

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: USA (Dept of Agriculture Forest Service)  
 Gallatin National Forest  
 PO Box 130  
 Bozeman, MT 59771
  
2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit # 30050302-41H
  
3. Water source name: Groundwater
  
4. Location affected by project: NESESW, Sec. 33, T7S, R4E, Gallatin County.
  
5. This application is to obtain a water right for a well located in the Yellowstone Controlled Groundwater Area (YCGA). Water is proposed to be diverted by means of a groundwater well from May 1 through September 30 annually at a rate of 25 gallons per minute (GPM) up to 0.5 acre-feet (AF), from a point in the SENESESW Sec. 33, T7S, R4E, Gallatin County. The proposed appropriation is for 0.5 AF for recreation use at the Red Cliff Forest Service Campground. The water from this well measured 41 degrees Fahrenheit (F). The National Park Service was notified. If they do not object, a permit will be issued.
  
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
  - National Park Service.....Water Resources Division

**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:* No impacts identified  
The source is groundwater.

**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 impacts identified  
The source of water is a groundwater, not on the DEQ list.

**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 impacts identified  
The well is unlikely to affect adjacent surface flows. The National Park Service has been contacted, per compact requirements. No impact identified.

**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 impacts identified  
The diversion is a 255 foot deep well, drilled by a licensed contractor. No identified impact to existing resources.

#### **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 impact identified  
The Montana Natural Heritage Program identified species of concern. The Species of Concern Data Report the Peregrine Falcon, Brewer's Sparrow, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Gray Wolf, Grizzly Bear, Wolverine, and the Canada Lynx inhabiting the project area.

**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 impacts identified  
No wetlands exist in the area.

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

*Determination:* No impacts identified  
This project does not include a pond.

**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 impacts identified  
This well should not impact soil quality, alter soil stability, or moisture content. There is no saline seep in this area.

**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 impacts identified  
The disturbed areas have reclaimed themselves since construction. No impact identified.

**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 identified  
There should be no significant impact to air quality from this development. No impact identified.

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES** - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.

*Determination:* No impacts identified  
This project is located on Federal lands. However, it is a Categorical Exclusion due to the well drilled in an already established campground.

**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 impacts identified  
No anticipated additional impacts.

<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>
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**LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS** - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

*Determination:* No impact identified

The proposed project is not inconsistent with 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:* No impacts identified

Water from the well is for Forest Service campground recreational activities.

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

*Determination:* No impacts identified.

**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 impacts identified

**OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** - *For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.*

*Impacts on:*

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| (a) <u>Cultural uniqueness and diversity?</u>                  | No impacts identified |
| (b) <u>Local and state tax base and tax revenues?</u>          | No impacts identified |
| (c) <u>Existing land uses?</u>                                 | No impacts identified |
| (d) <u>Quantity and distribution of employment?</u>            | No impacts identified |
| (e) <u>Distribution and density of population and housing?</u> | No impacts identified |
| (f) <u>Demands for government services?</u>                    | No impacts identified |
| (g) <u>Industrial and commercial activity?</u>                 | No impacts identified |
| (h) <u>Utilities?</u>  | No impacts identified |
| (i) <u>Transportation?</u>                                     | No impacts identified |
| (j) <u>Safety?</u>   | No impacts identified |

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No impacts identified

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:*** Mitigation or stipulations are not planned at this time.

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:***

*PART III. Conclusion*

1. ***Preferred Alternative:*** Obtain a water right for the proposed purpose.

2. ***Comments and Responses:*** None 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:* No reasonable alternatives identified.

None of the identified impacts for any of the alternatives is significant as defined in ARM 36.2.524

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

*Name:* Porter Dassenko

*Title:* Water Resource Specialist

*Date:* 3/30/11