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 change application no. 76G-G(W)032342-01

2. Applicant/Contact name and address: Old Works Golf Course Authority
Water Rights Owned by:
ARCO Environmental Remediation, LLC
c/o Sandra Stash, Vice President
307 East Park, Ste. 400
Anaconda, MT, 59711

3. Water source name: Warm Springs Creek

4. Location affected by action: NW, Section 2, Township 4North, Range 11West, Deer Lodge County

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken: The applicant proposes to change the point of diversion and place of use of 1.4 CFS, up to 345 acre-feet/year from water rights 76G-W032341-00 and W032350-00. The new diversion consists of a gravity pipeline with valve on Warm Springs Creek in NESENW, Section 2, T04N R11W, Deer Lodge County. The new place of use will be the Old Works Golf Course, in Sections 35 and 36, T05N R11W, and Sections 1,2 and 3, T04N R11W, all in Deer Lodge County. Water will be diverted into one of the two ponds on the course. From there it will be diverted into the other pond (as a water hazard) and to irrigate the rest of the course. The period of appropriation will be April 1 - September 30.

To accomodate the new place of use, 106 acres will be taken out of irrigation in Sections 3 and 17, T05N R10W, Deer Lodge County.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment: Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Deer Lodge Conservation District; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Montana Historical Society.

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. Historical activity adversely impacted soils and geologic features. The golf course is an Environmental Protection Agency sanctioned remediation action. It has already been completed and is in use. The new diversion structure has also been completed.

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

The Deer Lodge Conservation District issued a 310 permit on September 24, 1998. The diversion structure has been completed. The stream bank on either side of the structure has been rocked in a

way that it appears will limit any stream bank erosion. The bank within the diversion structure has been covered with a grout-like material to prevent any soil from the golf course from entering the water.

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 new diversion and existing golf course will have no affect on local vegetation.

It is unknown what activity will take place on the land being taken out of irrigation. Dry farming will have little or no impact on vegetation. No activity on the acreage may increase the incidence of either native vegetation or noxious weeds.

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?

There may have been a temporary increase in turbidity and/or siltation in the stream bed during construction of the diversion works. Under operating conditions, there should not be any alteration in water quality. The intake pipeline is equipped with a backflow prevention device. The golf course has a drainage system that traps all surface runoff and percolation and diverts it to two off-site settling ponds for treatment. This should limit contaminants from entering Warm Springs Creek.

Because the new diversion is upstream from the old diversion, there may be a reduction in the quantity of water in the stream between the diversion points. This could result in an increase in water temperature.

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?

Modification of the design of the diversion structure, as required by the Corps. Of Engineers during the 404 permitting process resulted in construction of a structure that does not span the stream channel. It should not affect fish passage in the area.

The stream is very channelized in this area and is poor quality fish habitat. However, there are quite a few fish in this area (Telephone communications with Wayne Hadley, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, April 2000).

Endangered Species:
Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

Warm Springs Creek supports two sensitive species of fish. West Slope Cutthroat Trout are found in the upper portion of the stream and probably would not be affected by this project. Bull Trout are

"reasonably expected" and probably enter the project area (Telephone communication with Wayne Hadley). They may be affected if the moving of the diversion upstream has any dewatering affect on Warm Springs Creek between the old and new diversions.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:
Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?

No

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

No. The Montana Historical Society has determined that due to previous disturbance of the area, no significant impact will occur with this project (See Montana Historical Society report in this file).

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:

The Old Works Golf course is already in existence. This change will effectively give the course the ability to irrigate with surface water as well as groundwater from Permit for Beneficial Water Use No. 76G-P092739-00.

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2. Secondary and cumulative impacts: Because the golf course is already in existence, secondary or cumulative impacts from the course are not identified in this assessment. No secondary or cumulative impacts have been identified with the installation of a new diversion structure on Warm Springs Creek.

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

A) No action alternative: The golf course would continue to irrigate with groundwater under it's water right permit. Poor water quality is a problem with the wells. Continuous irrigation with groundwater may have a detrimental effect on golf course vegetation.

B) No irrigation alternative: The golf course would discontinue irrigation of course vegetation. This would probably result in dead vegetation and discontinued use of the course.

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 sufficient because the impacts of this water right change are minimal, since the golf course is already in existence and fully operational.

PREPARED BY:

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DATE: [Automatic date code removed]