

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

Name and address of applicant Thomas Simpson
P.O. Box 236
Victor, MT 59875

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

Location:

County Ravalli Township 7N Range 21W Section 13 S1/2,NW1/4

Name of the drainage where the pond would be located: Fred Burr Creek

Name(s) of fish species proposed for introduction
Trout

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes, several species of trout are present in the drainage

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:

NOTE: The pond is spring fed, and has no inlet or outlet that fish could enter or exit by. The possibility that fish could escape and have any impact on any other population is very small. However, the westslope cutthroat in Fred Burr upstream from the pond site have been found to be genetically pure, which makes them a valuable population. ANY escapement of rainbow or hatchery westslope cutthroat trout from the pond would be potentially detrimental to this genetically pure population. There is also a small population of bull trout upstream of the pond site, and any introduction of brook trout could threaten their genetic integrity as well.

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

Comments: (See Above) Also, the bull trout upstream of the pond site could be adversely affected by competition if escapement of stocked brown trout occurred.

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:

See above

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

Possible. Its proximity to Fred Burr Creek would make poisoning and/or water evacuation impossible, which would make removal of fish difficult.

Would this introduction result in impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?

Not likely. There are, however, numerous such ponds in the Bitterroot Valley, and the cumulative effects are unknown.

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

The proposal to renew this private fish pond license includes the stocking of fish. The application is for "trout".

Alternatives would include which species to stock:

Four (4) potential trout species are:

1. Rainbow trout - already present in the drainage thanks to earlier stocking efforts, but only found in lower reaches.
2. Brook trout - not presently allowed by MFWP policy.
3. Brown trout - not present in Fred Burr Creek, but present in Lower Mill Creek not far below pond site.
4. Westslope cutthroat trout - The westslope cutthroat that are commercially available do not originate from the Bitterroot and have a different genetic makeup than bitterroot fish.

2. No action. Fred Burr Creek already has a population of rainbow trout in its lower reaches. But due to the genetic purity of the upstream westslope cutthroat trout a no action alternative would insure no escapement into the creek of genetically different fish (rainbow or hatchery cutthroat stock), and would subsequently insure the integrity of the native population. However, since there is no inlet or outlet for the fish to escape through, the likelihood of escapement is remote, giving the "no action" alternative little credence.

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

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:

none

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

none

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. This issue can be handled at the EA level.

EA prepared by Larry Javorsky-acting Fisheries Biologist 07/10/00

Comments will be accepted until August 10, 2000

Comments should be sent to: Larry Javorsky
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