

January 10, 2013

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS

As required by state and federal rules for determining whether an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed action below:

Project	Pablo / Lake County Water & Sewer District New Water Well Project
Location	Pablo, Montana
Project Number	WRF-13263
Total Cost	\$260,000

In 2010 Thomas, Dean & Hoskins, Inc. (TD&H Engineering) prepared a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District. The PER evaluated the existing water system supply, storage and distribution systems, identified system deficiencies and recommended alternatives to address these deficiencies. The PER noted that the current Pablo water supply system does not meet the quantity requirements as described by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Circular DEQ-1 for current or future water demands. Based on this analysis, the PER recommended that new water supply wells be added to the system to provide sufficient supply for both current and future demands.

Based on the documented water supply need, the District has proposed the installation of one new water supply well. The proposed redundant well will be located on land currently owned by the District at the corner of U.S. Highway 93 and Northwood Road and is expected to be drilled to between 500 and 600 feet below ground surface. A future water transmission main will also be needed to connect the new well to an existing water main along U.S. Highway 93 Frontage Road and will require the installation of approximately 250 feet of pipe. The system improvements are selected to improve the Districts water supply and provide additional protection against backflow or loss of water pressure in the event of a main break or fire event.

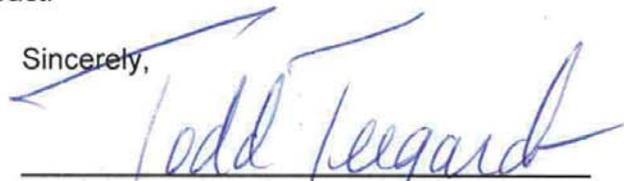
Environmentally sensitive characteristics such as wetlands, floodplains, threatened or endangered species and historical sites will not be adversely impacted as a result of the proposed project. No significant long-term environmental impacts were identified. An environmental assessment (EA), which describes the project and analyzes the impacts in more detail, is available for public review on the Department of Environmental Quality website: [www.deq.mt.gov](http://www.deq.mt.gov) or at the following locations:

Department of Environmental Quality  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901  
rashton@mt.gov

Pablo/Lake County WDS  
District Office  
208 Carbine Road  
Pablo, MT 59855

Comments on the EA may be submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality at the above address. After evaluating substantive comments received, the department will revise the environmental assessment or determine if an environmental impact statement is necessary. If no substantive comments are received during the comment period, or if substantive comments are received and evaluated and the environmental impacts are still determined to be non-significant, the agency will make a final decision. No administrative action will be taken on the project for at least 30 calendar days after release of the Finding of No Significant Impact.

Sincerely,



Todd Teegarden, Bureau Chief  
Technical and Financial Assistance Bureau

PABLO / LAKE COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT  
NEW WATER WELL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

I. COVER SHEET

A. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Applicant: Pablo / Lake County Water and Sewer District

Address: 208 Carbine Road  
Pablo, MT 59855

Project Number: WRF-13263

B. CONTACT PERSON

Name: Mike Lee, District President

Address: 208 Carbine Road  
Pablo, MT 59855

Telephone: (406) 675-4242

C. ABSTRACT

In 2010 Thomas, Dean & Hoskins, Inc. (TD&H Engineering) prepared a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District. The PER evaluated the existing water system supply, storage and distribution systems with respect to Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) requirements. Based on this analysis the PER developed alternative solutions, cost comparisons and made recommendations for water system improvements.

The 2010 PER analysis of the current source water capacity noted a significant deficiency compared to the flow requirements as stated in Circular DEQ-1. Currently, Pablo has a source capacity of 625 gpm total and 425 gpm excluding the largest well. The PER indicates that by 2030 the community will need approximately 1,400 gpm (with the largest well out of service) to meet DEQ requirements. The PER also discussed significant needs associated with Pablo's water storage and distribution systems but noted the substantial cost of the improvements dictated a phased approach to the preferred alternatives. Based on current priorities, the District is proposing that one new redundant water supply well be drilled, tested and connected to the system through a new transmission main. The new well is projected to yield 200 to 400 gpm and will address some of the immediate water supply shortfall. The need for additional water supply, storage and distribution system improvements will be addressed in future phases and is not discussed in this environmental assessment (EA).

