

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:* Allen & Jill Blackford  
2515 Ridgewood Lane  
Billings, MT 59106
  
2. *Type of action:* Permit to Appropriate Water 76LJ-30044923
  
3. *Water source name:* Flathead Lake
  
4. *Location affected by project:* Govt. Lot 7, SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 35, Township 27N,  
Range 21W, Lake 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 a surface water withdraw from Flathead Lake for the purpose of providing lawn and garden irrigation water. Maximum size of irrigated lawn and garden is 1.35 acres resulting in the proposed use of 3.38 ac-ft at a rate of 50 gpm for a period of diversion between April 15 to October 15, inclusive of each year. This proposed diversion will be completed within three years from permit issuance.

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

Montana Natural Resource Program ..... Species of Concern  
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.

Determination: This appropriation is for surface water and therefore does not apply.

**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 diversion works will consist of a 2-inch galvanized steel intake pipe buried approximately 10 ft below high water level. The steel pipe daylights on shore then attaches to a 3 hp pump capable of providing 50 gpm to 141 ft. with 15 ft. of static suction. The pump outlet will connect to a 2-inch PVC mainline that runs to a sprinkler system shutoff valve, then to a manifold that will supply four different watering zones on the property.

Determination: Installation of pump and distribution line will have slight impact on riparian area and shoreline habitat.

#### **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 delisted Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*) and Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and the threatened Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) as possible species inhabiting this region. 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*); Guadalupe Water-nymph (*Najas guadalupensis*); and Columbia Water-meal (*Wolfia columbiana*).

*Determination:* Due to its limited size it is not expected that this proposed project will adversely impact any of these species. Land-use characteristics will change from lightly forested to residential/lawn and garden.

**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:* There are no wetlands in the area of this proposed project.

**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.*

The location of the proposed place of use encompass the soil type of Kingspot-Rock outcrop complex; a well-drained soil type of moderate to significant slopes. This soil type is very limited for lawn and garden purposes with slope being the most limiting factor.

*Determination:* No degradation of soil quality, stability, or moisture content is expected with 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.*

The land-use will likely change from a partially wooded landscape to residential/lawn and garden landscape.

*Determination:* No significant impact is expected. Establishment of a healthy lawn should not increase the likelihood of 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:* 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:* This proposed project will not cause disturbance on a landscape scale, and therefore is not expect to degrade cultural 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:* 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 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 irrigating lawn and garden.

**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:* June 3, 2009