

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTIONS  
PRIVATE POND APPLICATION

Name and address of applicant Marlin Payne  
386 Sharrott Hill Loop  
Stevensville, MT 59870

Has the pond been approved for a private pond permit? No, no license has been granted in past

Location:

County Ravalli Township 9N Range 20W Section 20 S1/2, NE1/4

Name of the drainage where the pond would be located Kootenai Creek

Name(s) of fish species proposed for introduction  
Rainbow trout

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes

Species of special concern present in the drainage yes

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations? None\_\_\_ Minor X Major\_\_\_

Comments:

Rainbow trout are already present in drainage due to previous stocking, and additions to the population from newly stocked fish would have minimal, if any impact to the population. Since Westslope cutthroat are present in the drainage there is potential for impact to the genetic structure of their population, but since rainbow trout are already present in the drainage the threat is already there, and additional rainbow trout would have little affect.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation? None\_\_\_ Minor x Major\_\_\_

Comments:

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction? None\_\_\_ Minor x Major\_\_\_

Comments:

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location? None\_\_\_ Minor\_x Major  
Comments:

If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked?

Yes

Would this introduction result in impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?

Not likely. The lower reaches of Kootenai Creek—where this pond could have an effect—has a well-established population of rainbow trout. Stocking of this species would likely have no effect on the aquatic ecosystem. There are, however, numerous such ponds in the Bitterroot Valley, and the cumulative effects are unknown.

Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action).

The proposal to have this private fish pond includes the stocking of fish. The application is for "rainbow or any other trout". The alternatives would include which species to stock:

Alternatives:

1. Stock different species. Four potential species are:

Rainbow trout- Already present in drainage. **This is the recommended species to stock** due to this reason as well as due to their growth and catchability.

Brook trout - not presently allowed by MFWP policy.

Brown trout - also exist in Bitterroot River, but can be highly predatious and difficult to catch.

Westslope cutthroat trout - The westslope cutthroat that are commercially available do not originate from the Bitterroot and have a different genetic makeup than bitterroot fish, so **would not be an advisable choice**.

2. No action. The lower reach of Kootenai Creek already has a good population of Rainbow trout. There is no reason to believe that the stocking of rainbows in this pond would have any adverse impact on this population. Since the cumulative effects of numerous such ponds is unknown, it is difficult to determine whether a no action alternative would have a positive impact on the fish populations in the valley or not.

Describe and evaluate mitigation, stipulations, or other control measures enforceable by the agency, if any.

Water for this pond is supplied by irrigation. The pond outlet should be screened but escapement at some time is possible.

Current laws regarding the transfer of live fish from one water body to another govern the legality of movement of fish planted in this pond to other waters. This movement of fish to other waters would be enforceable under this regulation.

List any other agencies or individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction:

none

List all agencies and individuals who have been notified of this proposed introduction:

none

Based on this evaluation, is an EIS required? Yes/No If no, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.

**No. Recommendation is for stocking of rainbow trout.** If this recommendation is accepted by landowner then there would be no reason for an EIS due to the fact that the proposed action occurs on private lands and would have no affect on any public lands. This issue can be handled at the EA level. If landowner desires stocking of Westslope cutthroat trout, other measures may have to be taken.

EA prepared by Larry Javorsky—acting Fisheries Biologist 03/23/00

Comments will be accepted until April 23, 2000

Comments should be sent to: Larry Javorsky  
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