Volunteers needed for fish and habitat surveys in Golden Trout Wilderness

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Heritage and Wild Trout Program (HWTP), is requesting volunteer assistance for fish surveys in the Golden Trout Wilderness Area. This is a great opportunity to learn first-hand about native trout and how they are managed, while working in a beautiful wilderness setting and contributing to the conservation of golden trout. Each trip is eight days in length, including travel on both ends to and from the trailhead. Volunteers are needed to help with electrofishing and habitat surveys. Volunteers must be prepared to hike long distances (up to 10 miles a day), camp in a remote setting, carry field equipment, work in adverse weather, wade in rivers and creeks, and able to endure high elevations (up to 10,000 feet). A base camp will be set up for each trip and mules will be used to carry the majority of field equipment, camping gear, and food to this location. Trip locations will vary throughout the year and may be based out of Lone Pine or Kernville.

Survey trips will be from Wednesday to Wednesday, beginning in mid-June and ending in late September, with a general plan of:

Wed: Drive to trailhead and drop off gear with packer by early evening. Volunteers meet with survey crews.

Thursday: Hike in to survey location with pack stock support.

Friday-Monday: Field surveys with day hikes from basecamp.

Tuesday: Hike out with pack stock support; packers anticipate being back to trailhead with gear by 5 pm, plus or minus, depending on location.

Wednesday: Drive home.
Volunteers must be able to commit to the entire survey effort to be considered. Pack stock will be provided to carry 50-60 pounds of personal gear per person; any additional weight must be carried in. Volunteers will be responsible for providing their own transportation to and from the trailhead (does not require 4WD but the road is not paved and higher-clearance vehicles are recommended), food, and personal gear (tent, sleeping bag, backpack, cook gear, sturdy hiking boots, etc). The HWTP will provide waders and wading boots and some camping gear is available as needed.

Surveys will consist of electrofishing, fish measurements and habitat assessments. Volunteers are needed to net and weigh fish, carry gear, take photographs, and assist with habitat measurements. Due to the physical demands of the survey, please carefully consider your ability to safely assist with the surveys before committing. Up to four volunteers are needed for each trip (locations and specific details will be forthcoming):

Trip dates:

June 25-July 2nd, 2014
July 9th-16th, 2014
July 23rd-30th, 2014
August 6th-13th, 2014
August 20th-27th, 2014
September 3rd-10th, 2014
September 17th-24th, 2014

Although these surveys will be demanding, they will also be very rewarding and will aid in the management and future restoration of golden trout. Volunteers will have the opportunity to fish in the evenings and catch one of California’s heritage trout. If you have any questions regarding the nature of these trips, please contact Cameron Zuber at cameron.zuber@wildlife.ca.gov.

To sign up for a trip, please email Howard Kern at howardkern@roadrunner.com and provide him with the following:

- Name and phone number
- Number of people
- Preferred trip dates
- Backpacking and outdoor experience