

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.
76LJ-P111158-00
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
P.O. Box 25486
Denver Federal Center
Denver, CO 80225
3. **Water source name:** GROUNDWATER WELL
4. **Location affected by action:** NESESE, SECTION 10, T28N, R20W, FLATHEAD COUNTY
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** 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 THE WATER IN A WELL. THE WELL WAS DRILLED ON THE OWNERS PROPERTY USING STANDARD WELL DRILLING PRACTICES WITH MINIMAL DISTURBANCE TO THE AREA. WELLS DRILLED IN THIS MANNER HAVE LITTLE TO NO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT. THIS EA CHECKLIST WILL ADDRESS THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS WITH RESPECT TO THE LOCATION OF THE WELL. THE APPLICANT PROPOSES TO DIVERT WATER AT A RATE OF 90 GPM NOT TO EXCEED 145.15 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR FOR FISH INCUBATION, REARING AND PROPAGATION.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)
NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM (NHP)

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, THE FISH HATCHERY HAS BEEN IN PLACE FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THAT PATHOGEN FREE GROUNDWATER WILL BE USED INSTEAD OF SURFACE WATER. THE PLACEMENT OF THE WELL WILL NOT ALTER SOIL STABILITY OR THE GEOLOGIC SUBSTRUCTURE. A QUERY WITH SHPO REVEALED THAT THE

CRESTON FISH HATCHERY IS CONSIDERED ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES AND HAS THE SMITHSONIAN NUMBER OF 24FH600. OTHER THAN BEING AN HISTORIC SITE IN ITSELF, THERE ARE NO KNOWN HISTORIC SITES IN THIS LOCATION.

Erosion:

Alteration of erosion or siltation patterns that modify streambeds or lake shores?

NO, THE LOCATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF THIS WELL WILL NOT ALTER STREAMBEDS OR LAKE SHORES. THE WELL WILL BE USED TO SUPPLY WATER TO A FISH RACEWAY. NEITHER THE WELL NOR ITS WATER WILL BE EXPOSED TO A STREAM OR LAKE. THE PROPOSED USE WILL NOT ALTER CURRENT EROSION PATTERNS

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?

NO, THE WELL WILL SUPPLY WATER TO A FULLY CONTAINED INDOOR FISH RACEWAY. THE USE OF THE WELL WILL NOT AFFECT VEGETATION.

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, turbidity, quantity, or distribution?

NO, THE WELL IS DRILLED INTO THE DEEP ARTESIAN AQUIFER. THE AMOUNT OF WATER PROPOSED IS NEGLIGIBLE WITH RESPECT TO THE AVAILABILITY. WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY WILL NOT BE ALTERED BY THIS WELL.

Floodplain:

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

NO INCREASED HAZARDS

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

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

NO, THE USE OF THIS WATER WILL ENHANCE FISHERIES. IT WILL SUPPLY A FISH RACEWAY WITH SAFE WATER.

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

NO, IT WILL ENHANCE THE REARING HABITAT FOR SEVERAL SPECIES OF FISH.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

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

THE WATER USE WILL INCREASE THE PROFITABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY OF THE PROPERTY AND AREA LAKES SUPPLIED BY THE HATCHERY.

Historical Significance:

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

THE FISH HATCHERY IS A HISTORICAL RESOURCE IN ITSELF. THIS WATER USE WILL ENHANCE IT.

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, THE SYSTEM HAS BEEN IN AFFECT FOR SEVERAL YEARS. THE ONLY CHANGE IS THE SOURCE OF WATER FOR A FISH RACEWAY AT A NATIONAL HATCHERY.

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 CHANGE

Other:

OVERALL BENEFICIAL IMPACTS

2. **Secondary and cumulative impacts:** BENEFICIAL IMPACTS OF SUPPLYING LOCAL AREA LAKE WITH HEALTHY FISH.
3. **Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:**
 - 1) ISSUE THE PERMIT DUE TO NET POSITIVE IMPACTS FROM THE PROPOSED USE.
 - 2) DENY THE PERMIT DUE TO UNKNOWN NEGATIVE IMPACTS. THE NATIONAL FISH HATCHERY WILL NEED TO FIND ANOTHER UNCONTAMINATED SOURCE OF WATER.

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. NO ADVERSE IMPACTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED, THEREFORE AN EIS IS NOT REQUIRED.

PREPARED BY:

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