GREAT NORTHERN Landscape Conservation Cooperative

2015 ANNUAL REPORT



Aspen forests are high-value habitat in the Centennial Mountains, which is an important wildlife corridor connecting the Yellowstone ecosystem with other parts of the northern Rocky Mountains. Photo: M McFadzen

OUR VISION

A landscape that sustains its diverse natural systems to support healthy and connected populations of fish, wildlife, and plants; sustains traditional land uses and cultural history; and supports robust communities.

THE LANDSCAPE





Leadership Highlights

BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP

Thank you to all of the partner organizations and people that have helped build a truly collaborative landscape partnership over the past six years.

A few of the issues tackled this year by the Great Northern LCC Steering Committee include:

- Representing private land interests and industry;
- Incorporating community and cultural values, and economies; and
- Planning direction and focus of investments for the next five years.

The GNLCC Advisory Team is using the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation to analyze how we can focus investments to add the most value. The results of this work will be used to identify specific science, information, and capacity needs that fill critical gaps among our partners.

PEOPLE AND CULTURES

A critical part of making progress on landscape conservation is recognizing the value of people in terms of society, cultural resources, traditional land uses, and communities. To address this need, the Steering Committee adopted a People and Cultures goal, the fifth sub-goal under the over-arching goal of landscape integrity.

Sub-Goal 5, People and Cultures is to: Maintain large functional landscapes where local people and communities, including tribes and First Nations, can sustain their livelihood, stories, culture, and identity supported by the lands and waters, and fish and wildlife they steward.

Adding this sub-goal is the first step towards investing in science and capacity for social, economic and other interdisciplinary needs. We need to look at the big picture of linking communities with the large landscape story and supporting them in local action to achieve results on the ground.



LCCS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) concluded that the Landscape Conservation Cooperatives are making a difference in trans-boundary, interjurisdictional landscape conservation, but they need more time (than the five years to date) to achieve measurable successes and outcomes on landscape resources.

In 2013, Congress asked the NAS to review the status of and report on the purpose, goals, scientific merit, and achievements of the LCC Network. The NAS report released in 2015 states "The nation needs a landscape approach to conservation" and "only the LCC Network is designed to address this need at a national scale for all natural and cultural resources, and to bridge from research to management."

The report noted that the LCC Network's strategic plan includes the critical elements of the landscape approach—stakeholder engagement, adaptive management, and delivery of landscape-scale designs and that the Network's goals are consistent with the scientific literature. Also noted was the importance of both developing scientific information and applying this information in implementing conservation actions, and that this can be facilitated by boundary-spanning organizations such as the LCC Network.

The NAS review committee stated that the concept of the LCC Network is correctly based on conservation science, and that its structure and function are appropriately designed to address landscape-scale conservation challenges. They recognized the short time LCCs have been around





as a limitation in seeing measurable progress. Included in the report are recommendations for the LCC Network to adopt measurable and accountable strategies. Staff from all LCCs are working to fully understand the recommendations, and will deliver a comprehensive response and an action plan guiding programmatic adjustments in November 2016.

Great Northern LCC Steering Committee

Collaborating For Conservation

The Great Northern LCC is collaborating in many ways on many landscape conservation initiatives and projects. The six collaborations featured here are helping to achieve goals of the GNLCC Strategic Conservation Framework.

1

TRANSBOUNDARY ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A strategic initiative of the Crown Adaptation Partnership (CAP), *Taking Action on Climate Change*, is led by the Crown Managers Partnership (CMP), Crown Conservation Initiative, U.S. Forest Service's Northern Rockies Adaptation Partnership, and The Wilderness Society. With strategic funding support from the Great Northern LCC and the Crown Roundtable, CAP is working to link stakeholders across the transboundary Crown of the Continent Ecosystem (CCE) to collectively prioritize and implement Crown-wide climate adaptation projects. CAP brings to the table state, federal and provincial agencies, tribes and First Nations, conservation organizations, industry, and communities.

