

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

**Name and address of applicant:** Edwin Evans  
631 NE Washington St.  
Lewistown, MT 59457

**Is approval for a private pond permit application recommended?** Yes

**Does the landowner have legal water rights to the pond?**

Yes. There is a 6/10/1957 stock water right for 3.5 GPM. Water Right 40B 215156-00. The water right says that the original capacity was 2.5 acre-feet, current capacity 1.25 acre-feet.

**Location of pond:**

**County:** Fergus

**Legal description:** T13N R21E S3 SENENW

**Name of the drainage where the pond is located:**

Pond is located in the headwaters of Bear Creek, about 6 miles upstream of the South Fork McDonald Creek. South Fork McDonald Creek flows about 150 miles until it reaches Flatwillow Creek (Musselshell drainage).

**Fish species proposed for introduction:**

Rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout

**Are these species legally present in the drainage?**

Yes, some tributaries and ponds throughout the Musselshell drainage.

**Species of Special Concern present in the drainage:**

South Fork McDonald Creek does not contain any known species of special concern. Bear Creek is ephemeral. A tributary of Flatwillow Creek contains pure westslope cutthroat, but the westslope cutthroat are located about 200 miles upstream of the mouth of Flatwillow and above impassable Petrolia Reservoir. Redbelly x finescale dace, a species of special concern, were reported over 50 years ago from main McDonald Creek, about 50 miles downstream. In recent years the stream has often been dry.

**RISKS:**

**Inlets to or outlets from the pond?** Yes  No  **Explain:**

The outlet is not screened so fish stocked in this pond can go downstream during high flow events. Unlikely that fish would go far downstream, as the downstream drainage is ephemeral.

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

None  Minor  Major

Comments: No significant impacts are expected. Fish have to go over 6 miles to reach South Fork McDonald Creek. South Fork McDonald Creek has been dry much of the past 5 years. The rainbow trout and brown trout found there in the past, appear to have been eliminated or are now very rare. In the unlikely event stocked trout reach South Fork McDonald Creek they should have very little influence on genetics of any remaining non-native rainbow trout, brook trout and brown trout.

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

None  Minor  Major

Comments: Fish are likely not found in pond. Stocked trout will eat some minnows if present.

**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.

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

None  Minor  Major

Comments: Unlikely substrate is suitable for spawning.

**If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked?** Yes.

It should be possible to use chemicals during low/no flow periods to eradicate fish.

**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:** 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. Impacts expected to be minor.

**EA prepared by:** Anne Tews, Fisheries Biologist **DATE:** April 8, 2004