

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.  
40K-G(P)089852
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
USA (DEPT OF INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MGMT)  
HC-65 BOX 5000  
MALTA, MT 59538
3. **Water source name:** UNNAMED TRIBUTARY OF WHITEWATER CREEK, NORTH  
FORK
4. **Location affected by action:** NWSENE, SECTION 22, T37N, R31E, PHILLIPS COUNTY
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THIS CHANGE IS TO  
REPLACE A RESERVOIR THAT WAS UNABLE TO HOLD WATER. THE NEW RESERVOIR  
WILL BE LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 2000 FEET DOWNSTREAM OF THE OLD  
RESERVOIR ON THE SAME UNNAMED TRIBUTARY. THE NEW POINT OF DIVERSION IS  
IN THE NWSENE, SECTION 22, T37N, R31E. THE NEW PLACE OF USE COVERS 2.66  
ACRES WITHIN THE NWSENE AND SWNE OF SECTION 22, T37N, R31E.  
  
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-090-EA00-018. NO  
SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WERE IDENTIFIED.  
  
THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE A CHANGE AUTHORIZATION IF THE APPLICANT PROVES THE  
CRITERIA IN 85-2-402, MCA ARE MET. THIS APPLICATION IS TO STORE WATER IN A  
17.3 ACRE-FOOT RESERVOIR.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
USA-BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – EA #MT-090-EA00-018

**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 UNDER WATER.  
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-090-EA00-018, 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-090-EA00-018).

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| <b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b> |
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**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 or archeological importance?

“A CULTURAL RESOURCE STUDY WAS COMPLETED ON 10/4/99. 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-090-EA00-018).

**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 IMPACT

**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 THIS AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE WAS NOT ISSUED, THE APPLICANT WOULD NOT HAVE THE BENEFIT OF A REPLACEMENT RESERVOIR FOR STOCK AND WILDLIFE 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:

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