CAP's objective is to secure ecological integrity across the landscape by overcoming challenges to working across boundaries and crafting collaborative long-term solutions for key conservation priorities. Collectively identified conservation priorities include: cold-water adapted native salmonids, terrestrial invasive plants, aquatic invasive species, five-needle pines, mesocarnivores, and mixed-severity fire regimes.

Accomplishments for this year:

- As a CAP and GNLCC partner, the CMP maintains a transboundary foundational database, hosted on ScienceBase, featuring seamless geospatial datasets for key attributes across the CCE, including roads, bear occupancy, census data, fire, whitebark pine, and aquatic invasive species.
- Jointly hosted the 2015 CMP Annual Forum, Climate, People and Terrestrial Invasive Species: Taking Collective Action in the Crown of the Continent in Lethbridge, Alberta, to identify priority conservation actions for addressing weeds in the CCE. Forum products include a jurisdictional management survey and transboundary distribution datasets for a suite of key invasive plant species.



- Selected three priority climate adaptation projects for westslope cutthroat and bull trout, and worked with managers and biologists to assist with implementation, including leveraging private foundation financial support for in-stream work.
- Developed distribution maps for zebra and quagga mussels and Eurasian watermilfoil in the CCE, and distributed a draft transboundary management protocol for aquatic invasive species.

2 LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION DESIGN

An emerging approach to collaborative conservation planning called Landscape Conservation Design (LCD), is being explored and implemented by the GNLCC and LCC Network in locales across the continent. The National Academy of Sciences 2015 review of the LCC Network affirmed that LCCs are appropriate bodies to lead development of the LCD approach and support sub-regional collaborations to create the "processes" and "products" to address pressing landscape issues in inclusive, efficient, and sensible ways.

The LCC Network, which includes diverse public and private partners, is developing best practices with the recognition that one size never fits all, but that soundlyapplied, science-informed basic principles will help us collectively address the seemingly intractable challenges to natural and cultural resource conservation. The working definition of LCD is: a stakeholder-driven landscape conservation strategy to achieve a sustainable, resilient landscape. It is an iterative, collaborative, and holistic process that provides information, analytical tools, maps, and best management practices to reach jointly held landscape conservation goals among partners. How we achieve that must be critically sensitive to local needs and norms.

GNLCC partners are working on three LCDs: the High Divide, the Green River Basin, and the Columbia Plateau. The first two were just getting underway in 2015 whereas the Columbia Plateau LCD, which pioneered many of LCD best practices, is in the implementation phase.

High Divide (MT, ID)	Green River Basin (WY, UT, CO)	Columbia Plateau (WA)
 Led by Heart of the Rockies	 Led by Southern Rockies	 Led by Arid Lands Initiative,
Initiative, consists of 26	and Great Northern LCCs,	USFWS Region 1 Refuge
stakeholders and 11 Land	Conservation Science Partners,	System, Washington Dept.
Trusts Identified conservation	and Oversight Team Produced needs assessment	Fish and Wildlife, and The
targets: greater sage-	that included a social network	Nature Conservancy Completed spatial and
grouse, wolverine, mule	analysis to help partners	strategic assessments of
deer, headwaters salmonids,	collectively understand context;	conservation targets and now
pronghorn, elk, connectivity,	drafted conservation targets:	integrating riverine elements Developed "scorecards" to
wildfire and fire mitigation,	sagebrush-steppe and riparian	help managers understand
and invasive weeds Gathering and vetting source	and riverine systems Planning April 2016 workshop to	significance of conservation
data to feed spatial modeling Planning March 2016	develop shared understanding	priority areas and have access
workshop to engage	of project process, data	to summary information on
additional stakeholders,	availability, and analytical	focal targets, stressors, and
formulate and vet modeling	capabilities; and understand	management options State and federal agencies
strategies, and discuss how	existing programs, initiatives,	and NGOs are integrating
conservation actions may be	and priorities for conservation	project products into their
realized	actions	programs

Status of GNLCC Landscape Conservation Design Projects

STRATEGY FOR ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY

In May 2014, the Steering Committee approved a pilot Shared Landscape Outcomes project to develop a Great Northern Ecological Connectivity Strategy. The first major milestone in this project was hosting a workshop in April 2015, which resulted in recommendations that have become the road map for this project. At a national level, the network of 22 LCCs, as articulated in the LCC Network Strategic Plan considers ecological connectivity a high priority.