A total of \$260,000 has been included in the current project budget for drilling and testing a new water supply well. A loan of \$260,000 will be obtained from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Loan Program with \$130,000 of this amount being forgiven once the District

meets certain DWSRF loan conditions.

Environmentally sensitive characteristics such as wetlands, floodplains, threatened or endangered species and historical sites are not expected to be adversely impacted as a result of the proposed projects. Additional environmental impacts related to land use, water quality, air quality, public health, energy, noise, and growth were also assessed. No significant long-term environmental impacts were identified.

Under the Montana Water Pollution Control State Revolving Fund Act and the Montana Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Act, the DEQ may loan money to municipalities for construction of public sewage and drinking water systems.

The project will be constructed using standard construction methods and to minimize or eliminate pollutants during construction, best management practices will be implemented. A Stormwater Discharge General Permit and a construction-dewatering permit from the DEQ may be required prior to construction. Plan and specification review and approval is required by the State Revolving Fund (SRF) section of the DEQ for this project.

The DEQ, Technical & Financial Assistance Bureau, has prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

D. COMMENT PERIOD

Thirty (30) calendar days

II. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

According to the 2010 PER the source capacity in the existing Pablo water system does not meet the requirements of Section 3.2.1.1. a. of Circular DEQ-1. Pablo has a source capacity of 625 gpm total and 425 gpm excluding the largest well. To meet the requirements of Section 3.2.1.1.a. the community currently needs 832 gpm of source capacity excluding the largest well. In 2030, based on population estimates, Pablo will need 1,393 gpm to meet maximum day demand (MDD). Due to financial constraints the community is pursuing adding one 200-400 gpm well to address some of the current shortfall.

A. WATER FACILITIES

The Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District was formed in 1987. Initial construction of the Pablo water system occurred in 1972 with the drilling of the community's first well (Well #1). Three additional wells were added to the community's water system between 1973 and 1989. All four wells pump to the community's elevated water storage tank. The water storage tank has a usable capacity of approximately 187,000 gallons and provides pressure for the water system. The majority of Pablo's distribution system was constructed in 1973 and currently includes approximately 72,000 feet of pipe.

The proposed drinking water supply improvements are necessary in order to address existing deficiencies and to continue to provide the Pablo water users with a safe, reliable water supply. The main health issue, associated with the current shortage of water supply is the potential loss of water pressure during a fire event or power outage. In addition to increased fire risk, this condition could cause contamination of the distribution system due to backflow.

A sound water supply system is important for public health and safety. Providing additional water supply will reduce the public health and safety risk to the residents and visitors of Pablo.

### III. ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION AND COSTS

#### A. WATER SUPPLY

##### 1. NO ACTION

DEQ Circular 1 requires the water supply to meet maximum day demand with the largest supply source out of service. Existing maximum day demand is estimated at 1,200,000 gpd. The largest existing supply source is Well 4. If this well is out of service, the remaining 3 wells can only produce 612,000 gpd or about 51% of the projected maximum day demand. If no action is taken to provide additional water supply for Pablo the potential for low system pressure, backflow and increased fire risk will remain. Based on these concerns, the no-action alternative was not recommended.

##### 2. PROPOSED ACTION

The 2010 PER examined Pablo's water supply needs and detailed several alternatives with varying number of water supply wells to meet current and future flows demands. The PER also examined the cost and the social and environmental impacts of each alternative during a ranking procedure. Based on this analysis the PER recommended the following water supply improvements:

- Phase 1 - One new 210 gpm water supply well
- Phase 2 (future) – One new 210 gpm water supply well

The current required maximum day demand in Pablo is 832 gpm. To meet the requirements of DEQ-1, the total supply capacity must meet or exceed the maximum day demand without the largest supply source. The addition of two 210 gpm wells would increase the maximum day demand supply to 835 (with the largest well out of service) which meets the requirements of DEQ-1. It should be noted that the production of a well is never known until it is drilled and developed.

