Draft Environmental Review of Fish Introduction

Description of water body and action:

Name: **Hundred Dollar Bill Pond** (also known as Mud Creek Reservoir)
County: Meagher
Legal Description: T9N R11E S9/16 Water Code: No water code
46.54702; 110.34669

Montana FWP plans to stock rainbow trout in a Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) owned pond. The pond is about 10 surface acres at full pool. Maximum depth is about 17feet (Figure 1). A private pond license was granted to this pond in 1972 for brook trout and rainbow trout. A historic pond immediately downstream failed in the last 6 years. Pond appears to keep good water levels based on aerial photography from 1998, 2005 and 2009. Pond is located about 7 miles north of Martinsdale, Montana (Figure 2).

Name of the drainage where the pond is located:

The pond is located on Mud Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Musselshell River.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Rainbow trout

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes. A private pond permit was granted for brook trout and rainbow trout for this pond in the past.

Species of Special Concern in the drainage:

Northern redbelly x finescale dace hybrids were sampled about 3 miles upstream of the Reservoir in 2004.

Risks:

Inlets to or outlets from the pond? Yes_X_ No___ **Explain:** Pond is on-stream. Trout may be swept downstream during high flow events. The spill-way is a low spot in the fill. There is not a visible outlet pipe but some seepage below the dam. Fish can swim upstream during high flow events. Additional ponds about 1.5 miles upstream should block fish passage.

Potential for impacts on the genetic structure of existing fish populations:

_____ None ____X___ Minor _____ Major

During high flow events, stocked trout could go over the spillway into the North Fork Musselshell. Rainbow trout are stocked heavily Bair Reservoir on the North Fork Musselshell. It is unlikely that the stocked fish would have negative impacts on the genetics of non-native rainbow.

Impacts to any life stage of existing fish populations due to competition and/or predation: ___None _X__Minor ____ Major

The stocked fish will eat small fish in the pond if they are present. It is unlikely that the trout will colonize the drainage upstream of the pond; passage would be blocked about 1.5 miles upstream. There should not be any population level effects.

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction: ___None ___X_Minor _____ Major

It is unlikely that there will be additional impacts.

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location:___None ___X_Minor _____ Major

It is unlikely stocked rainbow trout would reproduce in this pond.

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

Yes the pond is small enough to treat and/or be drawn down by pumps.

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).

No action. There would not be a new opportunity for public fishing in Meagher County.

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

Fish stocking will be a beneficial action. Walk-in access may be required.

List all agencies and individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction.

Area anglers. Lessee of state land.

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

DNRC; FWP

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 actions. No. Action expected to be minor.

EA prepared by: Anne Tews, Fisheries Biologist
Date: June 10, 2010 **Comments accepted until:** August 2, 2010
Comments should be sent to: Anne Tews, MFWP, P.O. Box 938, Lewistown, MT 59457: Email address: antews@mt.gov

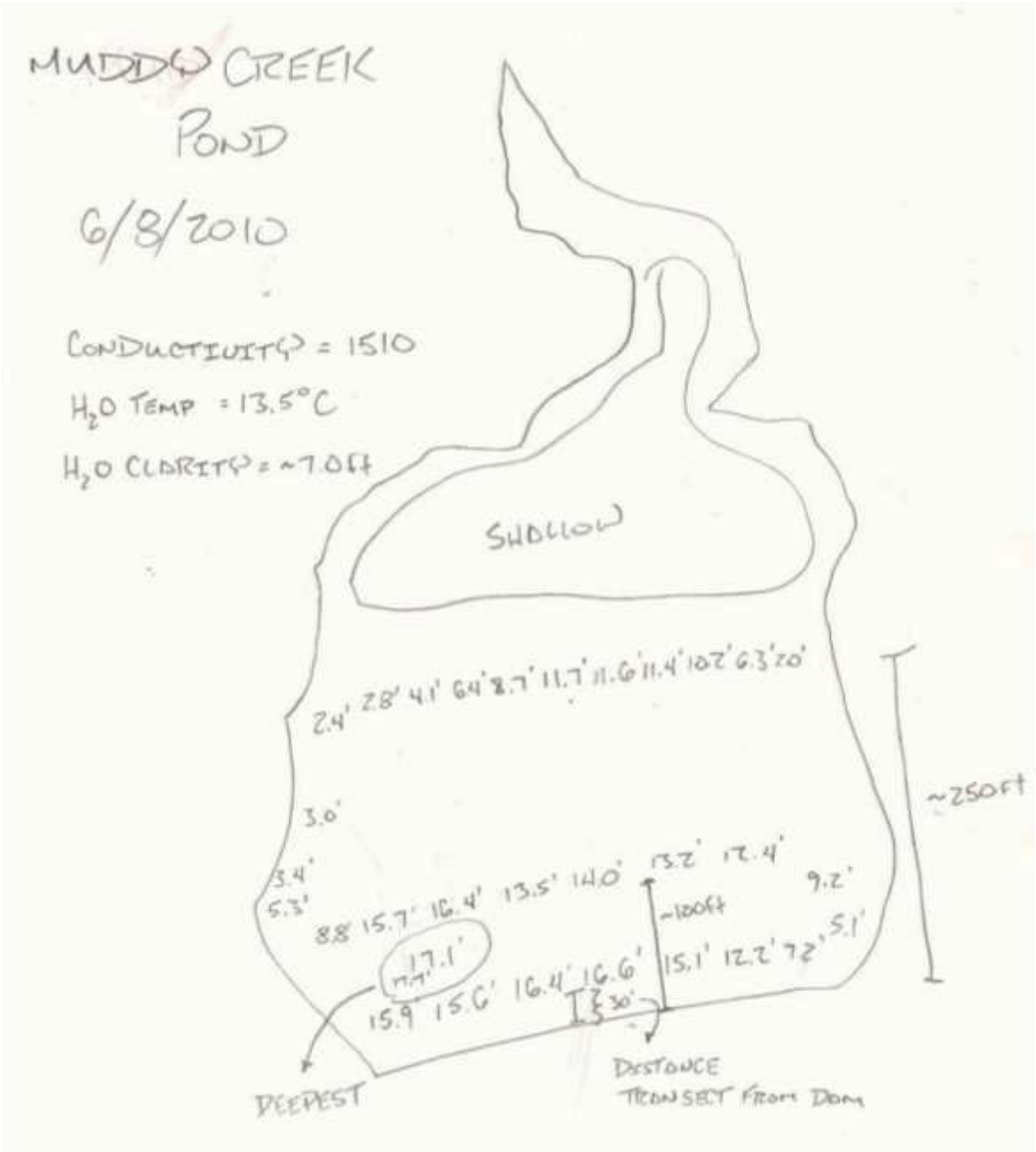

Figure 1. Hundred Dollar Bill Pond (Mud Creek Reservoir) Map. June 8, 2010.

Figure 2. Top: Location of Hundred Dollar Bill Pond in red; T9N R11E sections 9/16. The lower pond no longer exists. Lower Aerial Photo: 2009 view of the pond.

Both Photos: Hundred Dollar Bill Pond June 8, 2010.