The goal of this project is to: Conserve a permeable landscape with connectivity across aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, including species movement, genetic connectivity, migration, dispersal, life history, and biophysical processes. To achieve this end, the components in the conceptual model to the right will be pursued and together form the Ecological Connectivity Strategy.



https://sites.google.com/site/gnecoconnectivity

4

KEEPING INVASIVE MUSSELS OUT

A second GNLCC Shared Landscape Outcomes pilot project aims to address aquatic integrity and stressors in the Columbia River Basin. The GNLCC Columbia Basin Partner Forum (CBPF) is facilitating this effort to enhance information sharing and collaboration across partners. In response to shared concerns from the CBPF about aquatic invasive species, and a direct request from the Pacific Northwest Economic Region for a prospectus on priority research needs for quagga and zebra mussels, CBPF convened a workshop in November 2015 in Portland, Oregon. The purpose of the workshop was to update research priorities in the 2010 Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan in light of the westward expansion of mussels in the United States and Canada.

At the workshop, experts in the fields of mussel biology, ecology, and management prioritized research within the categories of prevention, detection, monitoring, management, and control. In addition, research on the human dimensions of mussel dispersal and management were identified as critical to successful prevention and response to a mussel introduction.



TRIBAL PARTNERS IN THE GREAT NORTHERN

The Great Northern geography is home to a number of Tribes and First Nations with intrinsic values for the land they have inhabited for centuries. Their ties to the land and its cultural and natural resources are part of their lives and livelihood. We have much to learn from their knowledge and history of the land. Yet many tribes lack the capacity (resources, money, and time) to participate in discussions with regional partners.

To support their participation, the GNLCC provides Tribal capacity grants. Most of the eight GNLCC tribal projects currently underway address climate change impacts to culturally important resources such as "first foods" (e.g., native fish, wildlife, plants), forestry, water, as well as public health and education. Some grants focus on building cultural awareness and educating tribal communities about climate change. This support gives them resources to join in broader discussions with their partners in order to share GNLCC vision and goals.

GNLCC tribal grants have seeded the development of tribally led and implemented adaptation plans and strategies based on traditional knowledge and modern science that empowers their communities



Chief Mountain near the border of Montana and Alberta, is sacred to many First Nations peoples. Natives from all over North America travel the base of Chief Mountain for ceremonies. Photo: K Lund, https://www.flickr.com/ photos/kenlund/66272434

to manage for the future. At the spring GNLCC Steering Committee, a panel of tribal leaders discussed their viewpoints with other regional land management executives. GNLCC will continue to explore how to best support the tribes in addressing their needs and embracing their traditional knowledge so that information can help support better decisions for all.

6

ENHANCING STATE/FEDERAL DATA INTEGRATION

A new pilot project underway is designed to help state and federal wildlife managers securely store and share data in the Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT). The State CHAT Data Community (SCDC), which is comprised of five core states (ID, KS, UT, NV, WA), four newly participating states (AK, CA, MT, NM), the Great Northern and Southern Rockies LCCs, and federal partners, is working to deliver tools that enhance data integration across landscapes.

The SCDC aims to:

- 1. Help the states keep the CHAT maps and website current,
- 2. Provide federal partners with increased online access to state data used in creating the CHAT maps, and
- Provide CHAT states with increased online access to federal data that states can incorporate into the CHAT mapping process.



A western state collaboration providing fish and wildlife data to conservation partners

Partner Forum Updates

The Great Northern LCC Partner Forums provide a means to engage the partnership network on specific conservation needs that inform and support an adaptive management approach to on-the-ground application of landscape conservation.

