

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTIONS
PRIVATE POND APPLICATION

Name and address of applicant Roger Dougherty
475 Hidden Haven Lane
Hamilton, MT 59840

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

Location:

County Ravalli Township 6N Range 21W Section 3

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

Name(s) of fish species proposed for introduction
Rainbow & Brook 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:

The chances of fish escaping from this pond into the Mill Creek drainage are very low, if not nonexistent. Even if there was some escapement, the species proposed for stocking are already present in the drainage, to adding to their numbers would have minimal effect on the genetic structures of existing populations.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation? None___ Minor__x___ Major
Comments:

See above

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction? None___ Minor__x___ Major
Comments:
See above

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location? None___ Minor__x___ Major
Comments:

Pond has essentially no inlet or outlet, and is lined with plastic—no reproduction looks possible.

If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked?
Yes. Shutting off the water supply would essentially dry the pond up.

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

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 and brook trout". Brook trout are presently not allowed to be stocked according to FWP policy, so they would not be considered as an option. Alternatives to stocking just rainbow trout would include stocking different species:

Alternatives:

1. Stock different species. The two other potential species are:

Brown trout - also exist in Mill Creek, but can be highly predatory 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. Mill 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.

Despite the unlikelihood of fish escaping from this pond, 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. 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.

EA prepared by Larry Javorsky—acting Fisheries Biologist 05/09/00

Comments will be accepted until June 09, 2000

Comments should be sent to: Larry Javorsky
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