

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:* STW Properties LLC, PO Box 210, West Glacier, MT 59936
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 30030287076I
3. *Water source name:* Developed Spring
4. *Location affected by action:* NE NW quarter, Section 2, T 31N, R 19W, Flathead County
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
The applicants propose to dig a pond on a developed spring and plant it with trout. The pond will be primarily for esthetics and a public attraction to coincide with their river rafting business. No flow rate is being requested and the only volume applied for will be one filling of the pond and evaporative losses. A drainage device will installed to allow extra water to flow out of the pond.
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction) US National Park Service, MT Natural Heritage Program and the MT Historical Society.

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 DFWP has made no determination on this source.

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 anticipated impacts.

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: Water from this source will be allowed to flow naturally with no pumping or added demand on the source.

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: There will be some impacts to the area during 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: Grizzly bears and bald eagle are common to this area as well as an occasional Lynx. This action will create no migration barriers and will allow for more feeding opportunities for eagles from the planted fish.

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

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

Determination: Positive impacts, if any, may occur as a result of this action.

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: Soil moisture may improve as a result of this action.

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 applicant will be responsible for weed control.

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

Determination: No impact

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 property.

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: None 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: This area has been subdivided and developed for many years. The action is consistent with other like actions in 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: No impacts

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

Determination: No impacts

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:

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? Slight improvement
 - (c) Existing land uses? Slight change
 - (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? Slight if any
 - (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? None
 - (f) Demands for government services? Slight
 - (g) Industrial and commercial activity? Slight if any
 - (h) Utilities? None
 - (i) Transportation? None
 - (j) Safety? Slight once the pond has water in it.
 - (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 were identified as a result of this action.
3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** None are justified 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 no action alternative would prevent the applicant from creating the pond as a water feature at the commercial river rafting location. The added water feature may attract additional customers who may not patronize their business otherwise.

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 secondary nor cumulative impacts were identified as a result of this action, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for the action.

Name of person responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Wes McAlpin

Title: Water Resources Specialist
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