

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

Name and address of applicant Cooper Family Limited Partnership
P.O. Box 547
Oakwood, OH 45873

Has the pond been approved for a private pond permit? No

Location:

County Ravalli Township 3N Range 21W Section 21 SESENE

Name of the drainage where the pond would be located McCoy Creek

Name(s) of fish species proposed for introduction
Rainbow/Brook/Brown/Cutthroat Trout

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Cutthroat are present in small numbers in McCoy Creek upstream of the pond drainage point. No other trout species have been found in McCoy Creek.

Species of special concern present in the drainage Yes

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations? None___ Minor X Major___

Comments:

Water in pond is to be from irrigation outflow. Overflow from pond is screened, and only occurs during irrigation season in summer. Drainage into McCoy Creek is minimal and also used for irrigation downstream of outflow, so little, if any water reaches McCoy Creek. Potential for fish escapement is low.

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

Comments:

(See Above)

Impacts to other forms of aquatic life that may be caused by this introduction? None___ Minor x Major___

Comments:

(See Above)

Potential for the proposed new species to reproduce in this location? None___ Minor__x__ Major

Comments:

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?

Possibly, there is a considerable number of fishponds in the Bitterroot drainage. While this pond could have some impact, the cumulative effect of all ponds is unknown.

Describe reasonable and prudent alternatives to this action, if any (including no action).

The proposal to have this private fish pond will require the stocking of fish. The application is for rainbow, brook, brown, and cutthroat trout. Any fish that could escape could potentially hybridize and/or compete with resident trout populations.

Alternatives are to stock one or two species, rather than all four listed above. Undesirable species to stock are:

Brook trout - not presently allowed by MFWP policy.

Westslope cutthroat - The westslope cutthroat that are commercially available do not originate from the Bitterroot and have a different genetic makeup than bitterroot fish. Therefore it would not be advised to stock them and potentially jeopardize the genetics of the native stock.

The species most appropriate for stocking in this situation would be rainbow and brown trout.

A "no action" alternative is also a legitimate consideration, since there is a small remnant population of westslope cutthroat in the upper reach of the drainage. But, since access to the upper reaches from the lower reaches is limited due to dewatering, there is little indication that a serious threat exists. And drifting of stocked species to the lower reaches of McCoy Creek and the Bitterroot River is a non-issue due to dewatering and due to the presence of rainbow and brown trout already in the river.

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

Water for this pond is supplied by irrigation ditches and springs. The pond outlet should be screened, and outflows will be minimal, but escapement at some time is possible.

Current laws regarding the transfer of live fish from one water body to another govern the legality of movement of fish planted in this pond to other waters. This movement of fish to other waters would be enforceable under this regulation.

List any other agencies or individuals that may be affected by the proposed introduction:

Bitterroot National Forest

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

Bitterroot National Forest

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

The proposed action occurs on private lands but impacts could occur to a public resource. This issue can be handled at the EA level

EA prepared by Larry Javorsky, acting Fisheries Biologist: 04/06/00

Comments will be accepted until May 6, 2000

Comments should be sent to: Larry Javorsky
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