

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
WATER RIGHTS BUREAU
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of action:** Water use permit application no.
Water right change application no. 40J-G(W)192856-00 (Temporary Change Application)
Petition or Other Action:

2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:** BARDANOUE, Francis, PO Box 367, Harlem, MT 59526 is the owner of the water right. MONTANA POWER COMPANY, 40 East Broadway, Butte, MT 59701, is the temporary user applicant.

3. **Water source name:** Unnamed tributary to MILK RIVER

4. **Location affected by action:** S½SWSE SEC. 29, TWP 32N, RGE 22E, BLAINE COUNTY

5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** DNRC shall issue an authorization for change of appropriation if the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-402, MCA, are met. Montana Power Company (MPC) is applying for a temporary change of use from a stock water right to industrial use, specifically hydrostatic testing of a natural gas pipeline. MPC is proposing to use a portion of a 14.4 acre-foot stockwater reservoir owned by Francis Bardanouve. MPC is requesting a temporary one-time use of 1500 gpm up to .25 AF for testing of a 10 mile pipeline stretching from SEC. 29, TWP 32N, RGE 22E, to SEC. 36, TWP 32N, RGE 20E. Their period of use will be some time between July 1, 1996 and August 31, 1996. This 6" pipeline will run parallel to and replace an existing 4" pipeline. The new pipeline will provide natural gas service to the Harlem and Fort Belknap areas.

6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**
None

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Soils/Geologic Features:

Degradation of soil quality or alteration of soil stability, moisture content, geologic substructure, unique geologic features, archeological sites?

NO

Erosion:

Alteration of erosion or siltation patterns which modify stream beds or lake shores?

NO

Vegetation/Noxious weeds:

Change in or adverse affect on diversity and production of local plant species including any unique or endangered species (including trees, shrubs, grass, and aquatic plants)? Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?

NO

Air:

Deterioration of air quality, or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

NO

Water:

Alteration of surface water or groundwater quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity or quantity or distribution?

Francis Bardanouve has agreed to limit his use of this stock water right until this project is completed to avoid over appropriation and adverse affect to existing uses.

Floodplain:

Changes in drainage patterns, course or magnitude of flood flows, or exposure of people/property to hazards (flood)?

NO

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat? Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife?

NO

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

NO

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?

MPC is constructing a temporary access road parallel to the pipeline. When pipeline construction is complete, MPC will follow reclamation procedures and reseed using native species. The land is primarily grazing land.

Historical Significance:

Destruction or alteration of a natural area of scientific or educational value or prehistoric or paleontological importance?

NO

Populace:

Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? Alteration of social structure of community?

NO

Transportation:

Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?

NO

Safety:

Creation of any health hazard or affect on existing emergency response or evacuation plans?

NO

Public Services:

Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? Have an effect upon local or state tax base?

NO

Utilities:

Creates need for new or altered facilities for any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?

NO

Aesthetics:

Alteration of any scenic vista or recreation opportunity or creation of an aesthetically offensive site to the public?

NO

Other:

NO

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2. **Secondary and cumulative impacts:** None
 3. **Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:** No significant impacts have been identified. If an authorization is not issued, the temporary applicant will need to find an alternative water supply which may not be available. In this area, there is a closure on the Milk River and other sources are over appropriated. MPC previously looked at other water sources but was unsuccessful. If this project is not completed, natural gas services to Harlem and Fort Belknap may suffer in the future. The existing 4" pipeline is causing some safety concerns and definitely needs to be replaced.

PART III. CONCLUSION

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? No

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

This is a temporary change for 2 months and it is a very small amount of water. No adverse affect is expected.

PREPARED BY:

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TITLE: Water Resource Specialist
DATE: June 21, 1996