

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTION
One Time Stocking Permit**

Name and address of applicant: Jim Chalmers
201 E 14th Street
Tempe, AZ 85281

Is approval for a private pond permit application recommended? No, because the pond is not an artificial structure, but a beaver dam which will allow fish to escape downstream. The beaver dam is an old well established silted in dam. We are recommending a one-time stocking permit to be issued since this area does not have game fish or species of special concern and impacts of stocking should be minimal.

Location of pond:

County: Fergus
Legal description: T15N R20E Sec 18, SE1/4

Name of the drainage where the pond would be located:

The pond is located on an unnamed tributary to the North Fork of McDonald Creek. Water from McDonald Creek eventually enters the Musselshell east of Winnett over 50 miles downstream.

Fish species proposed for introduction:

Brook trout

Is this species legally present in the drainage?

Yes, brook trout were stocked in this drainage in the 1950's by the MFWP.

Species of Special Concern present in the drainage:

Historically redbelly X finescale dace were found in 1948 in McDonald Creek near Winnett, over 30 river miles downstream (Montana River Information System, Internet, 4/3/2000). Even if this species of special concern is still present, stocking brook trout should not be a concern because McDonald Creek is intermittent between the pond and Winnett.

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations:

None Minor Major

Comments: Trout have not been recently seen here. Ted Schmidt of Antler Consulting did not sample any trout when the inlet and outlet were electrofished. If brook trout are present in the vicinity the stocked fish will likely interbreed with them. This is not a concern for this non-native species.

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

None Minor Major

Comments: Ted Schmidt identified fathead minnows and Utah chub downstream from the dam. Utah chub have not previously been identified in central Montana and were probably misidentified lake chub. Fathead minnows and lake chub are common throughout Montana. Minnows will be eaten by brook trout.

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. Some brook trout will likely escape this beaver dam structure and migrate downstream into the North Fork McDonald Creek.

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

None Minor Major

Comments: Brook trout will likely spawn in the inlet stream.

If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked? It would be very difficult to remove brook trout from this beaver dam pond and in the downstream beaver dam complex.

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.

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:

Notification via State of Montana electronic bulletin board.

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 expected to be minor.

EA prepared by: Anne Tews, Fisheries Biologist **DATE:** April 28, 2000

Comments will be accepted until: May 26, 2000

Comments should be sent to: Steve Leathe, Fisheries Manager, MFWP, P.O. Box 6610, Great Falls MT 59406