

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW OF FISH INTRODUCTION

Description of water body:

Name: Kelly Reservoir
County: Teton
Water code: Not available
Legal Description: T25N R04W Sec4 NW1/4

Name of the drainage where reservoir is located:

Kelly Reservoir is located on private land in an unnamed dry side coulee of Gamble Coulee approximately four miles northeast of Choteau. From the reservoir, the coulee runs in a southeasterly direction about 0.5 miles before entering Gamble Coulee. From this point, Gamble Coulee runs east then southeasterly approximately six miles before reaching the Teton River. The mouth of Gamble Coulee on the Teton River is located 15.1 river miles below the town of Choteau.

Fish species proposed for introduction: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is proposing to stock approximately 500 rainbow trout annually in Kelly Reservoir. The landowner has agreed to allow public access for youths to fish this reservoir.

Is this species legally present in the drainage? Yes, in the Teton River.

Species of Special Concern present in the drainage:

Survey work completed in the lower reaches of Gamble Coulee on 21 June, 2006, identified the presence of northern red belly X finescale dace (*Phoxinus eos* x *P. neogaeus*) hybrids, a Montana Species of Special Concern. Seven individuals were identified in a sample of 265 individual fish representing six species.

RISKS:

Potential for impacts on genetic structure of existing fish populations:

None Minor Major

Comments: No impacts are expected. Overflow from the reservoir does not reach any streams as it flows into a dry coulee, and then into the upper reaches of Gamble Coulee, which is ephemeral. In a major precipitation event it is possible stocked rainbow trout may flush from the reservoir and ultimately end up in the Teton River. However, rainbow trout are already present in the Teton River and no negative impacts are expected.

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

None Minor Major

Comments: The landowner is not aware of any existing fish populations in the reservoir.

Rainbow trout were stocked several years ago but have since died off. There is an existing private pond license (4-98018) associated with this reservoir.

If a major precipitation event results in stocked rainbow trout flushing from the pond, they may end up in the lower reaches of Gamble Coulee. Larger rainbow trout may prey on minnows and smaller fishes, including northern red belly X finescale dace that are found in this area. However, this predation risk is minimal because Gamble Coulee does not provide adequate trout habitat and their residency in this ephemeral drainage would be very short term. Additionally, northern red belly X finescale dace appeared in relatively low abundances in lower Gamble Coulee (i.e., 2.6% of all fish sampled).

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: It is not likely trout will spawn successfully due to absence of an inlet or outlet stream.

If necessary, would it be feasible to remove this species after it has been stocked? Yes - all fish could be eradicated by either draining all water from the reservoir or poisoning with rotenone.

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.

None necessary beyond this EA.

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

Tim Kelly, landowner
Montana anglers

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

David Moser, Acting Region 4 Fisheries Manager, MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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 and insignificant.

EA prepared by: Dave Yerk

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PUBLIC COMMENT DEADLINE: March 31, 2007

Comments should be sent to: Dave Yerk, MTFWP, PO Box 733, Choteau, MT 59422;
email: dyerk@3rivers.net