CASCADIA

	EL PARTNER FORUM	Recent News: Swinomish Indian Tribel Co Adaptation Leadership Aw	
Home About U subserve	Cascada Overview New	es and Eventa Resources	Contact
PLACE	PEOPLE & NETWORKS	PRIORITY ISSUES	RESOURCES
Cascada is a rarm that has been used to define many regions that include the Cascado mountain range and sumounding communities. This forum cummitily defines it as a transboundary region ahared between	A wealth of existing organizations, patherships, universities, and individuals are working twosprout Casoadia on a spectrum of climate adaptition issues effecting species.	Our forum identifies priority adaptation issues to focus operdination and information gathering on. The issues reflect unique priorities of the tensiboundery Casocides ecceystem, while also	Although there is still work to do, many resources are evaluate at the broad and fine acale to facilitate climate adaptation in Casoadia. These include existing climate adaptation plane,

http://www.cascadiapartnerforum.org

The Cascadia Partner Forum focused on coordination around priority issues which have been growing since their inception in 2012. Issues include: science planning on ecological connectivity, salmon, and grizzly bear while initiating collaboration on Canada lynx and bull trout.

- Invested in applied science to inform access management planning in four landscapes. Products include: road inventory in state Teanaway Community Forest; GIS analysis of road densities in North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recovery area for Ministry of Environment and National Park Service; two analyses on vulnerabilities to road system from climate change on Mount Baker Snogualmie National Forest; and effectiveness monitoring of road closures in Okanagan Nation Alliance territory.
- Released a report summarizing the major terrestrial connectivity patterns (key linkages and fracture zones) within and connecting to Cascadia.
- Hosted the annual Wildlinks conference in Manning Park, British Columbia, that was attended by 90 people.

COLUMBIA BASIN

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About Us



The Columbia River Basin Partner Forum (CBPF) was convened to address a unique geographic sub-region of the <u>Creat Northern Landacase Conservation Cooperative</u> (CNLCC). The Columbia River Basin is the drainage basin of the Columbia River and covers 668,000 km². The Columbia River Basin includes the southeastern portion of the Canadian province of British Columbia, most of the U.S. states of Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, the western part of Montana, and very small portions of Nevada, Utah, and Wyoning. The GNLCC addresses landscape scale stressors across a large area of the northwest US and the Canadian west. The CBP will follow the overall guidance and operating principals of the GNLCC's <u>Strategic</u> <u>Conservation Framework</u>. Science Plan, and other documents. The CBPF provides a format for information sharing and partnership building within the Columbia River Basin. It further promotes identification of existing partnership efforts and opportunities for collaboration and coordination of conservation and management profiles and actions.

conservation and management priorities and actions.

Collaborative Workspace

This website provides Columbia Basin Partner Forum members information and a workspace for members to collaborate and contribute (ideas, news, project information, files, etc.)

Features Include Partner/Program contact information Partner/Program consect anonymeter data entry
 Program/Contact information listings
 News and update distribution
 Meeting calendar
 Document distribution

Join or Invite Someone to the Forum To learn more about joining the Partner Forum, contact a Great Northern LCC coordinator:

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Spring Meeting, May 5th at 8:30 am Looking twent to ou CRR4, tensore (Index, May 51 at 8:30 am at CRR10 C attact a Portant. The spinds has been pooled on our meeting score and apendes page.

Next CBPF Meeting May 5 Our next CBPF meeting will be May 6 at the Convertise Reve Inter-Trible Fish Commission office, Trib NE Multiment for #1900 (Postend, CH \$1232), from Stock and to ... Protect April 4, 2016, 1133 Mark by all inactione

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COPF Survey sent to Partners On January 12, the COPF Partner Survey was sent to our working group distribution 14.

• http://sites.google.com/site/columbiabasinpartnerforum

The Columbia Basin Partner Forum held three meetings where regional priority needs were discussed and presentations made describing on-going programs that address landscape scale stressors. This year's highlights include:

- Hosted Dreissenid Research Priority workshop in • Portland, Oregon, to update research priorities in the 2010 Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan. Workshop results were presented via webinar and also will be reported in regional forums such as the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, Northwest Power and Conservation Council, and Columbia River Federal Caucus.
- Launched the CBPF website: https://sites.google. com/site/columbiabasinpartnerforum.
- Developed a Landscape-scale Conservation Program ٠ Matrix for the Columbia River Basin based on partner input.
- Working with Yakama Nation to identify regional program information and data needs to support implementation of their Climate Adaptation Plan.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

