

Loch Lomond fishing to lose allure

State ending trout stocking in 175 lakes, streams as part of settlement

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Loch Lomond, which draws several thousand people a year for recreational fishing, is among the 175 lakes and streams in California where trout stocking will be suspended in the spring. But trout stocking will continue at several hundred other lakes including Pinto Lake in Watsonville.

Last week, the state Department of Fish and Game posted a list on its Web

site announcing where the trout plants will and will not take place. The lists are based on the size of the lakes, whether they are inhabited by frogs and whether they are connected to rivers.

The announcement came after the Nov. 21 settlement of a 2006 lawsuit filed by the Pacific Rivers Council and the Center for Biological Diversity, which claimed the fish stocking was in violation of the California Environmental Quality Act without the completion of an environmental impact study.

In some parts of the state, the trout stocking has been going on for close to 100 years, inspiring people to spend time outdoors and spawning the recreational fishing industry. As for Loch Lomond, the city of Santa Cruz purchased the land in Felton and developed the reservoir in the late 1950s, then opened the area to recreation in 1963.

Mike Baxter recalls his parents taking him to Loch Lomond, a tradition he shares with his own children.

"These are some of my fondest memo-

ries," he said. "If the trout-stocking program is canceled, this all may be lost."

Noah Greenwald of the Center of Biological Diversity pointed out that the ban is "just for one year," until the state finishes its environmental impact study, which is scheduled for January 2010.

The state is working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The comment period closed Oct. 1 and a draft of the study is expected to be ready next May.

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