

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:* GRANT CREEK WATER USERS ASSOCIATION
PO BOX 17222
MISSOULA, MT 59808

2. *Type of action:* APPLICATION FOR BENEFICIAL WATER USE PERMIT
76M-30012585

3. *Water source name:* GROUNDWATER

4. *Location affected by project:* SE OF SECTION 28 AND THE E2 OF SECTION 29,
TWP 14 NORTH, RGE 19 WEST, MISSOULA CO.

5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*

THE APPLICANT IS A PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY ASSOCIATION THAT CURRENTLY SUPPLIES DOMESTIC WATER TO NUMEROUS HOMES IN THE GRANT CREEK DRAINAGE. THE PRESENT APPLICATION IS TO ADD A THIRD WELL TO THE WELL FIELD TO ACCOMMODATE THREE ADDITIONAL RESIDENCES NOT COVERED BY THE EXISTING WATER RIGHTS. THE THIRD WELL IS TO BE USED TO SUPPLEMENT THE EXISTING SYSTEM. TOTAL VOLUME REQUESTED IS 13 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR. MAXIMUM FLOW RATE FOR THIS THIRD WELL IS 275 GPM.

THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE A WATER USE PERMIT IF AN APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN 85-2-311, MCA ARE MET

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

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
DEQ WATERSHED WEBSITE
DFWP MTFISH WEBSITE

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

<h2>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</h2>

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

GRANT CREEK IS LOCATED APPROXIMATELY 200 FEET WEST OF THE PROPOSED GROUNDWATER DIVERSION. GRANT CREEK IS CONSIDERED CHRONICALLY DEWATERED BY MONTANA DFWP. THE APPLICANT IDENTIFIES GRANT CREEK AS A LOSING STREAM. THE APPLICANT'S REPORT INDICATES THAT THE GROUNDWATER WELL AND STREAM ARE SEPARATED. DNRC STAFF HYDROGEOLOGISTS REVIEWED THE APPLICANT'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDED THAT A CONNECTION BETWEEN GROUNDWATER AND SURFACE WATER DOES EXIST. THE APPLICANT'S REPORT PROVIDES INFORMATION THAT ESTABLISHES A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATE OF POSSIBLE STREAM LOSS USING THE ASSUMPTION THAT A HYDRAULIC CONNECTION COULD EXIST. UNDER THIS SCENARIO, THE PROPOSED PROJECT COULD CAUSE ADDITIONAL STREAM LOSS OF 4.7 ACRE-Feet PER YEAR.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

GRANT CREEK IS NOT LISTED ON THE 2002 303(d) LIST OF IMPAIRED WATERS. INFORMATION PRESENTED BY THE APPLICANT INDICATES THAT THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PROPOSED WELL AND NEARBY GRANT CREEK.

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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE PROPOSED WELL IS INTENDED TO AUGMENT AN EXISTING PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM. THE NEW WELL WILL BE OPERATED IN AN AS-NEEDED BASIS. THE APPLICANT PROVIDED AN AQUIFER REPORT INDICATING THAT 270 GPM WAS DIVERTED DURING A 72-HOUR PUMPING TEST. THE REPORT INDICATES THAT WATER IS AVAILABLE AT THE REQUESTED FLOW RATE. THE REPORT ALSO INDICATES THAT THE NEARBY GRANT CREEK IS DISCONNECTED AND WILL NOT BE AFFECTED BY PUMPING THE NEW WELL ON A CYCLIC BASIS.

DNRC STAFF HYDRO-GEOLOGISTS REVIEWED THE AQUIFER REPORT AND RECOMMENDED THAT A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE GROUNDWATER WELL AND GRANT CREEK DOES EXIST AND THAT THE REPORT IS CONSISTENT WITH THAT DETERMINATION.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE MEANS OF DIVERSION FOR THIS PROPOSED GROUNDWATER SOURCE IS A 10-INCH CASED WELL, 58 FEET IN DEPTH, CONSTRUCTED BY A LICENSED WELL DRILLER. A 30 HP SUBMERSIBLE PUMP IS SET AT 44 FEET TO DIVERT A MAXIMUM 275 GPM.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

AN AQUIFER REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT PROVIDES INFORMATION TO SHOW THAT THEIR USE OF THE PROPOSED WELL WOULD HAVE NO MEASURABLE IMPACTS TO NEARBY GRANT CREEK.

