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29 May 2014

Jim Darling  
Montana FWP  
1420 Sixth Avenue  
Helena, MT 59620

Re: FFIP funding for Piney Creek project

Jim,

I am writing to lend Montana Trout Unlimited's endorsement to a pending proposal to use Future Fishery Improvement Program funding for fixing some structural problems at the reservoir created on Piney Creek for the benefit of an important conservation population of genetically unaltered Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

FWP and BLM biologists are proposing to reduce leakage from the reservoir by installing a synthetic liner and a bentonite seal. This will better maintain reservoir levels, benefitting fish and the cooperating water users.

Montana TU supported the initial 2009 project at Piney Creek because of the high conservation value of this local cutthroat population, the last known to hold genetically unaltered fish in the upper Shoshone HUC draining the Pryor Mountains. Despite issues the project has created related to winter icing and water availability, the cooperating water users continue to support the project. FWP data indicate an upward trend in abundance and size class distribution in the population since the project was implemented. Investing in remedying the problem with the impoundment will be money well spent.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Farling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Bruce Farling  
Executive Director