

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

Description of water body and action:

Name: Tunis Reservoir
County: Chouteau
Legal Description: T24N R07E S28
Water Code: 14-9380

Tunis Reservoir is located on private land on the west side of Highway 87 near the railroad siding of Tunis approximately seven miles west of Fort Benton. Public access to this reservoir is gained through an agreement between the landowner and Montana FWP that involves reasonable public access in exchange for FWP stocking the reservoir with fish. Water levels in the reservoir fluctuate. In years when water levels are high, the reservoir can provide reasonably good fishing. As of January 2012, the reservoir water levels are high. Montana FWP plans to stock the reservoir periodically with largemouth bass to improve angling opportunity and angling quality. The reservoir is 5-7 surface acres and has a maximum depth of 11 feet. This reservoir has been stocked since 1929 with coho salmon, brook trout, channel catfish and rainbow trout. FWP is proposing to stock largemouth bass in order to maximize angling quality in this fishery.

Name of the drainage where the pond is located:

The reservoir is located on Eightmile Coulee, which is a tributary to the Teton River.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Largemouth bass.

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Largemouth bass occur in some reservoirs in the Teton River drainage.

Species of Special Concern in the drainage:

There are no species of special concern in the immediate vicinity. Sauger are rare in the Teton River and common in the Marias River, approximately 4 and 18 stream miles downstream, respectively.

Risks:

Inlets to or outlets from the pond? Yes X No ___ **Explain:** The reservoir is located in the headwaters of Eightmile Coulee. The species proposed for stocking already exists in the Teton River drainage and poses little risk. There is no outflow stream from this reservoir

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

X None _____ Minor _____ Major _____

Stocked fish would have no negative impacts on the genetics of other species in the reservoir since there are no other fish currently present in the reservoir.

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

None Minor Major

There are no fish in the reservoir at this time.

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 impacts that would be significant to other forms of aquatic life. The bass would consume some zooplankton and aquatic insects in the reservoir.

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

Minor Major

Largemouth bass will likely reproduce in the reservoir.

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

Largemouth bass could be controlled by chemical treatment of the reservoir, by intentionally dewatering the reservoir, or by natural fluctuations in water levels.

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 Tunis Reservoir. Not taking this action would maintain 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 is intended to have beneficial results which would likely mean more public use. FWP would coordinate with the landowner to address any negative impacts from increased public use.

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

Jim Olsen (Landowner).

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

Jim Olsen was consulted and agreed to allow the proposed action. George Liknes, regional fisheries manager, was also consulted regarding this proposed introduction.

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: Paul Hamlin. Fisheries Technician

Date: April 29, 2011. **Comments accepted until:** March 3, 2012
Comments should be sent to: Paul Hamlin, MFWP, 4600 Giant Springs Road, Great Falls, Mt.
59405.
Email address: phamlin@mt.gov

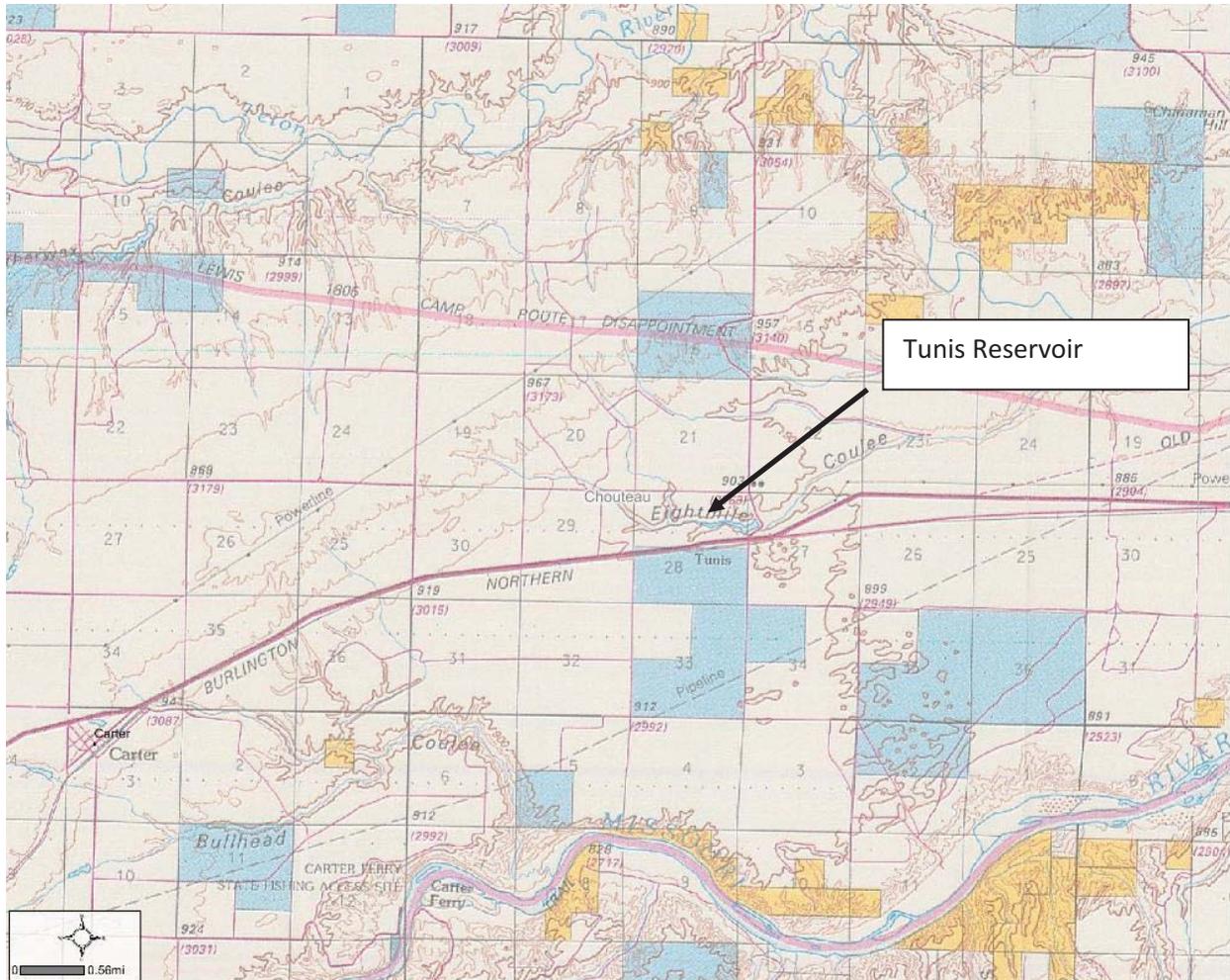


Figure 1. Map of the Tunis area showing Tunis Reservoir.