

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Water Resources Division Water Rights Bureau
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT</b> <b>For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact</b>

**Part I. Proposed Action Description**

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* West Ridge Homeowners Association  
% Glen Morrit  
P.O. Box 83  
Somers, MT 59932
  
2. *Type of action:* Permit to Appropriate Water 76LJ 30044582
  
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater
  
4. *Location affected by project:* NW<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 27, Township 27N, Range 21W, Flathead County
  
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*

This application is to obtain a water use permit for multiple domestic and lawn and garden purposes from two public water supply wells. The period of diversion and use for proposal is from January 1 to December 31 for multiple domestic (16 houses), and from April 15 to October 15 for lawn and garden, inclusive of each year. The applicant proposes to divert water at a rate of 73 gpm up to 34.72 ac-ft per year, and this amount of diversion will be completed within 10 years.

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

Montana Natural Resource Program ..... Species of Concern  
 Montana Historical Society ..... Cultural Records Search  
 US Fish and Wildlife Service ..... Wetlands Mapper  
 Natural Resource Conservation Service ..... Web Soil Survey

## **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:* N/A.

**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:* N/A

**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.

The two public water supply wells will derive groundwater from the aquifer at a rate not to exceed 73 gpm. The wells were drilled into a fractured rock aquifer 932 and 720 feet below ground surface and have a static water level of 613 and 453 for wells one and two respectively. The applicant determined a zone of influence of approximately 11,360 ft. from the point of diversion by modeling a pumping flow rate of 73 gpm for the full period of appropriation. The annual volume of water passing through the potential zone of influence was calculated as 82,121 ac-ft. The proposed diverted amount of 34.72 ac.ft combined with existing appropriations totals 3,061.34 ac.ft. per year, representing 4% of annual available volume.

Over time, the use of this public water supply will reduce impact Flathead Lake. The consumptive use for domestic purposes will be approximately 1.07 ac-ft per year, and 16.8 ac-ft for lawn and garden purposes. This amount is negligible compared to the amount of water physically available in Flathead Lake.

*Determination:* No impact

**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.

The groundwater wells were completed on 3/29/1977 for well #1, and 6/12/2007 for well #2. Two 10 hp. submersible pumps will be used to deliver water three above ground concrete storage tanks, and then to a mainline distribution system. The project will utilize groundwater, therefore, there are no known significant impacts to channels, barriers, dams, riparian areas or modifications in flow.

*Determination:* No impact

## **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.”

The Montana Natural Heritage Program website was referenced to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any “species of special concern” in vicinity of Township 27N and Range 21W, that could be impacted by the proposed project. The US Fish and Wildlife Service identified the threatened Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), and the delisted Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*). In addition the State of Montana, US Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management identified the following species of special concern: Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*); Fisher (*Martes pennanti*); and Columbia Water-meal (*Wolffia columbiana*).

*Determination:* This proposed project will not change land use characteristics and therefore should not impact the above listed species. In conclusion, this proposed project it is not expected to adversely impact any of these 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:* The proposed point of diversion and place of use are not within the boundaries of wetlands mapped by the national wetlands inventory program.

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

*Determination:* N/A

**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 degradation of soils is expected.

**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:* There will be no change in land-use characteristics associated with this permit, the houses already exist, so there will be no significant impact.

**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:* There will be no change in land-use characteristics associated with this change so there will be no significant impact.

**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

## 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 planned land use.

**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:* There should be no significant impacts on recreational or wilderness activities from this proposed use.

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

*Determination:* No impact.

**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 impact.

**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

(b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No

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

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

Secondary Impacts: None

Cumulative Impacts: None

**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:**

The “no action” alternative to this proposed project will result in the landowner not having access to water for domestic purposes.

**PART III. Conclusion**

**1. Preferred Alternative:** As proposed

**2. Comments and Responses:** None

**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, no EIS is necessary.

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

*Name:* Tim Eichner  
*Title:* Water Resources Specialist  
*Date:* May 18, 2009