The proposed Phase 1 well is scheduled to be drilled and tested in 2013 and it is hoped this new well will produce 200 to 400 gpm. In October of 2012 a Source Water Delineation and Assessment Reports was prepared by Applied Water Consulting, LLC. This document provides the proposed well location, aquifer properties and general design information for the well. The proposed 10-inch well will be drilled to 500-600 feet, draw water from a confined aquifer and will include a bentonite seal from the ground surface to 90 feet below ground surface. The Source Water Delineation and Assessment Report indicates that the required 100 foot control zone is located entirely on property owned by Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District and no significant potential contaminant sources are located within the control zone.

The project budget for drilling and testing the new well is \$260,000. Once testing is complete, and it has been determined that the new well is suitable as a public water supply, the District will pursue a transmission main, connection to the water system, backup generator, telemetry and control system for the new well.

#### IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

##### A. STUDY AREA

The unincorporated community of Pablo is located on the Flathead Indian Reservation in Lake County, Montana. The community is situated on US Highway 93, approximately 8 miles south of Polson and 62 miles north of Missoula (see Figure 1).

The proposed well location is on property owned by the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District and sits on the corner of Montana Highway 93 Frontage Road and Northwood Road. If well development is successful, the well will be connected to an existing water main located along Frontage Road. This future transmission main will be comprised of approximately 250 lineal feet of 8 to 12 inch pipe and will be located within property currently owned by the District or using established utility easements. The location of the proposed well site and the future transmission main can be seen on a map prepared by Applied Water Consulting (see Figure 2).

##### B. POPULATION AND FLOW PROJECTIONS

The current population of Pablo is approximately 2,000 people. The PER estimated a growth rate of 2.6% and a 2030 design year population of 3,342 people. As of 2008, there were approximately 549 active water service connections. The requirements for water supply and storage are directly related to population. Based on the population estimates, there are deficiencies in both supply and storage in the current system and therefore also in the 10 year and 20 year design systems if no improvements are made.

The 2010 PER calculations for average day used 2000 US census information (2.89 people per EDU) and a conservative per capita water demand of 150 gallons per capita day. The current average day demand was estimated at 208 gpm. The 20 year design average day is estimated to be 348 gpm. A peaking factor of 4 was used to calculate the current maximum day at 832 gpm and the 20 year design maximum day at 1,393 gpm.

##### C. NATURAL FEATURES

Pablo is surrounded by agricultural lands used by local farmers and ranchers. The area surrounding Pablo includes tribal, irrigated, cultivated, and pastured lands. Pablo is relatively flat with an elevation of approximately 3,100 feet above sea level. Pablo is located central to several significant land features. Flathead Lake is located to the north, the Mission Mountain Range is located to the east, and the Lolo National Forest is located in the west and south of Pablo. Several small creeks, ditches and canals can be found in the vicinity of Pablo.

The proposed well is to be completed within the deep alluvial aquifer, which is comprised of glacial outwash sediments. The outwash sediments occur as sand and/or gravel seams that range in thickness from several feet to as much as 30 feet. In general, the seams occur at depths of 350 feet below ground surface (bgs) or more. Regionally, the outwash sediments are covered by clay-rich tills, which are generally present from 50 feet to 350 feet below ground surface. These tills act to confine the deeper alluvial aquifer. Given the hydrogeologic setting as a confined aquifer with a thick sequence of clay-rich material, the aquifer is classified as having low source water sensitivity.

Conceptually, groundwater occurs in glacial outwash beds which are recharged by surface water infiltration into alluvial and other surficial deposits along the margins of the Mission Mountains.

The deep groundwater system is bounded between the Mission Range to the east, the Salish Mountains to the west, and the Jocko Hills to the south. Water flows from the recharge areas along the margins vertically into the aquifer beds and then horizontally towards the central part of the Mission Valley, beneath a thick clay-rich confining layer. In general, water flows from the margins towards the Flathead River, where it discharges.

D. MAPS

Figure 1 shows the general location of the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District within western Montana. Figure 2 show the proposed location for the new water supply well and future transmission main.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT

A. DIRECT AND INDIRECT IMPACTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT

Land Use - All of the water supply system improvements will be located within property owned by the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District. The land use in the study area is residential and agricultural in nature. The proposed well site is in a relatively open field located just south of Northwood Road and just east of U.S. Highway 93 Frontage Road. This site will be maintained for additional groundwater wells and a future water storage tank. The required 100 foot control zone will be preserved in order to maintain water quality. No further land use changes are expected as a result of this project.

