

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Revised 11-00

Note: Instructions to DNRC staff for preparing this EA can be found at:
http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html

Part I. Proposed Action Description

- 1. Applicant/Contact name and address:** Jerry Lacy
540 West Village Drive
Bigfork, MT 59911
- 2. Type of action:** Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76K-P114019-00
- 3. Water source name:** Echo Lake
- 4. Location affected by action:** NWNENW, Section 8, T27N, R19W, Flathead County
- 5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:** The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, MCA are met. The applicant is seeking a water use permit from Echo Lake for one-half acre lawn & garden. Water will be diverted at a rate of 30 gpm up to 1.25 acre-feet per year. Water will be diverted with a 1.5 horsepower pump. The water will be pumped through a 1.5" PVC pipe to a pump house. This EA checklist will address the environmental impacts due to the amount of water diverted from the source.
- 6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)**
Natural Heritage Program (NHP)
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP)
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

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: The source is not identified as chronically or periodically dewatered. Echo Lake has a usable capacity of 25,375 acre-feet of water and is a natural reservoir. The proposed use will not adversely impact the quantity of water in the source.

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: The source is not identified as impaired or threatened. The withdrawal of 1.25 acre-feet of water per year will not impact water quality. However, the use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides could have a negative impact on water quality.

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: The proposed use is from a surface source and will not impact groundwater quantity or quality.

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: The proposed diversion will require the burial of pipe from the lakeshore to the pump house. This project will require a permit from another government agency. The impact will be minimal and temporary.

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: The project location is within grizzly bear habitat boundaries. However, no other endangered or threatened species were located within the same section as the applicant's property. The proposed project will not adversely impact endangered or threatened species.

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: Not applicable

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

Determination: Not applicable

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: The withdrawal of water from Echo Lake will not alter area geology. The use of the water for lawn and garden will enhance soil moisture and stability.

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: The proposed use will enhance the vegetation and keep noxious weeds under control.

Air quality

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

Determination: The proposed use will not have an impact on air quality.

Historical and archeological sites

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

Determination: The project location is on previously developed private property. The chance of any historical or archeological remains existing at the site is very slim. Since the property is private, there is nothing that can be done to protect potential historical remains.

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: None

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

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

Determination: The project is consistent with the land use of the area. Recommended Water Quality Targets by the Flathead Basin Commission will cause load reduction and in time improve water quality.

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: Echo Lake is accessible for public recreation. The proposed project is on private land and will not hinder public access.

Human health

Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: The project will not affect human health.

Private property

Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights. Yes___ No X. If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: Private property rights are not impacted or regulated by this proposed action. The right to use water belonging to the State of Montana will become a property right if approved.

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 ? None
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues ? None
- (c) Existing land uses ? None
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment ? None
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing ? None
- (f) Demands for government services ? None

- (g) Industrial and commercial activity ? None
- (h) Utilities ? None
- (i) Transportation ? None
- (j) Safety ? None
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances ? None

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:

A secondary impact from watering lawn & garden would be the application of fertilizers, herbicides, or pesticides that would runoff into the lake. The cumulative impact of everyone on the lake practicing this would cause eutrophication of the lake.

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:

If the applicant follows Best Management Practices (BMP's), there will not be a water quality concern from the above-referenced causes. A buffer zone of native vegetation between the lawn and lakeshore dramatically decreases the potential for contaminated runoff to reach the lake. Education is the best defense for the environment.

4. 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:

Using lake water for the intended purpose will not pose any greater environmental impact than using water from a well. Therefore, a reasonable alternative is not identified. The no action plant would deny the applicant the right to use the water. Not watering the lawn would be a greater environmental impact than watering.

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: Significant impacts have not been identified.

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

Name: Cristy Carter

Title: Water Resource Specialist

Date: 12/29/00