

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTIONS PRIVATE POND APPLICATION

Name and address of applicant: Pioneer Farms Inc.
PO Box 187
Chester MT 59522

Is approval for a private pond permit application recommended? Yes

Does the landowner have legal water rights to the pond?

Yes. There is a statement of claim with a priority date of 6/1/1930; it has a stock use and includes a reservoir record that does not list the surface area acreage or the current capacity in AF. Measurement of the surface area of the pond on a 2005 color aerial photo showed a surface area of 0.7 acres or less. The water rights number is 41N 124753-00.

Location of pond:

County: Liberty , 2.88 miles southeast of Lothair, MT
Legal description: T31N R4E S14 NE¼SW¼NW¼
Lat: 48.445927 **Long:** -111.183419

Name of the drainage where the pond is located:

The Reservoir is located approximately 0.45 miles upstream on an intermittent, unnamed tributary drainage of Eagle Creek, which enters Eagle Creek at River mile 4.55. Eagle Creek enters the Willow Creek arm of Tiber Reservoir.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Rainbow trout.

Are these species legally present in the drainage?

Yes. Rainbow trout are present in the Marias River drainage above Tiber Dam.

Species of Special Concern present in the drainage:

No native Species of Special Concern are found in Tiber Reservoir. Blue sucker, sturgeon chub, and sauger are Species of Special Concern found in the lower Marias River. Risks to Species of Special Concern below Tiber Dam from potential escapement of rainbow trout are negligible because of the low probability of escapement from the pond, travel through Tiber Reservoir and flushing downstream into the Marias River. Also, rainbow trout are already present in Marias River below Tiber Dam.

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations:

None Minor Major

Comments: No significant impacts are expected. Fish have to travel approximately 0.45 miles downstream on an unnamed tributary to Eagle Creek, and then another 4.55 miles on Eagle Creek, also an intermittent drainage, to reach Tiber Reservoir (Lake Ellwell). If the stocked trout reached the small population of rainbow trout in Tiber Reservoir, they should have very little influence on genetics of any remaining non-native rainbow trout. The pond has previously been stocked with rainbow trout in the past.

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

None Minor Major

Comments: Currently, there are no fish in the pond. Escapement of stocked fish into Eagle Creek and Tiber Reservoir could potentially occur in a major run-off event that results in substantial overland surface flow; however, it is a remote possibility. There is potential for stocked trout to reach the Tiber Reservoir, but the species is already present. Escaped rainbow may migrate to upstream reaches of the Marias River above Tiber, but no significant impacts are expected.

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction?

None Minor Major

Comments: Fish will consume some invertebrates in pond.

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location:

None Minor Major

Comments: There is little potential for rainbow 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. It should be possible to use chemicals at any water level in the pond, but water levels could be lowered to minimize the volume of water that would have to be treated to eradicate fish.

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 2, 2009

**DECISION RECORD
FISH POND LICENSE**

DECISION: Issue

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

EA# Pioneer Farms Inc. Private Pond

APPROVED SPECIES: Rainbow Trout.

LICENSE RESTRICTIONS: None.

DECISION REASONING:

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



George Liknes
Regional Fisheries Manager

6/2/2009

Date