

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. 41B-105640-00
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:** Circle S Ranch - Donald L. Lucas
Menlo Park, CA
3. **Water source name:** Krueger & Picket Creek
4. **Location affected by action:** SWNESW and SENESW of Section 3, T6S, R13W, Beaverhead County
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** The proposed project is to create 8 ponds for fish, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetics. Water for the ponds will come from Krueger and Picket Creek at a combined rate of 2.0 cfs up to 1445.4 AF/year.
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?

During the initial construction of the ponds and the channels there will be a slight degradation of the soils. However, the channels and the ponds are going to be lined which will eliminate future degradation of the existing soils. No unique geologic or archeological sites are known in the area.

Erosion:

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

While constructing the ponds and the channels, there will be an increase in erosion and siltation however, the affects will only be short term.

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?

The applicant proposes to plant shrubs, grass and trees along the channels and the ponds to provide a desirable appearance. The contractor who will construct the ponds has completed several projects like this in the past and it is unlikely that they will establish or spread noxious weeds.

Air:

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

If there are any affects to air quality, it will be during construction. Construction of the ponds should not take too long and any affects will be minor and short term.

Water:

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

During construction of the ponds and the channels there will be an increase in temperature, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity. However, the ponds are being created to benefit fisheries and the long term benefits of the ponds will outweigh the short term affects of construction.

Floodplain:

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

None known.

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

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

The ponds have been designed to benefit fish and wildlife.

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

None known.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

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

None

Historical Significance:

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

None known

Populace:

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

None

Transportation:

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

None

Safety:

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

None

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?

None

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?

None

Aesthetics:

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

One of the "purposes of use" for these ponds is aesthetics and recreation. The ponds are located on private property and will probably not be available to the public. The applicant has several consulting firms working on the design and construction of the ponds and the ponds should improve the existing aesthetic and recreational value of the land.

Other: None

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts:

If the ponds are not designed properly it could be fatal to the fish and wildlife. Also, the proposed project will divert water out of Krueger and Picket Creeks into a new channel which will reduce the amount of water available in the Creeks.

3. Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:

Another alternative would be to only use Krueger Creek to fill the ponds, and reduce the requested flow rate so that it is just enough for fish and wildlife. Currently, most of the requested flow rate is for aesthetic and recreational purposes which could be eliminated.

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 EA checklist did not find any major affects to the environment or the surroundings because of this project. The proposed project will benefit fisheries and provide a recreational opportunity. Therefore, an EA is an adequate level of analysis.

PREPARED BY:

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DATE: November 24, 1998