



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sequoia and Kings Canyon
National Parks

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks News Release

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National Park Service Extends Public Comment Period and Reschedules Public Meetings for a 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) has extended the public comment period and rescheduled public meetings for a plan to restore high elevation aquatic ecosystems in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, as part of an environmental impact statement (EIS) process. **All public comments must now be received by December 17, 2013.** 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, historically fishless, high elevation waterbodies and 41 miles (66 km) of connecting streams to allow for native species and ecosystems to flourish and function naturally. This work would increase the resistance and resilience of native species, including frogs, aquatic invertebrates, snakes, and birds, to other threats such as disease and climate change. 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.

***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 or stock use.*

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.

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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.*

The public meetings for the plan have been rescheduled. To learn more about the restoration plan, the public is invited to attend public meetings to be held at:

November 19, 2013

7 - 8 p.m.

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

November 20, 2013

7 - 8 p.m.

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

November 21, 2013

7 - 8 p.m.

Tri-County Fairgrounds
Tallman Pavilion
Sierra Street and Fair Drive
Bishop, CA 93515

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.

Over the past 16 years, we have 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.

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