Soils Suitability, Topographic and Geologic Constraints – The proposed well site will be located in the northeastern portion of Pablo. No soil, topography or geological constraints are present for the proposed project. Based on the existing conditions and soils types, the impacts of the proposed water project will have no significant effect on the soils or topography.

Fish and Wildlife and Biological Resources – The area around Pablo supports a vast array of wildlife including bear, deer, elk, game birds, and other small mammals. Considering the scale and scope of the project, no significant long term impact on fish, wildlife or biological resources is expected. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks were sent letters regarding the proposed improvements. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has reviewed the proposed water improvements project and in a letter dated November 2008, stated "...this project is unlikely to have any significant adverse effects upon fish, wildlife, or habitat resources under the purview of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service".

Water Resource Issues – Groundwater in the planning area is shallow; in some places as shallow as one foot below ground surface. There are numerous tributaries and small water bodies in the vicinity of Pablo. Mud Creek flows south of the community. Various canals also flow east of the community. The proposed new well will not impact surface water and no significant impact is expected on the groundwater resource. The new well will be considered a redundant water supply well and any groundwater used by the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District will fall within the existing water rights held by the District.

Floodplain – There is a small portion of Mud Creek that flows through the southeast portion of the proposed service area that is in the 100 and 500-year floodplain. However, the proposed project is not located within a delineated floodplain and will have no impact on a floodplain.

Wetlands – There are some small wetlands in and around Pablo. However the proposed well site

doesn't include wetlands and no impact to wetlands will occur.

Cultural Resources & Historical Sites – The community of Pablo is named after Michael Pablo, a bison rancher who inhabited the area around Pablo in the late 1800's. Currently, Pablo is home to the governmental offices of the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Salish Kootenai College.

The Montana Historical Society and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe Preservation Department were contacted regarding the proposed project. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the proposed project and conducted a cultural resource file search for the proposed project area. In a letter dated November 21, 2008 SHPO states "According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales."

Socio-Economic Issues – The 2000 US Census indicated the average household income in Pablo lags behind that of Lake County and the State of Montana as a whole. The median household income in Pablo in 1999 was \$26,771 which was below the state average. The Census indicated that 40.5% of the families in Pablo earned less than \$25,000 compared to 26% for the state average. Approximately 23% of the families in Pablo lived below the poverty line in 1999.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program will provide a portion of the project loan funds to be forgiven based on the disadvantaged status of the community. No adverse human health or socio-economic impacts are expected as a result of the new water supply well.

Air Quality - Short-term negative impacts on the air quality will occur from heavy equipment, dust and exhaust fumes during project construction. However, no long-term air quality problems will result from this project.

Energy - During construction of the proposed project, additional energy will be consumed, resulting in a direct short-term increased demand on this resource. Additional energy will be required to operate the additional well pump. The District spent \$15,976 in electricity cost in fiscal year 2006 to 2007. The majority of these costs are assumed to be associated with water supply well production. The new energy costs are estimated at \$5,000 annually. The District's rates and charges for water will be adjusted to account for the increased energy costs.

Public Health – Public health will be protected and improved due to this project. The new water supply well will improve system redundancy and help ensure water system pressures in the event of fire or broken water mains.

Noise - Short-term impacts from excessive noise levels may occur during the construction activities. The construction period will be limited to normal daylight hours to avoid early morning or late evening construction related disturbances. In the long-term, no increase in noise levels associated with this project will occur.

Growth – The community of Pablo is governed by the Lake County growth policy. The 2010 PER estimated future populations based on the Lake County historic growth rate of 2.6%. The PER recommended water projects needed to insure a viable water system for current and future residence of Pablo. However, the proposed water project will address current system water supply needs and will have no significant impact on growth.

Cumulative Effects – This project involves the construction of one additional redundant water supply well and a 250 foot transmission main to connect it to Pablo's water system. Based on the size and scope of the proposed project there should be no significant cumulative adverse effects on resources,

ecosystems or human communities.

