

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact**

**Part I. Proposed Action Description**

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* Wayne & Jane Bensen  
275 Morning Creek Rd  
Kalispell, MT 59901
2. *Type of action:* Provisional Permit to Appropriate Water No. 76LJ-30019455
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater well
4. *Location affected by action:* SW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 2, Township 36N, Range 22W, Flathead County.
5. *Narrative summary of the action to be taken, proposed project, purpose, and benefits:*

The DNRC shall issue a Provisional Permit to Appropriate Water in accordance with the Glacier National Park Compact with the State of Montana. The applicant proposes to divert water at a rate of 7 gpm up to 3.42 acre-feet per year, using a ¾ hp pump in a 140 ft deep well. The well will provide domestic use for two homes, ½-acre of lawn and garden, and livestock.

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

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)  
Montana Natural Heritage Program (NHP)  
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (DFWP)

## Part II. Environmental Review

### 1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>
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#### **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 groundwater that has not been determined to be hydrologically connected to surface water in the area.

**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 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:* Glazier Drilling Company installed the well following the Montana Board of Water Well Contractors (MBWWC) construction standards. Therefore there should be no impact to the groundwater quality in the area. The diversion of 3.42 AF of water at 7 GPM should not affect the overall supply of water in the aquifer by any significant amount. Since the pump is installed at a depth of 114 feet, it is doubtful that withdrawal from it will impact adjacent surface water flows. The National Park Service has been notified, and has the option of conducting a study to determine if the groundwater source is hydrologically connected to adjacent 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:* Water from the groundwater well will be diverted by a ¾ HP pump to the applicant's pressure tank at 7 GPM. The well was completed by a licensed water well contractor using MBWWC standards. The proposed project will not impact channels, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, or well construction.

## **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 NHP has not identified any sensitive species of plants in the section. This area in western Montana also contains habitat used by Gray Wolves, Lynx, and Grizzly Bears. Since the home will be built in an area that has been developed for many years, there should be minimal additional impact to the vegetation and wildlife in 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:* The proposed project does not involve any wetlands.

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

*Determination:* The proposed project does not involve any 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 area has been developed for many years. The installation of a simple water system will have a minimal impact on the soils. Saline seep is not a concern generally in western Montana.

***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 installation of a simple water system will have a temporary impact on the existing vegetative cover. The proposed project will not result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.

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

*Determination:* This small water system will not deteriorate air quality or increase any air pollutants.

***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 well has already been drilled. Minor disturbances will occur when the homes are constructed. A report from the SHPO did not identify any historical or archeological sites in the vicinity.

**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:* Impacts to the environment are not anticipated from the development of the small water system.

## **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:* The quality of and access to any recreation or wilderness activities will remain the same. The home and water system are typical of uses in the area.

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

*Determination:* The project will not impact 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:* This water right will become a private property right if the permit is issued.

**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? None

(f) Demands for government services? No

(g) Industrial and commercial activity? No

(h) Utilities? No impact.

(i) Transportation? No impact.

(j) Safety? No impact.

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None

2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*** This area has been developed for many years. Secondary or cumulative impacts to surface water will be assessed by the National Park Service as part of the Glacier National Park Compact with the State of Montana.
3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** No mitigation measures are required or 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 intends to build a home in an area adjacent to Glacier National Park. A well is the simplest and most economical method of supplying water suitable for domestic use to their homes. Installation of a well has the least impact to the environment compared to most other means of acquiring potable water. The *no action alternative* would greatly restrict the applicant's enjoyment of their property.

### **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 or even anticipated, therefore an EIS is not necessary.

*Name of person responsible for preparation of EA:*

*Name:* James Albrecht

*Title:* Water Resource Specialist

*Date:* May 4, 2006