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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

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*: Kalispell, City of
PO Box 1997
Kalispell, MT 59903-1997

2. *Type of action*: Permit to Appropriate Water 76LJ-P30008766

3. *Water source name*: Groundwater Well

4. *Location affected by action*: NE¼ NW¼ NW¼, Section 20, Township 28N, Range 21W, 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 for up to 2,305 acre-feet from a groundwater well that has been in use since 1964. The Armory well has been used for municipal purposes for the City of Kalispell and pumped at a rate of 1,650 gallons per minute up to 356 acre-feet. This application is to increase the total overall volume to 2,661 acre-feet per year by the year 2020. HDR Engineering, Morison-Maierle and Land and Water Consulting estimated the current and predicted service area for the City of Kalispell. City growth and water consumption identified between 1990 and 2000 is approximately 17 percent. It is predicted that growth will continue at this rate for the next twenty years. A portion of the additional volume requested in this application will be put to use immediately. The remainder of the additional volume will be put to use over the next 20-years as the City of Kalispell benefits from the ability to meet existing demands.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment: (include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

No agencies were consulted based on the nature of this project.

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: Not applicable, the source is groundwater.

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: Not applicable, the source is groundwater.

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 well will derive groundwater from the deep artesian aquifer within the Flathead Valley. Hydrogeologic information indicates that the deep artesian aquifer is present valley-wide encompassing an area of approximately 300 square miles. The primary recharge to the aquifer is from snowmelt infiltration in the surrounding mountain ranges. This requested permit should have no effect to the quality or supply of this groundwater source.

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: A 16-inch diameter steel casing was installed from the ground surface to a depth of 276 feet with 10-inch diameter casing between 276 feet and 380 feet. Grout provides a sanitary surface seal and prevents seepage of surface runoff water from entering the aquifer, however no seal records are recorded with the Groundwater Information Center. The well will not affect any of the described elements and is properly constructed.

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 land where the well is located is currently in Kalispell at the original National Guard Armory, now downtown Kalispell. There will be no impact to threatened or endangered species or species of special concern.

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: There are no wetlands that will be impacted from pumping this additional volume.

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

Determination: This appropriation will not affect ponds.

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 well has been used without problem for many years.

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: Not applicable

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: The increased time of operating the existing pump will not have an impact.

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.

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: There will be no impact to the quality of recreation or wilderness activities nor will access be denied to any established recreation areas except by Forest Service road closures that occur throughout public domain in Flathead County.

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

Determination: The project will have a positive affect on 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: Not Applicable.

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

(*b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues?* No

(c) Existing land uses? No

(*d) Quantity and distribution of employment?* No

(e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No

(f) Demands for government services? No

(g) Industrial and commercial activity? No

(h) Utilities? No

(i) Transportation? No

(j) *Safety?* No

(k) *Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?* No

2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*** As the Flathead Valley continues to grow the demand on groundwater will increase. At some point the cumulative impact may become problematic.

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** An instantaneous/cumulative flow meter is installed at the wellhead.

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:*** No action would result in limiting Kalispell's future growth. There is no reasonable alternative to groundwater.

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, no EIS is necessary.

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

Name: Rich Russell
Title: Water Resources Specialist
Date: January 8, 2004