

**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](http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html)

**Part I. Proposed Action Description**

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* Blackwood Dry Creek LP  
2603 Blackwood Rd  
Bozeman, Mt. 59718
2. *Type of action:* Application to Change A Water Right # 41H 30004806
3. *Water source name:* West Gallatin River
4. *Location affected by action:* S2 SW Sec 36 T2S R4E & Sec 19 T2S R5E, Gallatin County
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*  
Ten acres will be removed from irrigation in the S2SW Sec 36 T2S R4E, Gallatin County. The additional water will be used on 220 acres in Sec 19 t2S R5E Gallatin County. The DRNC 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:*  
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction) Montana State Historical Preservation Office, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Gallatin County Planning Office, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

**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 of water, the West Gallatin River, has been listed as periodically dewatered. This is an existing water right, and will not be diverting additional water.

**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 West Gallatin River has been listed on the DEQ, 303(d) list. Water quality will not be impacted by this proposal.

**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:* This use of surface water will have no impact on groundwater.

**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:* Water will be diverted through the same canals. No impact on the river is expected.

#### **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 Montana Natural Heritage Program was contacted. The dwarf purple monkeyflower, and slender wedgrass may occur in this area.

**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:* By applying additional irrigation water to irrigated ground, wetlands will not be impacted.

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

*Determination:* This project does not involve 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 historically irrigated soils are not heavy in salts.

**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:* Existing vegetative cover will not be changed.

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

*Determination:* Air quality will not be affected by this change.

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES** - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

*Determination:* SHPO was contacted. Because this land has been plowed. A cultural resource inventory is unwarranted.

**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:* No additional impacts on other environmental resources were identified.

<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>
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**LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS** - Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

*Determination:* The Gallatin County Planning Board has no restrictions against changing the place of use for irrigation water.

**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:* This project is located on private land, with no access to recreational or wilderness activities. No impact is expected.

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

*Determination:* No impact to human health is expected.

**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 by this proposed action.

**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:*** It has been determined that there are no secondary impacts to the human and physical environment. The cumulative impacts to the physical environment are minimal.
3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** No mitigation measures are necessary.
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:*** The applicant can continue irrigating with his existing water rights. He could also drill a well to obtain additional 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:* Significant impacts have not been identified. The EA is the appropriate level of action for this project.

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

*Name:* Jan R. Mack  
*Title:* Water Resources Specialist  
*Date:* January 12, 2004