



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

The Honourable Loyola Hearn
House of Commons
Minister of Fisheries and Oceans
Parliament Buildings, Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0A6
July 24, 2008

Email: Min@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Dear Minister Hearn:

Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) is seeking SARA "endangered" status for all populations of genetically-pure westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*). We believe that unless this recognition is afforded them, and protection and recovery plans are implemented in the very near future, they will be extirpated from this province.

As you know, the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) designated the westslope cutthroat trout as "threatened" in 2006. The documentation confirms that designation was made because native populations of this fish have been reduced by almost 80% through habitat loss through recreation (OHV), resource development (especially road and linear development), overharvesting and introduction of non-native species of fish. Currently, we believe the proposed Petro-Canada Sullivan field project will impact numerous southern East Slopes streams that are either the last known refuges of pure native populations, or are the streams where major recovery efforts will have to be implemented to restore this fish to secure status in this province. Ongoing industrial and recreational development in the southern Eastern Slopes adds significant urgency to the need for designation and identification of critical habitat of the westslope cutthroat.

AWA believes that if the westslope cutthroat trout is listed, there is great hope that these fish can recover. They are a resilient species, but they cannot compete with the cumulative impacts of industry, recreation, and lack of management and enforcement. We recognize the process for reviewing the status of this species is in progress and we have submitted our comments on the workbook that was provided earlier this year. We are writing at this time to encourage you to expedite the process and province SARA "endangered" status to the genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout. We look forward to your response.

Yours truly,
ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

Christyann Olson
Executive Director