

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Draft Environmental Review of Fish Introduction

Description of water body and action:

Name: **Wadsworth Reservoir**
County: Cascade
Legal Description: T20N R1E S 17
Water Code: 20-8470

Wadsworth Reservoir is located on the west edge of Great Falls. Montana FWP plans to stock brook trout and white crappie in Wadsworth Reservoir to improve angling opportunity and angling quality. The reservoir is 41.3 surface acres and has a maximum depth of 15.3 feet. This reservoir has been stocked since 1978 with largemouth bass, rainbow trout, walleye and yellow perch. A major water source is the Sun River, which has resulted in other fish such as white suckers, carp, pumpkinseed sunfish and black bullhead entering the reservoir infrequently. The reservoir was dredged in 2004 to provide deep water zones to improve fishing. The reservoir receives an average of 903 (344-1806) angler days per year. Each June the reservoir hosts the annual Kids Fishing Day which attracts over 3000 kids and family members to participate in education programs and angling. FWP is proposing to stock brook trout and white crappie in order to maximize angling quality in this urban fishery. Both species are tolerant of high water temperatures and may fare better than the other species in the reservoir. White crappie can tolerate turbid water which occurs frequently at this reservoir.

Name of the drainage where the pond is located:

The reservoir is located just north of the Sun River.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Brook trout, white crappie.

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Brook trout occur in the Sun River drainage. Black Crappie are known to be present in the Missouri River in low numbers.

Species of Special Concern in the drainage:

There are no species of special concern in the immediate vicinity.

Risks:

Inlets to or outlets from the pond? Yes No **Explain:** The reservoir is located near the Sun River. Water that enters or exits the reservoir is controlled by a gate system that is used to manage flood waters on an infrequent basis. The two species proposed for stocking already exist in the Sun/Missouri drainage and pose little risk of becoming established if they escape the reservoir.

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

None Minor Major

Stocked fish would have no negative impacts on the genetics of other species in the reservoir or in the Sun River drainage.

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

None Minor Major

The stocked fish would likely eat small fish in the reservoir if they are present. It is unlikely there would be any impacts at the population level.

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction: None

Minor Major

It is unlikely that there will be additional significant impacts although the stocked fish would consume invertebrates in the reservoir.

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

Minor Major

Brook trout would not likely reproduce and white crappie would likely reproduce in the reservoir.

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

Brook trout could be controlled exclusively by stocking. Crappie could be controlled by managing the predatory fish (walleye, bass) that are present in the reservoir, through the use of piscicides, or mechanical removal.

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. The proposed action is intended to maximize the angling potential of Wadsworth Reservoir. No action would maintain the status quo and the existing level of angling quality/opportunity.

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

Fish stocking would be a beneficial action. Increasing the angling quality could result in more public use of the area. This is the desired consequence. The area around the reservoir has been developed to manage public use. The area has demonstrated it can support high density use that is more than 3 times the annual average angler days.

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

City of Great Falls

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

FWP, City of Great Falls.

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: Grant Grisak, Fisheries Biologist

Date: March 17, 2011.

Comments accepted until: Comments will be accepted at any time regarding the planting program for Wadsworth Reservoir. The proposed action is not anticipated to be potentially controversial and consequently would need no public comment period. If no comments are received by March 31, 2011, we proposed to issue a decision notice.

Comments should be sent to: Grant Grisak, MFWP, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, MT. 59405.

Email address: ggrisak@mt.gov

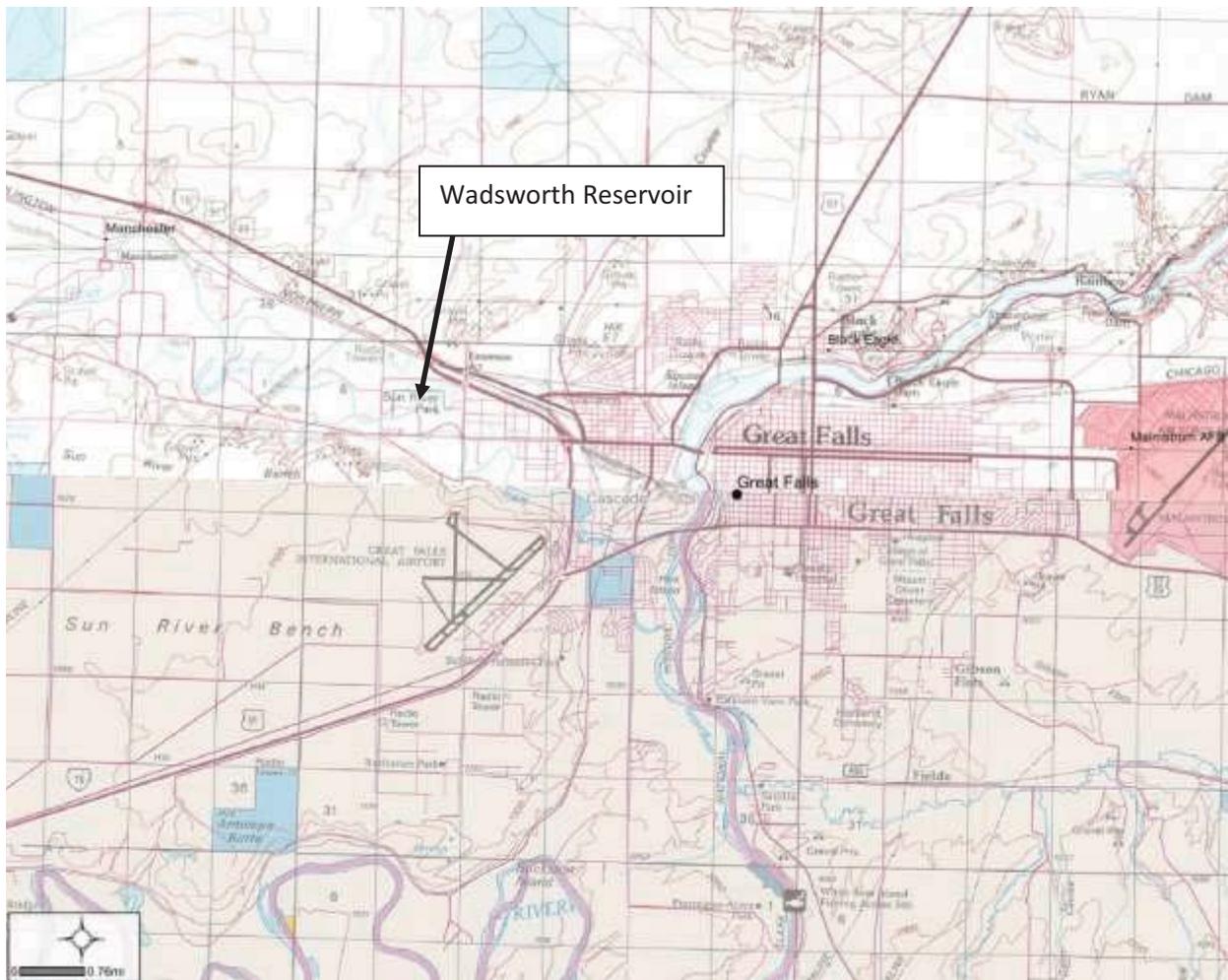


Figure 1. Map of Great Falls area showing Wadsworth Reservoir.