ROCKY MOUNTAIN PARTNER FORUM

• http://rmpf.weebly.com

The Rocky Mountain Partner Forum continues its work on meeting the needs of forum partners, and on the Great Northern Ecological Connectivity Strategy and Cold-Water Ecosystems projects. This year's highlights include:

- Developed the RMPF website that contains links to connectivity information, webinar recordings, and geo-tagged maps with updates of collaboratives working in the region: http://rmpf.weebly.com.
- Finalized report on Climate Change Adaptation for Cold-Water Ecosystems that has decision-making framework aimed to help practitioners adapt the report to their ecosystem.
- Continue to foster collaboration and create tools to better coordinate on-the-ground action for the Great Northern Ecological Connectivity Strategy project.
- Hosted webinars with partners and deliver a biannual newsletter highlighting workshops, projects, and collaborations in the Rocky Mountain region with a focus on ecological connectivity.

Supporting Science & Capacity

For the past five years, the Great Northern LCC has been funding landscape science and capacity projects to meet partner needs. In fiscal year 2015, 19 projects received funding: 13 were newly funded and 6 received funding in previous years.

STRATEGIC SCIENCE

Project Title	Key Objectives
A Rapid Range-wide Assessment of Bull Trout Distributions: A Crowdsourced, eDNA-based Approach with Application to Aquatic Species	Pair predictions of bull trout habitat occupancy from the Climate Shield model with an optimized eDNA protocol to survey juvenile bull trout habitats in two river basins in Montana and Idaho.
Conserving an Intact and Connected GNLCC Landscape	Develop an ecological connectivity conservation strategy that will identify collaborative actions to conserve the region's intact and connected landscapes that facilitate species movement, migration, and other biophysical processes.
Landscape Conservation Design in the High Divide: An Analysis of Future Landscape Scenarios and Viability	Improve knowledge about the sustainability of future landscape conditions created by current policy and conservation decisions by understanding cumulative effects of stressors and decisions.
Mapping Wetland Hydrology Across an Ecoregion and Developing Climate Adaptation Recommendations	Fill critical information gaps in support of wetland conservation efforts in the Columbia Plateau ecoregion under a changing climate.
Wolverine Metapopulation Monitoring and Connectivity in the U.S. Rocky Mountains and North Cascades	Establish a baseline distribution of wolverines across four states by implementing the monitoring framework and develop recommendations for long-term monitoring of changes in wolverine distribution.
Directing Conservation and Restoration Priorities in the Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Prioritization Framework	Use existing Yellowstone cutthroat trout status and distribution data to identify current data gaps in threat assessments needed to refine and prioritize conservation actions in the context of changing climatic conditions.
Applying GNLCC Science to Coordinated Climate Change Adaptation for a Suite of Conservation Targets Across the CCE	Identify, prioritize, and implement climate change adaptation strategies at a landscape-scale for native salmonids, aquatic invasive species, terrestrial invasive weeds, and whitebark pine.
Towards Developing an Interagency Stream Temperature Database and Model for BC and Northern Half of GNLCC	Develop an accurate assessment and description of historical stream temperatures and thermal habitat distributions for aquatic species in two pilot watersheds within British Columbia that will inform decision making.
Building Large Scale Drought Resiliency in the Missouri Headwaters Basin	Improve capacity support to watershed groups and conservation districts to help them plan for drought and implement drought resiliency tools; inventory and coordinate delivery of technical tools.
Evaluating Management alternatives to Mitigate the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Whitebark Pine Ecosystems in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem	Evaluate management scenarios for creating resilient whitebark pine forests using simulation models that test effects of landscape stressors such as climate change, competition, shifting fire regimes, and beetles.

