



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks

47050 Generals Hwy.
Three Rivers, CA 93271

559 565-3341 phone
559 565-3730 fax

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

For Immediate Release: September 26, 2013

Contact: Dana M. Dierkes

Phone Number: (559) 565-3131 (o), 559-679-2866 (cell)

National Park Service Seeks Public Comments on Plan to Restore High Elevation Aquatic Ecosystems in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS, CALIFORNIA-- The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking public comments about the plan to restore high elevation aquatic ecosystems in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks as part of an environmental impact statement (EIS) process. The purpose of the plan is to restore a portion of the high elevation aquatic ecosystems in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to natural conditions. This would be done by removing nonnative trout from up to 87 remote high elevation waterbodies and 41 miles (66 km) of streams to allow for native species and ecosystems to flourish and function naturally. This work would be done to increase the resistance and resilience of native species to disease and unprecedented changing climatic conditions. Visit the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=17157> for the plan and draft EIS or call Nancy Hendricks, environmental protection specialist, at (559) 565-3102.

All written comments must be postmarked or transmitted not later than 60 days from the date of publication in the Federal Register of the Environmental Protection Agency's notice of filing and release of the draft EIS. (*Estimated closing date for comments: Dec. 6, 2013.*) Upon confirmation of this date, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will notify all entities on the project mailing list and announcements about the public review period will be provided on the website <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectID=17157> and distributed via local/regional news media.

NOTE: *Fishing is a welcomed and popular form of recreation and will continue to be available and promoted throughout Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to meet a wide variety of interests and abilities. Treatment sites in this project were selected to avoid most lakes with a reputation for good fishing. Actions contained in the plan are restricted to removing nonnative trout in lakes and streams in remote, high elevation settings. The vast majority of project sites do not support quality trout fishing opportunities. The plan would affect up to 16% of fish populations in park lakes, ponds, and marshes. Impacts to recreational fishing would be minor, as nonnative trout would remain in 462 lakes, ponds, or marshes. The restoration plan does not propose to permanently close areas to recreational activities.*

--continued on page 2--

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

--continued from page 1--

Interested parties are encouraged to make comments about the draft EIS on the PEPC website. Comments about the EIS will also be accepted in writing (either hand-delivery, by mail, or fax). Comments submitted by email **will not** be accepted.

To submit written comments by letter, you may send them by U.S. Postal Service or other mail delivery service, or hand-deliver your comments to Superintendent, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, *Attn: Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration Plan*, 47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271. In addition, faxed comments will be accepted at (559) 565-4202. Anonymous comments will not be accepted.

NOTE: *Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

To learn more about the restoration plan, the public is invited to attend public meetings to be held at:

October 22, 2013

7 - 8 p.m.

Three Rivers Arts Center
41763 North Fork Drive
Three Rivers, CA 93271

October 23, 2013

7 - 8 p.m.

UC Merced Fresno Center
Inyo/Kern Conference Room
500 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710

Background Information:

Many studies conducted at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks and elsewhere in the Sierra Nevada have analyzed the effects that nonnative trout have on native species and ecosystems. These studies consistently document that the widespread introduction and continued presence of nonnative trout have caused substantial impacts to native species and ecosystems. Because nonnative trout are efficient predators and competitors, their introduction results in modifications to native food webs. Nonnative trout prey on large organisms such as amphibians and large-bodied aquatic insects and zooplankton and alter, deplete or eliminate populations of these animals from naturally fishless habitats. This results in less food being available to native aquatic and terrestrial predators, thus altering their distribution and abundance. The presence of nonnative trout has negative, cascading effects on entire ecosystems, and their presence in individual lakes, connecting streams, and entire lake basins in the parks continues to cause negative impacts to native species and ecosystem processes. These impacts are replicated on a landscape-scale across the parks' high elevations.

--continued on page 3--

--continued from page 2--

Over the past 16 years, we have effectively eradicated nonnative trout in 15 lakes and ponds using gill nets and electrofishers. Eleven additional lakes and ponds have nonnative trout removals in-progress, and are expected for completion by 2016. The removal of nonnative trout has been shown to be beneficial for native species. However, we have not had the tools necessary to restore habitats on a larger scale. This Restoration Plan/DEIS proposes the use of additional tools, such as the use of piscicide, for conducting high elevation aquatic ecosystem restoration at the landscape scale in the parks.

– NPS –

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, which lie side-by-side in the southern Sierra Nevada in central California, serve as a prime example of nature's size, beauty, and diversity. With the world's largest trees (by volume), grand mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, vast caverns, and the highest point in the lower 48 states, it is a place that attracts nearly 1.7 million visitors a year from across the U.S. and the world. Info: www.nps.gov/seki or 559-565-3341.