

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.  
40Q-P109592
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
KENNETH P. BENSON  
P.O. BOX 1133  
SCOBAY, MT 59263
3. **Water source name:** POPLAR RIVER
4. **Location affected by action:** NWNWNE, SECTION 27, T34N, R48E, DANIELS COUNTY
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THIS PROJECT IS TO ADD 66 ACRES TO AN EXISTING SPRINKLER IRRIGATION SYSTEM. THE POINT OF DIVERSION IS LOCATED IN THE NWNWNE, SECTION 27, T34N, R48E. THE PLACE OF USE IS 66 ACRES IN THE E2NE, T34N, R48E. THIS APPLICATION IS ASSOCIATED TO WATER RIGHT # 40Q-W104430. THEY SHARE THE SAME MEANS AND POINT OF DIVERSION.  
  
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 178 ACRE- FEET.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM  
MONTANA STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE  
DEQ WEBSITE – TMDL 303d LIST

**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?

THE 66 ACRES IS CURRENTLY BEING FARMED UNDER DRY LAND CROPS. THE ADDITION OF IRRIGATION SHOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON THE SOIL QUALITY HOWEVER THE MOISTURE CONTENT WILL INCREASE.

**Erosion:**

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

THE ADDITION OF THE ACRES TO AN EXISTING SYSTEM WILL NOT ALTER THE STREAM BED. THESE ADDITIONAL ACRES WILL UTILIZE AN EXISTING MEANS AND POINT OF DIVERSION.

**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 MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM WEBSITE LISTS NO "PLANT SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN" LOCATED IN THE PROJECT AREA.

**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?

THE 1998 MONTANA 303(d) LIST RANKS THE POPLAR RIVER AS LOW PRIORITY FOR TMDL DEVELOPMENT. PROBABLE IMPAIRED USES INCLUDE AQUATIC LIFE SUPPORT, COLD WATER FISHERY, AGRICULTURE, RECREATION, SWIMMING AND DRINKING WATER SUPPLY. THE ACRES TO BE IRRIGATED ARE LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 1/2 MILE AWAY FROM THE RIVER.

**Floodplain:**

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

THE ADDITION OF 66 ACRES TO THE EXISTING IRRIGATION SYSTEM WILL NOT CREATE ANY FLOODPLAIN CHANGES.

**Wildlife Habitat/Migration:**

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

THE ACRES TO BE IRRIGATED ARE ALREADY CROP LAND. THE ADDITION OF IRRIGATION SHOULD NOT CREATE ANY DETERIORATION OF HABITAT OR BARRIER TO MOVEMENT OF WILDLIFE.

**Endangered Species:**

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

ACCORDING TO THE MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM, THERE ARE 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?

THE EXISTING LAND USE WILL NOT CHANGE HOWEVER, THE ADDITION OF 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 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 DANIELS 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 DANIELS 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 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 ADDITIONAL UTILITIES WILL BE REQUIRED TO ADD THESE ACRES TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM.

**Aesthetics:**

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

NO IMPACT

**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 IMPACTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED. IF THE USE OF THE THIS WATER WERE NOT APPROVED, APPLICANT WOULD NOT HAVE THE BENEFIT OF SPRINKLER 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]