

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:* Sheaver's Creek/Lake County Water & Sewer District, PO Box 1015, Bigfork MT 59911
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76LJ-30046098
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater well
4. *Location affected by action:* SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 18, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 17, N $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 19 and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 20 all in Township 26N, Range 19 W, Lake County.
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
DNRC shall issue a water use permit if the applicant meets the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA.

This application was submitted by Sheaver's Creek/Lake County Water & Sewer District as the result of a new primary well being drilled in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 19, Township 26N, Range 19W and connected to their water system. The Applicant is requesting 120 gpm up to 48.97 AF of water for municipal purposes in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 18, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 17, N $\frac{1}{2}$ of Section 19 and the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 20 all in Township 26N, Range 19 W located 4 miles south of Bigfork in Lake County approximately 8 miles north of the Flathead Reservation. Water will be diverted January 1 through December 31 inclusive each year.

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

Montana Natural Heritage Program
Montana State Historical Society
Natural Resources and Conservation Service soil maps
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
United States Fish and Wildlife Wetland Mapper

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: 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 well is 243 feet deep completed by a licensed well driller (license #WWC-646) January 28, 2009. There are screen perforations from 139 to 152 feet and an 8.5 inch casing diameter. The static water level is 51.5 btoc. Legal availability has been assessed through the Provisional Permit process.

The use of this public water supply system will likely reduce water to the near surface water sources of Flathead Lake.

Determination: Through the Provisional Permit process, it has been determined that adjacent surface source senior appropriators of Flathead Lake will not be adversely affected.

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.

This well was drilled by a licensed, Montana State well driller (license #646) and completed on January 28, 2009. It was drilled to a depth of 243 feet. It has an 8.5-inch well casing. There are screen perforations from 139 to 152 feet. The static water level is 51.5 btoc. Schematics and specifications for the system were engineered designed and approved by DEQ.

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's website was used to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern", that could be impacted by the proposed project. The following animals were identified on that list located regionally: Gray Wolf, Canada Lynx, Wolverine, Fisher, Grizzly Bear, Great Blue Heron, Black Tern, Pileated Woodpecker, Peregrine Falcon, Common Loon, Bald Eagle, Western Toad, Bull Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Smoky Taildropper, Upward-lobed Moonwort, Wavy Moonwort, Mountain Moonwort, Beck Water-marigold, Pygmy Water-lily, Many-headed Sedge, Blunt-leaved Pondweed and Pod Grass.

Determination: No immediate impact.

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: This property is not located within a designated wetland boundary.

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

Determination: No pond. No impact.

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.*

Precambrian rocks of the Belt Supergroup (Ybe) are exposed along the length of the east shoreline of Flathead Lake. This area is mapped as older Quaternary alluvium (Qao).

Determination: No impact to soil quality or alteration of soil stability 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: No 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 impacts are anticipated.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.*

Determination: The Montana Historical Society was contacted. They have designated areas within the supply area as being designated as an area of historical or archeological interest. No major impacts have resulted with the current building. No 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: No other impacts were identified during this EA.

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 subdivision appears to be in compliance with the Flathead County Planning Office.

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 impact expected

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

Determination: No impact expected.

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

Yes ___ No XX. *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? None identified
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Increase in tax revenues.
- (c) Existing land uses? None
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? Standard growth impacts
- (f) Demands for government services? Developmental/growth impacts

- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None identified
- (h) Utilities? Greater demand for electricity and natural gas
- (i) Transportation? Not significant.
- (j) Safety? Not significant.
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None identified

2. **Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:** None expected
3. **Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:** None identified
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:** No reasonable alternatives identified

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 significant impacts were identified, this EA is the appropriate level of analysis.

Name of person responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Kathy Olsen

Title: Water Resources Specialist

Date: March 9, 2010