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: Gerald D. & Marilyn J. Bowman, 21480 E Lakeshore, Bigfork, MT 59911-7217

2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76LJ-30009551

3. Water source name: Flathead River (Flathead Lake)

4. Location affected by action: NE quarter of section 17, T 25N, R 19W, Lake County.

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits: The department shall issue a water use permit if the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, Montana Code Annotated are met. The applicants propose to pump water from Flathead Lake at a rate of 100 gpm up to 52.5 acre-feet annually for orchard irrigation from April 15 to October 15. They will use a 10-15 hp submersible electric pump to push water into and through their existing irrigation system. In an effort to minimize impacts on the source, they are utilizing low volume, highly efficient individual emitters for each tree irrigated. There will be no irrigation between trees.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment: MT Historical Society, MT Natural Heritage Program, MT DEQ and MT DFWP.
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

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: Flathead Lake is not considered dewatered.

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: There is little chance that this appropriation will have any adverse impact to the quality of Flathead Lake.

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 impacts

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: After initial installation of the pump and service lines, there will be no more disturbance of the shoreline or lakebed.

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: Although Flathead Lake is habitat for adult Bull Trout, the Common Loon and Bald Eagles are known to frequent this area, this action will have no adverse impact on these and other plant or animal species of special concern. Nor will it create a migration barrier for the occasional Grizzly Bear that might pass through the 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: There are no wetlands appurtenant to this action.

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

Determination: The project does not include 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: This action will simply replace the source for irrigation water from a well and stream, to the lake.

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: All weeds are strictly controlled in the orchard area.

Air quality

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

Determination: No impacts.

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 historical sites were identified on this parcel or in the immediate area.

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: There will be an increase in power demand once the diesel generator is replaced with the new electric pump.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

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

Determination: This action is consistent with other like planned uses in the area.

Access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities

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

Determination: No impacts.

Human health

Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: There should be no new impacts to human health.

Private property

Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.
Yes___ No__XX_. If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination:

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 ? No changes from what is already there.

(c) Existing land uses ? No changes.

(d) Quantity and distribution of employment ? No changes.

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

(f) Demands for government services ? No changes.

(g) Industrial and commercial activity ? No changes.

(h) Utilities ? Slight increase in demand.

(i) Transportation ? None

(j) Safety ? None

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances ? None identified.

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population: No secondary or cumulative impacts have been identified.

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures: No mitigation measures are required at this time.

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 applicants could continue to divert water from three spring sources and a drilled well or change to this source. Use of water from the lake will avoid competition over the spring water and will eliminate noise from the diesel generator that powers the well pump. Those alternatives might cause more impacts to the environment than the chosen alternative.

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: Because no significant impacts were identified as a result of this action, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the action.

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

Name: Wes McAlpin
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