

THE SUN RANCH WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT RECOVERY PROGRAM^{AFS}

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After mistakenly stocking hybridized fish into the Sun Ranch brood pond in September 2001, we eradicated all fry in the pond on 28 February 2002 by using antimycin through the ice. After completing this task, the steering committee, composed of representatives of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, USDA Forest Service and the Sun Ranch, began identifying and selecting pure westslope cutthroat (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*) donor streams in the Madison, Gallatin and Centennial drainages. Previous partial samples indicated pure, healthy westslope populations in Bean, Bear, and Jones Creeks, all in the Centennial Valley. Completed samples verified the purity of the West Fork of Cabin Creek in the Madison drainage, and the West Fork of Wilson Creek in the Gallatin. While attempting to collect fish for disease samples in the Centennial Valley, sampling crews

discovered that the adult populations in those three streams had mysteriously disappeared. No fish over six inches was observed in any of those systems. As a result, this year's egg take occurred in the west forks of Cabin and Wilson creeks. On 14 October 2002, 589 pure westslope cutthroat trout fry were transferred from our hatchery to the brood pond.