

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.
40D-P109610
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**
JAY DEE HIRSCH
PO BOX 129
MILES CITY, MT 59301
3. **Water source name:** EAST UALL CREEK
4. **Location affected by action:** SESESE, SECTION 8, T13N, R44E, GARFIELD COUNTY
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THIS PROJECT IS TO ADD 48 ACRES TO AN EXISTING WATERSPREADING SYSTEM. THE POINT OF DIVERSION IS LOCATED IN THE SESESE, SECTION 8 AND SWSWSW, SECTION 9 OF T13N, R44E, GARFIELD COUNTY. THE PLACE OF USE IS 5 ACRES IN THE SWSWSW, SECTION 9; 29 ACRES IN THE SE, SECTION 8; AND 13 ACRES IN THE NWNE OF SECTION 8; ALL IN T13N, R44E, GARFIELD COUNTY. THIS APPLICATION IS TO USE UP TO 120 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR. THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE A WATER USE PERMIT IF AN APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN 85-2-311, MCA ARE MET.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**
DNRC – GLASGOW WATER RESOURCES RO – FIELD INVESTIGATION
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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?

NO, BY DECREASING THE VELOCITY OF RUNOFF FLOWS MOISTURE CONTENT AND SOIL STABILITY SHOULD IMPROVE.

Erosion:

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

YES, THE NON-PERENNIAL CREEK HAS BEEN FILLED IN AND CONTOURED SO THAT THE ACRES CAN BE FLOOD IRRIGATED. WITH THE LAND LEVELED AND THE VELOCITY OF THE CREEK LOWERED, THERE SHOULD BE A DECREASE IN THE EROSION CREATED BY RUNOFF EVENTS. MUCH OF ORIGINAL CREEK BED UPSTREAM OF THE PROJECT IS NATURALLY GRASS COVERED.

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?

YES, ANY TIME LAND IS CROPPED, NATIVES SPECIES ARE PLOWED UP AND REPLACED BY THE CROP TO BE HARVESTED. THERE SHOULD BE NO AFFECT ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OR SPREAD OF NOXIOUS WEEDS.

Air:

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

NO, FLOOD IRRIGATION DOES NOT CREATE AIR POLLUTION. PLANTING AND HARVESTING WOULD INCREASE POLLUTANTS FROM THE EQUIPMENT FOR ONLY A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME.

Water:

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

YES, THE FLOW OF WATER WILL BE SLOWED AND SPREAD OUT OVER THE ACRES TO BE IRRIGATED BEFORE MOVING DOWN THE CREEK. MUCH OF SILT CARRIED BY THE RUNOFF WATER WILL LIKELY BE DEPOSITED OVER THE IRRIGATED ACRES DUE TO THE DECREASE IN VELOCITY.

Floodplain:

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

YES, SAME AS STATED ABOVE. EXPOSURE OF PEOPLE/PROPERTY TO FLOOD HAZARDS IS VERY UNLIKELY DUE TO THE REMOTENESS OF THE LOCATION.

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

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

PROBABLY NOT, THE PROJECT IS LOCATED ON A NON-PERENNIAL CREEK AND IS SURROUNDED BY DRY-LAND FARM GROUND AND NATIVE PRAIRIE.

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

IT IS NOT ANTICIPATED THAT ANY ENDANGERED SPECIES WOULD BE ADVERSELY IMPACTED BY THIS PROJECT. A MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM RESEARCH REQUEST REVEILED NO SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

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

YES, THE IRRIGATION WILL INCREASE THE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE LAND.

Historical Significance:

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

ACCORDING TO THE MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE, THERE ARE NO PREVIOUSLY RECORDED SITES IN THE PROJECT AREA. AS THE PROJECT IS LOCATED ON PRIVATE PROPERTY, NO RECONNAISSANCE SURVEY IS REQUIRED.

Populace:

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

NO, THIS FLOOD IRRIGATION PROJECT WILL HAVE NO IMPACT ON THE POPULACE.

Transportation:

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

NO, THIS PROJECT IS LOCATED IN A REMOTE LOCATION IN SOUTH GARFIELD COUNTY.

Safety:

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

NO, THIS PROJECT IS LOCATED IN A REMOTE LOCATION IN SOUTH GARFIELD COUNTY.

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, THIS PROJECT IS LOCATED IN A REMOTE LOCATION IN SOUTH GARFIELD COUNTY.

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, THIS IS A WATERSPREADING SYSTEM UTILIZING NATURAL FLOW.

Aesthetics:

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

NO

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 THIS WATER WERE NOT APPROVED, THE APPLICANT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ENJOY THE BENEFITS OF FLOOD IRRIGATION AND THE ASSOCIATED INCREASE IN CROP VALUE.

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]