

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: **City of Helena Parks & Recreation Dept
316 N Park Ave
Helena MT 59623-0001**

Consultant: Hydro-Solutions Inc, David Donohue, Senior Hydrogeologist

2. Type of action: **Application to Change a Water Right No. 30047080-411
(Permit No. 30004542-411)**

3. Water source name: **Groundwater Well**

Location affected by action: **SWNWSW, Sec 18, Twp 10N, Rge 3W, Lewis and Clark County.**

4. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and objectives: **The City of Helena proposes to change a portion of the place of use on a non-perfected municipal groundwater Provisional Permit No. 411-30004542 (aka county shop well). The place of use for this water right is the Bill Roberts Golf Course and Centennial Fields. Currently, the City is using water from this permit to irrigate the Bill Roberts Golf Course while final plans for Centennial Fields are being developed. The period of use is from April 15 through October 15. The well is located in the SW1/4NW1/4SW1/4 of Section 18, Township 10 North, Range 3 West, Lewis and Clark County. The water right has an enforceable priority date of November 25, 2002. The City of Helena was deeded 1.69 acres of parkland from the Northgate Meadows Subdivision in 2005. The parkland is located in the NE1/4SE1/4 SE1/4 of Section 13, Township 10 North, Range 4 West, Lewis and Clark County. The City proposes to irrigate the 1.69 acre park with water from Water Right 41-30004542. A 1.69 acre parcel will be removed from the acreage that would have been irrigated at Centennial Field from the county shop well. The 1.69 acre parcel removed from Centennial Fields would have had the same use patterns as the 1.69 acre parcel in Northgate Park.**

The DNRC shall issue an authorization to change to the applicant if the criteria in §85-2-402, MCA are met.

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

None

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: **No significant adverse impact.**

The source of supply is not identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. The source is a groundwater well. Tenmile Creek is the nearest surface water source and it has been determined there will be no adverse effect to the creek.

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 significant adverse impact.**

This is a groundwater well. It has not been listed as a water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ and will not have an effect on water quality.

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: **No significant adverse impact.**

The proposal will not change the current use patterns, increase use or move into a different aquifer. A place of use will be reduced to allow for the new place of use of equal size and volume of water. There should be no impact to adjacent surface water flows.

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: **No significant adverse impact.**

The proposed project will not have any impact on channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, or well construction. The well was drilled in May of 2004 by H. & L. Drilling, Inc. a licensed well driller. A Grundfos pump model 300s180-5 is powered by a 17.5 hp motor. The pump is installed at a depth of approximately 58 feet. The pump is capable of delivering 353 gpm of water at the 148 feet of head; calculated between the well and Bill Roberts Golf Course. A 6-inch diameter irrigation line is located beneath Benton Avenue and conveys water from the well to Bill Roberts Golf Course. There is already a 6-inch diameter connection stubbed from this line into Northgate Park. The connection will be completed if this change application is approved.

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: **No impacts to any threatened or endangered species or species of special concern would result from this proposal.**

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 functional wetlands have been identified in the project area.**

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

Determination: **There are no ponds involved in the proposed project.**

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 significant adverse impact. No degradation of soil will occur nor will there be any increase in salts that could cause saline seep is located in the proposal.**

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 significant adverse impact. The well has already been drilled and put to use. The majority of the pipeline has been constructed and installed. There may be additional disturbance to the ground cover if this change is granted. The area is highly populated and there are numerous streets lessening the chances of noxious weeds getting a start. The landowner is responsible for controlling any noxious weeds on the property.**

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

Determination: **No significant adverse impact. The project will not result in the deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.**

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 are no known archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.**

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 significant adverse impacts have been determined at this time.**

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 proposal is well within the guidelines and direction of locally adopted environmental plans and goals.**

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: **The project will enhance public access to quality recreation activities associated with urban recreation.**

HUMAN HEALTH - Assess whether the proposed project affects human health.

Determination: **There are no anticipated impacts to human health.**

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

Yes ___ No **X**__.

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 adverse impact.**
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? **No significant adverse impact.**
- (c) Existing land uses? **The existing land use is irrigation and that is not changing.**
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? **No significant adverse impact.**
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? **Northgate Park is adjacent to a residential housing development.**
- (f) Demands for government services? **No significant adverse impact.**
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? **No significant adverse impact.**
- (h) Utilities? **No significant adverse impact.**
- (i) Transportation? **No significant adverse impact.**
- (j) Safety? **No significant adverse impact**

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? **No significant adverse impact.**

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

Secondary Impacts: **No significant adverse secondary impacts have been identified.**

Cumulative Impacts: **No significant adverse cumulative impacts have been identified.**

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures: **The authorization, if issued, would be subject to all prior existing water rights in the source of supply. The applicant is required to keep measurement records and supply them to the DNRC by November 30th of each year or upon demand.**

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:

One of the alternatives considered was drilling a new well to irrigate the park. This alternative would have impacts on the surrounding area and other water users. The no-action alternative would not allow the Applicant to meet objectives for management of the parkland.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative: **The preferred alternative is to proceed with the Applicants proposal and issue the authorization as applied for by the Applicant, or in some modified form considered reasonable.**

2. Comments and Responses: **There have not been any comments and/or responses at this time.**

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: **Based on a consideration of the criteria found in DNRC Administrative Rule 36.2.524, "Determining the Significance of Impacts," there is not a significant adverse impact. An EA is sufficient for this level of action and does not warrant an EIS.**

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

Name: Terry Eccles

Title: Helena/Bozeman Regional Manager

Date: June 10, 2010