PARTNER FORUM CAPACITY

Project Title	Key Objectives
Facilitation and Technical Support for the GNLCC Columbia Basin Partner Forum	Develop list of key indicators of landscape-scale ecological integrity and climate change resiliency in the basin and an information matrix on relationships between landscape conservation programs.
Increasing the Capacity of the GNLCC Rocky Mountain Partners Forum	Expand the forum to include more engaged decision makers and stakeholders, establish channels to effectively transfer information among members, and understand opportunities and needs.
Positioning the Sage Steppe Partner Forum as a Pivotal Communication Tool for Sagebrush Biome Conservation Implementation	Expand the functionality of the forum wiki by integrating project tracking mechanisms to contextualize research projects in sagebrush biome; improve the sagebrush and sage-grouse data repository on LC MAP/ScienceBase.
Strategic Conservation Planning for Partner Applications in Cascadia	Build upon existing investment in conservation design for four conservation targets and add two new targets; Identify existing spatial priorities and review relevant climate science to highlight spatial priorities important in a climate adaptation strategy.

TRIBAL CAPACITY

Project Title	Key Objectives
The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Climate Change Readiness Program	Through professional development opportunities, tribal members will learn how to increase community engagement and leadership in their climate change program, and in national and regional climate change policy decisions.
Cross Cultural Capacity Building: Landscape Conservation and Climate Change Adaptation with the Blackfeet Nation	Increase cross cultural capacity of indigenous and non-indigenous groups to collaborate on climate adaptation; Improve understanding of resource conditions through identification of priorities for adaptation to climate change.
Yakama Nation Participation in Landscape Scale Conservation Collaboration within the GNLCC and the Columbia Basin	Integrate traditional ecological knowledge with current science findings in tribal Climate Adaptation Plan to better prepare natural resource programs to address future climate conditions.
Climate Adaptation Planning for Nez Perce Fisheries	Increase knowledge of tribal members on how to build a foundation of resources and partnerships for a successful, long-term climate adaptation strategy for fisheries management.
Stoney Nakoda Nation Cultural Awareness	Increase cultural awareness of science practitioners of First Nations historic conservation practices and cultural uses for integrating western science with traditional environmental knowledge.

View all projects at http://greatnorthernlcc.org/strategic-science-support

Supporting Science & Capacity

PROJECT FUNDING ALLOCATION AND LEVERAGING

Through a competitive process in fiscal year 2015, the Great Northern LCC/US Fish and Wildlife Service allocated \$700,000 to support landscape conservation science and capacity. These funds leveraged \$1,655,000 in matching/in-kind funds. The diagrams show the breakdown of funding allocated to projects by affiliation and leveraged funds by affiliation.



Delivering Science

PRODUCTS TO INFORM CONSERVATION ACTIONS

Products from projects funded by the Great Northern LCC partnership may take several years to develop. As products such as models, datasets, maps, and publications become available, they are delivered to conservation practitioners by GNLCC staff and project leads. Delivery formats include: workshops, trainings, presentations, webinars, and newsletters.

This list provides a sample of products delivered in 2015. Products can be accessed by using the Project Tracking System described below.

• Resource Managers Connectivity Workshop: Identified priorities and strategies for ecological connectivity within Great Northern region

- Ecological Connectivity Data Atlas: Online tool for identifying areas for conservation actions
- Dreissenid Mussel Research Priorities Workshop: Updated research priorities in the 2010 Quagga-Zebra Mussel Action Plan
- Wildlinks Conference: Increased coordination of transboundary science planning for conservation targets in Cascade region
- Transboundary Flathead River Basin Coordination meetings
- Cascadia, Columbia Basin, and Rocky Mountain Partner Forum meetings
- Science Webinar Series: 11 webinars averaged 65 attendees per event

Project Tracking System



Launched in 2015, the Project Tracking System (PTS) web application allows filtered searching of Great Northern LCC science and capacity projects. Similar to how online shopping filters work, the PTS app produces lists, summaries, and maps. From the search results, users can access project-specific information.

The PTS app was built and designed inhouse using LC MAP/ScienceBase as the backbone. Check back for new functions to better serve users.

• http://greatnorthernlcc.org/strategic-science-support

o learn more about the Great Northern LCC, please contact a staff member and visit GreatNorthernLCC.org

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LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION COOPERATIVES

Located in northeast Oregon on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, the Lostine River corridor supports a diversity of plant and wildlife species, and habitats. The upper five miles of the river are designated Wild and Scenic and the remaining section is designated Recreational. The river supports Snake River chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. Photo: M McFadzen