

## **Suit threatened over trout plan**

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FLAGSTAFF - Two environmental groups have notified the Arizona Game and Fish Department that they will sue to stop the resumption of rainbow trout stocking at Lees Ferry on the Colorado River.

The trout are predators to endangered fish species, and Utah's Living Rivers and the Center for Biological Diversity in Tucson served notice that they'll fight new stocking, last done in 1998.

Game and Fish has been killing rainbow trout by the thousands 60 miles downstream where the endangered humpback chub live. But trout populations upstream, between Lees Ferry and the Glen Canyon Dam, are half of the 100,000 that river management plans call for, Game and Fish Fisheries Branch Chief Manager Larry Riley said.

Game and Fish wants to stock tagged, mostly sterile trout for sports fishing and see if they will make it 60 miles downriver to prey on chub and other native fish.

The chub population, estimated at between 4,500 or 5,000, is too fragile to use as an experiment, Center for Biological Diversity's Robin Silver said.

Others agree.

"It's a ludicrous program. On one hand you're trying to remove trout in the Grand Canyon and electrofishing them out ... and on the other hand, you're adding them near the dam," said Dave Foster of Marble Canyon Outfitters at Lees Ferry.

But some anglers worry the trout population won't return without stocking.

"It's bad. It's really bad. People that I know from Flagstaff, they don't fish up there anymore. They know there's hardly any fish up there," said Mark Steffen, who represents the Federation of Flyfishers/Northern Arizona Flycasters and makes fishing poles in Flagstaff.