

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: **Jeff Neubauer**
6918 NB Loop
Wolf Point MT 59501
2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial water user Permit No. **40S 30041880**
3. Water source name: Missouri River, below Ft. Peck Dam
4. Location affected by project: **NESWNE, Lot 68, Sec 34, T27N, R41E, Idlewild Park, Valley County**
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:

This project is to pump water out of the Missouri River for lawn and garden and shelter belt use on an individual lot with in the Idlewild Subdivision. This application is to use 32 gpm up to 2.35 acre-feet of water per annum form April 1st to October 31st. The point of diversion and the place of use are located in the NESWNE of Sec 34, T27N, R41E, Valley County.

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)

The Montana State Historic Preservation Office
The Montana Natural Heritage Program
The Montana Department of Environmental Quality Website (TMDL 303d Listing)
The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Fisheries Listings)

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 Missouri River is not identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. The DFWP has a water reservation on this portion of the Missouri River for 4,508 cfs to maintain instream flows. It is unlikely that 32 gpm would have an impact on the 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: The Missouri River is listed on the 1996 Montana 303(d) list as partially supporting aquatic life, recreation and warm water fishery. The probable sources for the impairment are flow regulation, agriculture, municipal point sources, natural sources and streambank modification/destabilization. The applicant will need to acquire a 310 permit from the Valley County Conservation District to develop the pump site. Due to the small size of this appropriation, no significant impact should occur.

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: This surface water appropriation should have no significant impact on groundwater in the area.

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 diversion means consists of an electric 3 hp pump that will be located at the top of the river bank. The water will be diverted from the river through a 2 inch plastic line to the pump and then through a series of underground sprinkler and drip line zones to the newly planted trees and grassy areas. The Corp of Engineers approves of this type of diversion and it is commonly used around Fort Peck Lake and the Missouri River.

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 three species of special concern within the general area of the project. The pallid sturgeon is listed as endangered, and the shortnose gar and the paddlefish have been classified by the Bureau of Land Management as special status. It is generally believed that the pallid sturgeon have not successfully spawned in the Missouri River, in the reach area of this project, since the construction of Fort Peck Dam due to the altered stream flows and reduced sediment levels. The Pallid sturgeon prefers warmer, turbid water.

Due to the small size of the appropriation, the large size of Fort Peck Reservoir and the regulated releases from the dam, it is unlikely that this appropriation would impact the pallid sturgeon, paddlefish and/or the shortnose gar.

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 known wetlands exist in the project area.

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

Determination: Not applicable.

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 soil will be temporarily disturbed when the underground systems are installed. No permanent degradation to soil quality, stability or moisture content is anticipated

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: This project is located within a subdivision containing numerous home and cabin sites. After the permanent water line is installed, grassy areas will be seeded on that portion of the line that is above the high water mark. The control of noxious weeds is the responsibility of the property owner.

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

Determination: The pump is electric and there will be no deterioration of air quality as a result of this appropriation.

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 the Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) no cultural resource inventories have been previously conducted within the search area. Based on the lack of the inventories, SHPO recommends that a cultural resource inventory be conducted. As the project is located on private property, any cultural resource inventory conducted would be at the property owner's 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: are no known local environmental plans or goals in this 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: This project will have no impact on recreational or wilderness activities.

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

Determination: This project will have no impact on human health.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*

Yes___ No___ 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? **No significant impact.**

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:* NONE

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 their lawn and garden use. The applicant could drill a well and a certificate of water right would be issued, however due to the small size of the lot and the proximity of the drain fields, this may not be an option.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative would be the issuance of a water use permit provided the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, MCA are met.

2 Comments and Responses

3. Finding:

Yes___ No X Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

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 necessary.

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

Name: Ann L. Kulczyk

Title: Water Resource Specialist

Date: 19 June 2008