

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONSERVATION



BRIAN SCHWEITZER  
GOVERNOR

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074  
TELEFAX NUMBER (406) 444-2684

STATE OF MONTANA

WATER RESOURCES DIVISION (406) 444-6601  
TELEFAX NUMBERS (406) 444-0533 / (406) 444-5918  
<http://www.dnrc.mt.gov>

1424 9TH AVENUE  
PO BOX 201601  
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

Cover Letter

August 25, 2011

TO: Governor's Office, Vivian Hammill, Rm. 204, State Capitol, P.O. Box 200801, Helena, MT 59620-0801  
Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Room 106, P.O. Box 201704, Helena, MT 59620  
Dept. of Environmental Quality, Metcalf Building, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901  
Director's Office  
Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, 1625 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. Helena, MT 59620  
Director's Office  
Information Services Section  
Water Resources Division, 1424 9th Ave., P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601  
Kraig VanVoast, Water Resources Div. Havre Office, 210 6<sup>th</sup> Ave., PO Box 1828, Havre, MT 59501  
Denise Biggar, Water Res. Div. Glasgow Office, 222 6<sup>th</sup> St. S. PO Box 1269, Glasgow, MT 59230  
Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 E. 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. Helena, MT 59620  
Director's Office  
Patrick Gunderson, DFWP Region 6 Office, 54078 US Hwy 2 W Glasgow, MT 59230  
Cody Nagel, DFWP Havre Area Resource Office, 2165 Hwy 2 East, Havre, MT 59501  
Chad Barnard, Frenchman Water Users Association, 1054 Upper Frenchman Rd. Hinsdale, MT 59241  
Montana Environmental Information Center, P.O. Box 1184, Helena, MT 59624  
Montana Audubon Council, P.O. Box 595, Helena, MT 59624  
Phillips County Commissioners, 314 S 2nd Ave. W., County Courthouse, Malta, MT 59538  
Wildlife Federation, P.O. Box 1175, Helena, MT 59624  
Trout Unlimited, P.O. Box 7186, Missoula, MT 59807  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 10 W. 15th St. Suite 2200, Helena, MT 59626  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MT Field Office, 100 N. Park Ave. Helena, MT 59601

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) and Notice of Decision (NOD) have been prepared for the Frenchman Dam Sinkhole Repair Project and are submitted for your information and consideration. Please feel free to contact me at (406) 444-6622 (e-mail [jdomino@mt.gov](mailto:jdomino@mt.gov)) should you have any questions or comments. Please note that due to the emergency nature of this project no official public comment period is provided. However, comments will be accepted and can be mailed to: MT Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, State Water Projects Bureau, 1424 9th Ave., P.O. Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601, attn. James P. Domino. Copies of the EA are available upon request. The EA can also be viewed on the DNRC website at [www.dnrc.mt.gov](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov). Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "James P. Domino".

James P. Domino  
Environmental Science Specialist  
State Water Projects Bureau

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT / NOTICE OF DECISION

August 26, 2011

Dear Reader:

On August 25, 2011 the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) released a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Frenchman Dam Sinkhole Repair Project.

Frenchman Dam is located in Phillips County, Township 34N, Range 34W, section 23, approximately 22 miles north of Saco. The land where the dam and reservoir are located is owned by the State of Montana and administered by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, State Water Projects Bureau.

This project involves the emergency repair of a sinkhole that developed on the dam crest, immediately adjacent to the outlet control tower in the spring of 2011. This sinkhole, which occurred due to sustained high flows this past spring and early summer, has the potential of threatening the structural integrity of the dam if left unrepaired. The repair must be completed prior to the 2011/2012 winter season and subsequent 2012 irrigation season to prevent a potentially dangerous situation from further developing.

The anticipated project start date is September 1, 2011, with the project expected to be complete by December 31, 2011. Due to the emergency nature of this project, no official public comment period was provided. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were consulted and expressed no opposition to the project. The Montana Natural Heritage Program and the State Historic Preservation Office were also contacted.

Based on the EA's disclosure and analysis of potential impacts, the DNRC concludes that the proposed action will not result in any significant impacts. The DNRC will adopt the draft EA as the final EA and proceed with the preferred alternative. Copies of the Final EA are available upon request. The Final EA can be viewed on the DNRC website at [www.dnrc.mt.gov](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov) in the Environmental Documents section. Please direct any questions to:

**James P. Domino**

State Water Projects Bureau  
MT DNRC, P.O. Box 201601  
Helena, MT 59620-1601  
(406) 444-6622 e-mail: [jdomino@mt.gov](mailto:jdomino@mt.gov)

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely



Tim Davis  
Water Resources Division Administrator



## **Frenchman Dam Sinkhole Repairs**

### **Montana Environmental Policy Act Environmental Assessment**



Frenchman Dam

**Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation,  
Water Resources Division,  
State Water Projects Bureau**

**August, 2011**