

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:* William F. Oldroyd
P.O. Box 1162
West Yellowstone, MT 59758-1367
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit #30009555-41F
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater
4. *Location affected by project:* NESENWSE, Section 21, T13S, R4E, Gallatin County
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
The applicant proposes to pump 30 gpm up to 1 acre-foot for domestic purposes. The well is located within the Yellowstone Controlled Groundwater Area. The National Park Service will be notified. If they do not object, a permit will be issued.
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Natural Heritage Program
Montana State Historic Preservation Office
National Wetlands Inventory – Website
Gallatin County Planning Office
National Park Service

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: This permit application will be utilizing groundwater from a depth of 100 feet at a rate of 30 gpm. It is unlikely that it will have any impact on surface water flows.

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: This permit application will be utilizing groundwater from a depth of 100 feet at a rate of 30 gpm. It is unlikely that the project will have any impact on any listed (water quality impaired or threatened) streams.

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 well is 100 feet deep with a large clay layer. This 30 gpm well should have a negligible affect, if any, on the surface water.

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 well was drilled by a Montana state licensed well driller. Water will be diverted using a 1 hp pump. This well will have no channel impacts, will not create flow modifications or barriers, or have any impact to riparian areas.

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: A report received from the Montana Natural Heritage Program indicates there are six species of special concern within the general area of the project. Two of these species are currently listed under the Endangered Species Act, the Lynx and the Grizzly Bear. The Short-seeded Water-wort, Dwarf Onion, Slender Indian Paintbrush and a Mayfly are also identified as possibly occurring in the area. As this well was drilled on a parcel adjacent to an established subdivision it is unlikely that it will have any significant impact on any of these 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: The well is located approximately 2½ miles from a lacustrine wetland (Hebgen Lake). The well is 100 feet deep with a large clay layer. It is unlikely that the 30 gpm well would have any affect on the surface water.

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

Determination: Not applicable. This permit application will be using groundwater.

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 new well will be used for domestic purposes and should not impact soil quality, alter soil stability, or moisture content. The soils in the area are not susceptible to saline seep.

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: It is anticipated that any disturbance to the vegetation due to the drilling of this well will likely be re-seeded. The control of noxious weeds is the responsibility of the land owner.

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 to air quality are expected due to this project.

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

Determination: According to a report from the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), there are no previously recorded cultural properties within the project area. Additionally, their records indicate that no cultural resource inventories have been conducted in the area. SHPO recommends that a cultural resource inventory be conducted to determine whether or not any sites exist. As the well has already been drilled and the project is located on private property, any inventory conducted would be at the land owners discretion.

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.

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 Gallatin County Planning Board has no restrictions on drilling a well at this location.

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 property and will have no significant impact on recreational or wilderness activities.

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

Determination: This application will have no impact 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: There are no additional government regulatory impacts on private property rights associated with this application.

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

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

Secondary Impacts – No secondary impacts have been identified.

Cumulative Impacts – No cumulative impacts have been identified.

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** No mitigation or stipulation measures are planned 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:*** Under the no action alternative, the applicant would not have the benefit of water for domestic use.

PART III. Conclusion

1. ***Preferred Alternative:*** Complete the project as applied for.

2. ***Comments and Responses***

3. ***Finding:***

Yes___ No___ *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 EIS is not is not required for this action.

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

Name: Denise Biggar

Title: Water Resources Specialist

Date: May 24, 2004