

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 RIGHT PERMIT APPLICATION NO.
40J-P111302
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**
USA (DEPT OF INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT)
HC 65 BOX 5000
MALTA, MT 59538
3. **Water source name:** WILSON COULEE
4. **Location affected by action:** NWSENE, SECTION 27, T31N, R29E, PHILLIPS COUNTY
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THIS PROJECT IS TO CONSTRUCT A NEW RESERVOIR FOR STOCK AND WILDLIFE/WATERFOWL USES. THE POINT OF DIVERSION (DAM) WILL BE LOCATED IN THE NWSENE, SECTION 27, T31N, R29E. THE PLACE OF USE WILL COVER PORTIONS OF THE NWSENE, NESWNE AND SENWNE, SECTION 27, T31N, R29E.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT STAFF REVIEWED AND PREPARED AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THIS PROJECT TO FULFILL NEPA REQUIREMENTS. THE BLM EA NUMBER FOR THIS PROJECT IS MT-091-EA00-015. NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WERE IDENTIFIED.

THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE A WATER USE PERMIT IF AN APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN 85-2-311, MCA ARE MET. THIS APPLICATION IS TO USE UP TO 21.5 ACRE- FEET.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**
USA-BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – EA # MT-091-EA00-015

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?

MINOR – SOILS IN THE AREA OF THE NEW RESERVOIR WILL BE UNDERWATER. THESE CHANGES ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT.

Erosion:

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

MINOR MODIFICATION WILL OCCUR TO THE SILTATION PATTERNS DUE TO THE PRESENCE OF THE NEW RESERVOIR. THE MODIFICATIONS ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT.

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?

ACCORDING TO BLM EA # MT-091-EA00-015, THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF THE SPREAD OF NOXIOUS WEEDS DUE TO RECREATIONISTS TRAVELING TO THIS LOCATION FROM WEED INFESTED AREAS. CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN TO INSPECT OR SPRAY THESE AREAS FOR THE SPREAD OF ANY OR ALL NOXIOUS WEEDS. IF

NOXIOUS WEEDS ARE FOUND, THE LOCAL WEED AGENCY WILL BE NOTIFIED TO ENSURE THAT THE PROPER FORM OF ERADICATION IS USED.

Air:

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

NO IMPACT

Water:

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

MINOR – SURFACE WATER PATTERNS WILL BE ALTERED WITH THE CREATION OF A NEW RESERVOIR. THE CHANGE IS NOT CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT.

Floodplain:

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

MINOR – DRAINAGE PATTERNS WILL BE ALTERED WITH THE CREATION OF THE NEW RESERVOIR.

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

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

NO IMPACT- THE RESERVOIR WILL CREATE NEW WATERFOWL AND WETLANDS HABITAT.

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

NO IMPACT- NO KNOWN UNIQUE, THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES ARE PRESENT (BLM EA # MT-091-EA00-015).

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

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

NO IMPACT

Historical Significance:

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

“A CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY WAS COMPLETED ON 4/4/00. NO CULTURAL OR HISTORIC PROPERTIES OF CONCERN WERE LOCATED. HOWEVER, IF CULTURAL RESOURCES ARE DISCOVERED THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED BY PROJECT-RELATED ACTIVITIES, WORK WILL CEASE IMMEDIATELY. ALTHOUGH THE POTENTIAL OF FINDING A CULTURAL OR HISTORIC PROPERTIES IS LOW, CARE SHOULD BE TAKEN NOT TO DISTURB THEM AND THE DISTRICT OFFICE MUST BE INFORMED AND AT THIS TIME OPERATION MUST CEASE UNTIL SUCH TIME ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE WILL BE DETERMINED BY BLM PERSONNEL, AND ANY APPROPRIALTE MITIGATION MEASURES WILL BE FORMULATED” (BLM EA # MT-091-EA00-015).

Populace:

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

NO IMPACT

Transportation:

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

NO IMPACT

Safety:

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

NO IMPACT

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 IMPACT

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 IMPACT

Aesthetics:

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

NO IMPACT

Other:

NO

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 THE USE OF THE THIS WATER WERE NOT APPROVED, THE APPLICANT WOULD NOT HAVE THE BENEFIT OF A RESERVOIR FOR STOCK AND WILDLIFE/WATERFOWL USE.

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:

AN EA IS ADEQUATE FOR THIS ACTION. THERE WILL BE NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS, THEREFORE, NO EIS IS REQUIRED.

PREPARED BY:

NAME: DENISE BIGGAR
TITLE: WATER RESOURCES SPECIALIST
DATE: [Automatic date code removed]