

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTION
PRIVATE POND APPLICATION**

Name and address of applicant: Russell Dixon
1270 Dixon Lane
Big Sandy, MT 59520

Is approval of private pond permit application recommended? Yes.

Location of pond:

County: Chouteau
Legal description: T28N R10E S29 E½SW¼NE¼
Latitude: 48.155387, **Longitude:** -110.468425

Name of the drainage where the pond would be located:

The Russel Dixon Pond is located approximately 17.5 miles west of Big Sandy, MT, on Twelvemile Coulee, drainage upstream of Lonsome Lake Coulee, which is a tributary of Big Sandy Creek. The pond is 16.6 miles upstream on Twelvemile Coulee. Lonesome Lake Coulee is 7.4 miles in length and is a tributary of Big Sandy Creek. Big Sandy Creek enters the Milk River approximately 61 miles downstream from the mouth of Lonesome Lake Coulee. The Milk River is a tributary of the Missouri River.

Does pond have legal water rights? (describe) Yes. The pond has a stock and domestic water right that includes a reservoir record with an April 24, 1904 priority date.

Fish species proposed for introduction: Rainbow and brook trout.

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes, rainbow and brook trout are found in the upper Big Sandy Creek drainage at higher elevations to the east. Rainbow trout are planted in Twelvemile Coulee Pond, a private pond, by FWP for increased angling opportunity in Twelvemile Coulee 13.3 miles downstream from the Dixon Pond..

Species of Special Concern present in the drainage:

No species in local waters. Sauger (*Stizostedion canadense*) is reported as rare in the lower 20 miles of Big Sandy Creek. Pallid sturgeon (Federally protected endangered species) are present in very low numbers downstream in the Missouri River.

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations: ___ None X Minor ___ Major

Comments: No significant impacts are expected.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation?

___ None X Minor ___ Major

Comments: Escapement of stocked fish into Twelvemile Coulee could potentially occur in a major run-off event. There is potential for stocked trout to reach Twelvemile Coulee Pond, 13.3 miles downstream, which is planted with rainbow trout by FWP. It is also possible fish could escape from farther downstream into Lonesome Lake and then into Big Sandy Creek. It is unlikely rainbow and brook trout would successfully spawn and survive in Lonesome Lake or Big Sandy Creek because of water temperature and other species present. No negligible effects are anticipated because the proposed species are already present in the Big Sandy Creek watershed.

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

Comments: Rainbow and brook trout will consume macro-invertebrates, zooplankton and possibly amphibians in the lake. Since fish have been present in the reservoir before, this likely will not change the species composition in the reservoir, but planting fish likely will affect the relative abundance and size of the species currently inhabiting the reservoir. We expect that the effects on the aquatic invertebrate community in the lake from this proposed plant will be very similar to the effects from previous fish populations.

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location: None Minor Major

Comments: There is little potential for trout to spawn in this location because of the absence of flowing water and suitable habitat.

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? No.

Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action). Do not stock.

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

Species restrictions can be identified in the permitting process.

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. Impacts are expected to be very minor.

EA prepared by: George Liknes

Date: June 20, 2008

**DECISION RECORD
FISH POND LICENSE**

DECISION: Issue

- Private Pond License**
- Commercial Pond License**
- One Time Permission to Plant Letter**
- Denial**

EA Title: Russell Dixon Private Pond

APPROVED SPECIES: Rainbow Trout

LICENSE RESTRICTIONS: NA

DECISION REASONING:

- Pond meets all other requirements for Private Pond License.**
- Other (specify)**



George Liknes
Regional Fisheries Manager

6/20/2008

Date