



DECISION NOTICE

Lightning and Thunderbolts Inc. Pond Application

FWP-DN-FSH-R6-25-002

04/8/2025

ACTION

Decision Notice (DN). Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) shall prepare a DN for the proposed action. The DN must identify the agency decision, the reasons for the decision, and any special conditions surrounding the decision or its implementation.

With this action, FWP hereby adopts the Draft Environmental Assessment or Draft EA as final and approves Alternative 2, the proposed action.

AUTHORITY: MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

According to the applicable requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act or MEPA and its implementing rules and regulations, before a proposed action may be approved, environmental review must be conducted to identify, consider, and disclose any potential impacts of the proposed action on the affected human environment. The level of environmental review will vary with the complexity and seriousness of environmental issues associated with a proposed action. The level of public interest will also vary. The agency is responsible for adjusting public review to match these factors. *Title 75, Chapter 1, Parts 1 through 3, Montana Code Annotated (MCA)*.

Based on these factors, FWP determined a CHECKLIST EA (Draft EA) constitutes the appropriate level of review for the proposed action. Therefore, to assess and disclose potential impacts of the proposed action, FWP prepared a Draft EA for public review and comment. See *Public Participation Process* below.

Further, FWP must consider any substantive comments received in response to an EA and proceed in accordance with one of the following steps: determine the EA did not adequately reflect the issues raised by the proposed action and issue an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS; determine the EA did not adequately reflect the issues raised by the proposed action and issue a supplemental EA; or determine the Draft EA adequately addressed the issues raised by the proposed action and make a final decision, with appropriate modification resulting from the analysis provided in the Draft EA and the analysis of any substantive public comments received. See *Public Comment and FWP Response* below.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

The Draft EA was made available for public review and comment from March 21, 2025 – April 5, 2025. The Draft EA was posted on FWP's Public Notice webpage: <https://fwp.mt.gov/news/public-notice>. The Draft EA was also made available for public review on the Environmental Quality Council or EQC website:

<https://leg.mt.gov/mepa/search/>, by individual request, and through notice to identified interested parties.

FWP DID NOT RECEIVE comments during the public comment period.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

A landowner is applying for a private fish pond license and proposes to stock a combination of largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, crappie, and bluegill. The seasonal runoff fed pond is approximately 4.5 surface acres and located 5 miles south of Inverness, Montana. The pond was excavated with an earthen dam, an earthen spillway serves as the outlet for the pond. The pond is located near the headwaters of the East Fork of Black Coulee, the risks with stocking the pond with hatchery-reared bass and panfish are minimal. The pond is also referred to as Lightning Reservoir. The project is sponsored by the landowner, and the license would be active for a period of 10 years from the year of issuance (2025). The license can be renewed for additional 10-year intervals at the end of each term, and the license is transferable.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose is for a private landowner to stock (in any combination) largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, crappie, and bluegill in the private pond located at T32N R8E S35

ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED

Alternative 1: No Action

In addition to the proposed action, and as required by MEPA, FWP analyzes the "No-Action" alternative in the EA. Under the No-Action alternative, the proposed action would not occur. Therefore, no additional impacts to the human environment would occur. The No Action alternative forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed action may be measured.

Under the No Action alternative FWP would not issue the Private Fish Pond License, no action would occur, and the status quo would be maintained.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, FWP would issue the Private Fish Pond License to the applicant, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, yellow perch, crappie, and bluegill from a state approved source could be stocked in the reservoir, and the statutory obligations of MCA 87-4-603:610 would be abided and enforced.

PUBLIC COMMENT AND FWP RESPONSE

No public comments were received during the public comment period.

DECISION

Based on the environmental review provided in the Draft EA, and in accordance with all applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies, FWP determined the proposed action (Alternative 2), will not have significant adverse impacts on the human environment associated with the proposed action and constitutes a reasonable and appropriate strategy to achieve identified objectives. Therefore, preparation of an EIS is unnecessary. FWP hereby adopts the Draft EA as final and approves the Alternative 2, the proposed action.

With this DN, FWP hereby adopts the Final EA and approves the proposed action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Drew Henry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Drew Henry
Region 6 Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks