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31 October 2016

Dave Moser
Madison River management biologist
Montana FWP
1400 South 19th Avenue
Bozeman, MT 59718

Re: Hebgen Wild Trout EA

Dave:

Montana Trout Unlimited strongly supports FWP's proposal to end stocking of hatchery fish in Hebgen Reservoir. We represent the 4,300 individual TU members in Montana. They are organized among 13 local chapters and a number of individual members fish Hebgen Reservoir. Montana TU has an acute interest in fisheries management in the Madison River watershed. It is a resource of special interest to our local Madison-Gallatin Chapter of TU. The chapter, as well as our national organization, also supports ending stocking at Hebgen Reservoir.

The data are pretty clear indicating that hatchery supplementation is not necessary for maintaining a sport fishery at Hebgen. Managing this water solely for wild trout will be more than ample for maintaining Hebgen's high-value as a sport fishing destination. The FWP commission's recent decision to approve a regulation that closes three primary spawning tributaries to angling and harvest from December 1 through the third Saturday in May will help ensure there is ample recruitment to the reservoir (though we still believe, for precautionary and consistency reasons, it would be good policy to implement the same regulation for all tributaries to the reservoir).

Ending hatchery supplementation at Hebgen is a decision that is responsible for both biological and financial reasons. We are happy to support this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Farling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bruce Farling
Executive Director

cc. MGCTU

Dan Vermillion