primarily of insects. In contrast, "**adfluvial**" populations like the fish in Rimrock Reservoir, make spawning migrations into reservoir tributaries. The adults drop back into the reservoir after spawning and live in the lake primarily eating fish (kokanee, etc.). Adfluvial and big river (**fluvial**) bull trout get large--the state sport record, 22.5 lbs., was caught in the Tieton River downstream of Rimrock Dam.

By accident, we now know that bull trout are more widely distributed in the Ahtanum Basin than originally thought. In April, 1994, I conducted a fish recovery effort in the Bachelor-Hatton Canal concurrent with the backfilling of the construction bypass channel and initial operation of the new Phase 2 fish screen. We electroshocked about 200 yards of canal downstream of the screens and caught several dozen trout. Most of the fish were resident rainbows, but we also caught about six bull trout ranging in size from 10-12 inches total length. We transported the fish in large buckets and released them in the North Fork just below the John Cox Ditch diversion at R.M. 3.

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This means that bull trout are present at or below the Upper WIP diversion, at least in the spring when water temp. in the mainstem is cold enough. Bull trout (all charr actually) like cold water. Low summer flows and high water temp. in the mainstem upstream of Upper WIP may be inadequate to support bull trout year-round, but no one has done any sampling to confirm this hypothesis.

The American Fisheries Society (AFS) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) list bull trout as a "Species of Special Concern". The U.S. Forest Service has placed bull trout on their "Sensitive Species List". A coalition of Montana environmental organizations petitioned the FWS to list bull trout under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) throughout their range. FWS has decided not to list the species, although they admitted that listing may be warranted and further declines in status may push them on to the ESA "threatened" list.

WDFW has categorized Washington bull trout as a "Monitored Species" within the Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) program. In response to widespread concern for the species, WDFW severely curtailed recreational harvest statewide in 1992. Bull trout harvest is prohibited in the Yakima Basin. WDFW is developing a bull trout management/recovery plan to restore declining populations and prevent ESA listing.

The documented presence of bull trout at or below the unscreened Upper WIP diversion (as well as resident rainbow trout and steelhead), provides additional justification for proceeding with the Phase 2 screening project.