

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
WATER RIGHTS BUREAU

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Revised 10-00

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**
RULON AND AGNES ABBOTT
HC 63 BOX 2085
GRASS RANGE, MT 59032
2. **Type of action:** WATER RIGHT CHANGE APPLICATION NO. 40B-G(E)113581-00
3. **Water source name:** GROUNDWATER
4. **Location affected by action:** NW SW SW SEC 20, T12N, R24E FERGUS COUNTY
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE AN AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE IF AN APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN 85-2-402, MCA ARE MET. THIS APPLICATION IS TO REPLACE AN EXISTING WELL LOCATED IN THE NW SW SW SEC 20, T12N, R24E FERGUS COUNTY WITH A NEW WELL LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 10 FEET NORTH ALSO IN THE NW SW SW SEC 20, T12N, R24E, FERGUS COUNTY. THE EXISTING RIGHT WAS FOR 10 GPM UP TO .63 AF ACRE-FEET FOR LAWN AND GARDEN
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**
State Historic Preservation Office

Part II: Environmental Review

1. **Environmental Impact Checklist:**

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Water quantity, quality and distribution

Water quantity: Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: N/A. Replacement well. See Groundwater below.

Determination: Water quality: Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: N/A. Replacement well. See Groundwater below.

Groundwater: Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply.
If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

Determination: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The flow rate and volume of water to be used is minimal and is no greater than what was used in the past. The well log indicates a water supply well above that to be appropriated. A licensed water well contractor drilled the well and it is assumed board of water well standards were adhered to and as such groundwater quality should not be effected. The well log appears to indicate no direct connection to surface flow.

Diversion works

Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

Determination: NO LIKELY IMPACT. Well was drilled by a licensed water well contractor. As such it is assumed that the well was constructed according to accepted standards.

Unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources

Endangered and threatened species: Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."

Determination: NO IMPACT. There does not appear to be any direct connection between this well and surface flows so no fish species would be impacted. The well is at a preexisting domestic site and any barriers to wildlife movement would have already been present.

Wetlands: Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.

Determination: N/A. Replacement well.

Ponds: For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.

Determination: N/A. Replacement well.

Geology/Soil quality, stability and moisture

Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.

Determination: NO IMPACT.

Vegetation cover, quantity and quality/Noxious weeds

Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.

Determination: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. There would have been disturbance in the immediate area of the well head, but since this is at a domestic residence, it is assumed the applicant will take measures to contain any weed growth.

Air quality

Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

Determination: NO IMPACT.

Historical and archeological sites

Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Determination: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The State Historic Preservation office conducted a cultural resource file search and found no recorded cultural properties. Given that the new well is located on previously disturbed ground it was felt any impact would be unlikely.

Demands on environmental resources of land, water, and energy

Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.

Determination: N/A

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

Determination: NO IMPACT.

Access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities

Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.

Determination: NO IMPACT.

Human health

Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: NO IMPACT

Other human environmental issues

For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? NO IMPACT
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? NO IMPACT
- (c) Existing land uses? NO IMPACT
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? NO IMPACT
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? NO IMPACT
- (f) Demands for government services? NO IMPACT
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? NO IMPACT
- (h) Utilities? NO IMPACT
- (i) Transportation? NO IMPACT
- (j) Safety? NO IMPACT
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? NO IMPACT

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:
NONE

3. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:

The no action alternative would result in the applicant having to find another source of water for his lawn and garden irrigation. This would require abandonment of the well that is already in place, drilling a new well or obtaining water from surface source, which all would result in further disturbance to the area. Since the well is already in place, the proceed alternative is preferred, since this would result in no additional impact to the area.

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:

No significant impacts have been identified. Therefore, an EA is adequate for this replacement well application.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Gayle Phillips
Title: Program Assistant
Date: 10-16-00