

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.  
40S-G(R)111301
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
RICHLAND COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
HCR 89 BOX 5165A  
SIDNEY, MT 59270
3. **Water source name:** MISSOURI RIVER
4. **Narrative Summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THIS CHANGE APPLICATION IS TO ADD A POINT OF DIVERSION AND PLACE OF USE TO THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT'S RESERVED WATER RIGHT.

THE NEW POINT OF DIVERSION WILL BE IN THE SWSESE, SECTION 4, T26N, R59E. THE NEW PLACES OF USE ARE 66 ACRES IN THE NE, 36 ACRES IN THE NESW AND 19 ACRES IN THE SENW, ALL WITHIN SECTION 9, T26N, R59E. THERE IS A TOTAL OF 121 ACRES OF NEW IRRIGATION.

THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE AN AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE IF THE APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN 85-2-402, MCA ARE MET.

5. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

**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?

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Erosion:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**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?

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Air:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Water:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Floodplain:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Wildlife Habitat/Migration:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Endangered Species:**

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

A REPORT RECEIVED FROM THE MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM INDICATES THERE ARE THREE SPECIES OF CONCERN WITHIN THE GENERAL AREA OF THE PROJECT. THE LEAST TERN AND THE PALLID STURGEON ARE LISTED AS ENDANGERED AND THE PIPING PLOVER AS THREATENED. HABITAT FOR THESE SPECIES EXTENDS OVER MULTIPLE TOWNSHIPS.

THE LEAST TERN AND THE PIPING PLOVER PREFER NESTING SITES ON ISLANDS AND SANDBARS. PUMP SITES ARE TYPICALLY SET IN DEEPER WATER. THE SHALLOW WATER AROUND ISLANDS AND SANDBARS ARE AVOIDED. THE PUMP BEING USED FOR THIS PROJECT IS A CORNELL CENTRIFUGAL WITH FLOATING SUCTION. THE INTAKE ON THIS TYPE OF PUMP SITS HIGH IN THE WATER COLUMN AND SHOULD HAVE MINIMAL IMPACT ON THE FISHERY.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Existing Land Use:**

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

121 ACRES ARE NEW IRRIGATION. THE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THESE ACRES WOULD INCREASE.

**Historical Significance:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Transportation:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Safety:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**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?

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**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?

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Aesthetics:**

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

ADDRESSED IN THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE LOWER MISSOURI RIVER BASIN RESERVATIONS DATED AUGUST 11,1994.

**Other:**

NO

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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 CHANGE AUTHORIZATION WERE NOT ISSUED, THE CONSERVATION DISTRICT COULD NOT BENEFIT FROM HAVING A RESERVED WATER RIGHT.**

**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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DATE:       [Automatic date code removed]