THE MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM FILE SEARCH INDICATES SEVERAL PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES OF CONCERN OCCUR IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT. THE MISSOULA PHLOX, A STONEFLY, FRINGED MYOTIS, WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT AND BULL TROUT IN GRANT CREEK AND THE LYNX ARE SHOWN AS PRESENT WITHIN THE AREA AFFECTED BY THIS PROPOSED PROJECT. THE PROJECT IS NOT EXPECTED TO IMPACT ANY OF THESE IDENTIFIED SPECIES.

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: NO IMPACTS.

THERE ARE NO WETLANDS IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED.

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

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

THERE ARE NO PONDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

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: NO IMPACTS.

SOIL STABILITY, QUALITY AND MOISTURE CONTENT WOULD NOT CHANGE AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

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: NO IMPACTS.

EXISTING VEGETATIVE COVER WOULD NOT CHANGE AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

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.

AIR QUALITY WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED 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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE PROJECT IS COMPLETED, SHPO DECLINED TO DO A FILE SEARCH FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES. SHPO MAINTAINS THAT WHEN PROJECTS ARE COMPLETED, NO FILE SEARCH REQUEST IS WARRANTED.

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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE ADDITION OF THE PROPOSED WELL TO THE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM WOULD NOT CAUSE IMPACTS OTHER THAN THOSE ADDRESSED.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

THE ADDITION OF A THIRD WELL TO THE EXISTING WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM IS APPROVED BY DEQ AND IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH OTHER PLANS OR GOALS.

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: NO IMPACTS.

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

Determination: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE ADDITION OF THE PROPOSED WELL TO THE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM MAY AID IN THE AREAS ABILITY TO DEAL WITH THE THREAT OF FOREST FIRES. THE AFFECTED AREA IS IN THE URBAN INTERFACE WITH FOREST AND THE THREAT OF FIRES IS PRESENT.

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: NO IMPACTS.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- | | |
|--|------|
| (a) <u>Cultural uniqueness and diversity?</u> | NONE |
| (b) <u>Local and state tax base and tax revenues?</u> | NONE |
| (c) <u>Existing land uses?</u> | NONE |
| (d) <u>Quantity and distribution of employment?</u> | NONE |
| (e) <u>Distribution and density of population and housing?</u> | NONE |
| (f) <u>Demands for government services?</u> | NONE |

- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? NONE
- (h) Utilities? NONE
- (i) Transportation? NONE
- (j) Safety? NONE
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? NONE

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

Secondary Impacts NONE IDENTIFIED

Cumulative Impacts NONE IDENTIFIED

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures: THERE ARE NO MITIGATION/STIPULATION MEASURES IDENTIFIED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION.

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: OTHER THAN THE “NO ACTION” ALTERNATIVE, NO OTHER REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES ARE REASONABLY AVAILABLE OR PRUDENT TO CONSIDER. UNDER THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE, THE APPLICANT WOULD BE UNABLE TO USE THE PROPOSED WELL TO SERVE THREE ADDITIONAL RESIDENCES IN THE SUBDIVISION OR TO SERVE AS A BACKUP SUPPLY WHEN NEEDED DURING HIGH DEMAND CUCLES.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative

2. Comments and Responses

3. Finding:

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

Yes___ No X

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: AN EA IS THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS FOR THIS PROPOSED ACTION BECAUSE NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION.

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

Name: PATRICK RYAN

Title: WATER RESOURCE SPECIALIST

Date: FEBRUARY 22, 2007