

---

## **STOCKING WILDERNESS LAKES – THERE’S SOMETHING FISHY GOING ON?**

Jonathan Klein, USDA Forest Service, Madison Ranger District, Ennis Montana 59729

The Wilderness Act of 1964 set aside lands to be managed and protected so as to preserve their natural conditions. Yet, many historically fishless lakes within designated wilderness continue to be stocked with native and non-native fish by state fish and game agencies in order to provide recreational fishing opportunities. This practice is controversial because stocking programs can compromise ecological and social values of Wilderness. Stocking is commonly accomplished without adequate cooperation and consultation between state and federal agencies. A better understanding of wilderness impacts from fish stocking, as well as improved cooperation between agencies may help balance opportunities for recreational fishing with wilderness values.