

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(W)172440-00
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**
GUNSIGHT LAND PARTNERSHIP
P.O. BOX 351
GLASGOW, MT 59230
3. **Water source name:** MISSOURI RIVER
4. **Narrative Summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THIS APPLICATION IS TO CHANGE THE POINT OF DIVERSION. THE NEW POINT OF DIVERSION WILL BE LOCATED IN THE SWNESW SECTION 09, T26N, R44E. THE OLD PUMP SITE HAS BECOME UNUSABLE DUE TO EROSION CREATED BY THE CHANGING RIVER. THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE AN AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE IF THE APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN 85-2-402, MCA ARE MET.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

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?

NO IMPACTS

Erosion:

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

THERE MAY BE SOME MINOR ALTERATION TO THE RIVER BANK WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUMP SITE BUT THESE IMPACTS ARE NOT CONSIDERED 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?

THE MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM IDENTIFIED NO PLANT SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN WITHIN THE PROJECT AREA. DURING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUMP SITE THERE MAY BE SOME GROUND DISTURBANCE WHICH MAY ENCOURAGE WEED GROWTH. THE AREA OF THE PUMP SITE IS SMALL, HOWEVER, AND ANY WEEDS THAT DO BECOME ESTABLISHED COULD BE EASILY CONTROLLED.

Air:

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

NO IMPACTS

Water:

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

THERE MAY BE A MINOR INCREASE IN THE TURBIDITY WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUMP SITE, HOWEVER, THE EFFECTS WOULD BE TEMPORARY. NO ALTERATION TO WATER QUALITY SHOULD OCCUR ONCE THE PUMP IS SET INTO OPERATING POSITION.

Floodplain:

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

NO IMPACTS

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

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

MOVEMENT OF THE PUMP SITE TO ACCOMMODATE THE CHANGING RIVER BANK SHOULD NOT CREATE ANY ADDITIONAL DETERIORATION TO HABITAT OR BARRIER TO MOVEMENT OF WILDLIFE.

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

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

THE LEAST TERN TYPICALLY NESTS ON ISLANDS AND BARREN SANDBARS AND SHOULD NOT BE IMPACTED BY THIS CHANGE. PUMP SITES ARE TYPICALLY CHOSEN FOR DEEPER WATER AND AVOID SANDBARS WHICH CAN MAKE THE SITE UNUSABLE. THE PUMP IS SCREENED AND MOVING IT FROM ONE LOCATION TO ANOTHER SHOULD NOT CREATE ANY ADDITIONAL IMPACT ON THE PALLID STURGEON.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

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

THIS APPLICATION WILL SIMPLY ALLOW THE APPLICANT TO MOVE HIS PUMP SITE. THE EXISTING IRRIGATED ACRES SHOULD REMAIN PRODUCTIVE AND PROFITABLE.

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?

THERE WILL BE NO ALTERATION IN THE HUMAN POPULATION OR SOCIAL STRUCTURE WITH THE MOVEMENT OF THIS PUMP SITE.

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 IMPACTS

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 IMPACTS -THE PUMP IS DRIVEN BY A DIESEL MOTOR.

Aesthetics:

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

NO IMPACTS

Other:

NO IMPACTS

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 APPLICANT COULD NOT BENEFIT FROM HAVING THE ABILITY TO MOVE HIS PUMP SITE IN RESPONSE TO THE CHANGING RIVER.

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]