

NOTICE: REOPENING PUBLIC SCOPING COMMENT PERIOD – ARIZONA SPORT FISH STOCKING PROGRAM 2010-2019

The Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) are beginning the process of preparing a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) which will analyze the potential effects on the human environment from the Arizona Sport Fish Stocking Program for a ten year period (2010-2019). This is the first step in meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321). Presently, we are reopening the public scoping comment period. The Council of Environmental Quality defines scoping as an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action (40 CFR 1501.7).

The Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. 777-777k, 64 Stat.430) (SFRA) directs the FWS to provide Federal aid to States for the management and restoration of fish having “material value in connection with sport or recreation in the marine and/or fresh waters of the United States.” To fulfill this legislative mandate, the FWS proposes to fund, in part, the Arizona Game and Fish Department program of stocking sport fishes in selected waters of Arizona to provide opportunities for recreational fishing. A draft EA will be prepared to analyze the potential effects to physical and biological resources and socioeconomic conditions that may result from various alternatives proposed. Alternatives under consideration at this time include:

- Proposed action: The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) would continue to provide AZGFD with SFRA funds for sport fish stocking at approximately 178 locations in urban and rural Arizona.
- No Action Alternative: WSFR would not approve SFRA funds to be used by AZGFD to support sport fish stocking. (Because of the State statutory and public trust requirements, AZGFD would attempt to continue to sport fish stocking, seeking other funding sources to replace the Federal funds.)
- Other alternatives: WSFR will also consider a range of alternatives that would accomplish the action's purpose and need, including stocking programs that differ in size and/or location from the proposed alternative.

Questions may be directed to:

Mr. Harold Namminga, Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, P.O Box 1306, Albuquerque, NM 87103. Telephone: (505) 248-7461,

or

Mr. Dave Weedman, Habitat Branch, Arizona Game and Fish Department, 5000 W. Carefree Highway, Phoenix, AZ 85086, Telephone: (623) 236-7607.

Written comments may be submitted by email to fishaz@azgfd.gov or regular mail at the two addresses above through 5:00 pm on March 6, 2009. Comments submitted during the previous comment period do not have to be submitted again. They will be considered with any new comments submitted during this additional comment period. Please refer to Arizona Game and Fish Department Sport Fish Stocking Draft EA in the Subject line. Additional information about the sport fish stocking program can be found at the AZGFD website, http://www.azgfd.gov/h_f/PublicScoping.shtml