## B. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Short-term construction related impacts, such as noise, dust and traffic disruption, will occur but should be minimized through proper construction management. Energy consumption during construction cannot be avoided and there will be some increase to the District's energy bill associated with the new water supply well. However, these unavoidable impacts are not expected to cause significant impact to area resources, communities or public health.

## VI. AGENCY ACTION, APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, AND PERMITTING AUTHORITIES

All water supply and conveyance improvements will be designed to meet Montana DEQ requirements. Proper State regulatory review and approval of the project plans and specifications will be provided. All applicable local, federal and state permits will be required including, but not limited to, a stormwater discharge permit and a construction-dewatering permit if needed.

All appropriate easements and access will be addressed with regards to the water system infrastructure improvements.

## VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In addition to monthly District board meeting, three public meetings were held throughout the PER process.

## VIII. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents have been utilized in the environmental review of this project and are considered to be part of the project file:

1. Preliminary Engineering Report- prepared for the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District by TD&H Engineering, Kalispell, Montana, April 2010.
2. Source Water Delineation And Assessment Report - prepared for the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District by Applied Water Consulting, LLC, Kalispell, Montana, October 2012.
3. Pablo New Water Well Contract Documents and Specifications- prepared for the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District by Shari A. Johnson & Associates Engineering, PLLC, Somers, Montana, October 2012.

## IX. AGENCIES CONSULTED

As part of this Environmental Assessment process, the following agencies have been contacted in regard to the proposed water project:

1. The Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) was asked in a letter by the project consultant for comments on the proposed project. No comments regarding the project have been received.
2. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) was asked in a letter by the project consultant for

comments on the proposed project. The FWS responded with a letter dated May 1, 2009 stating "...this project is unlikely to have any significant adverse effects upon fish, wildlife, or habitat resources..."

3. The Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) considered the impacts of the proposed project on historical sites and in a letter dated November 21, 2008 stated "According to our records there have been no previously recorded sites within the designated search locales." SHPO also ask that the District contact the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal Historic Preservation Department.
4. Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal Historic Preservation Department was asked in a letter by the project engineer for comments on the proposed project. No comments regarding the project have been received.
5. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was asked in a letter by the project consultant for comments on the proposed project. The BIA responded in a letter dated January 9, 2009 noting that the BIA and the US Department of Justice were preparing for litigation over the water rights of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai (CS&KT) of the Flathead Indian Reservations. NOTE: The Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District is working with an attorney to ensure the well project meets all legal requirements.
6. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) was asked in a letter by the project consultant for comments on the proposed project. A response letter dated December 2008 noted that any work involving the placement of dredged or fill material below the ordinary high water mark of our nation's waters and their adjacent wetlands would require a permit. The new Pablo well will not require a Section 404 permit from the Corps as no waters of the U.S. will be impacted.
7. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) was asked in a letter by the project consultant for comments on the proposed project. MDT responded in a letter dated November 24, 2008 noting that 1) any impacts to US 93 would need to be reviewed by MDT, 2) Any work done within MDT right-of-way would require a permit, 3) work on US 93 should be coordinated with the existing Pablo bike/pedestrian overcrossing project. The proposed new water well will not impact US 93 and any future transmission main work will obtain all required MDT permits.

**Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**

EIS     More Detailed EA     No Further Analysis

Rationale for Recommendation: Through the Preliminary Engineering Report, prepared by TD&H Engineering and the associated public involvement, the Pablo/Lake County Water and Sewer District determined that the addition of one new water supply well will improve the operation and maintenance capabilities of their water system. Through this EA, the MDEQ has verified none of the adverse impacts of the proposed new water well project and associated transmission main are significant; therefore an environmental impact statement is not required. The environmental review was conducted in accordance with the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.4.607, 17.4.608, 17.4.609 and 17.4.610. This EA is the appropriate level of analysis because none of the adverse effects of the impacts are significant. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued and legally advertised in the local newspaper and distributed to a list of interested agencies. Comments regarding the project will be received for 30 days before final approval is granted.

**EA Prepared By:**

Robert Ashton  
Robert Ashton

1/7/2013  
Date

Approved By:

Marc Golz, P.E.  
Marc Golz, P.E.

1/8/2013  
Date

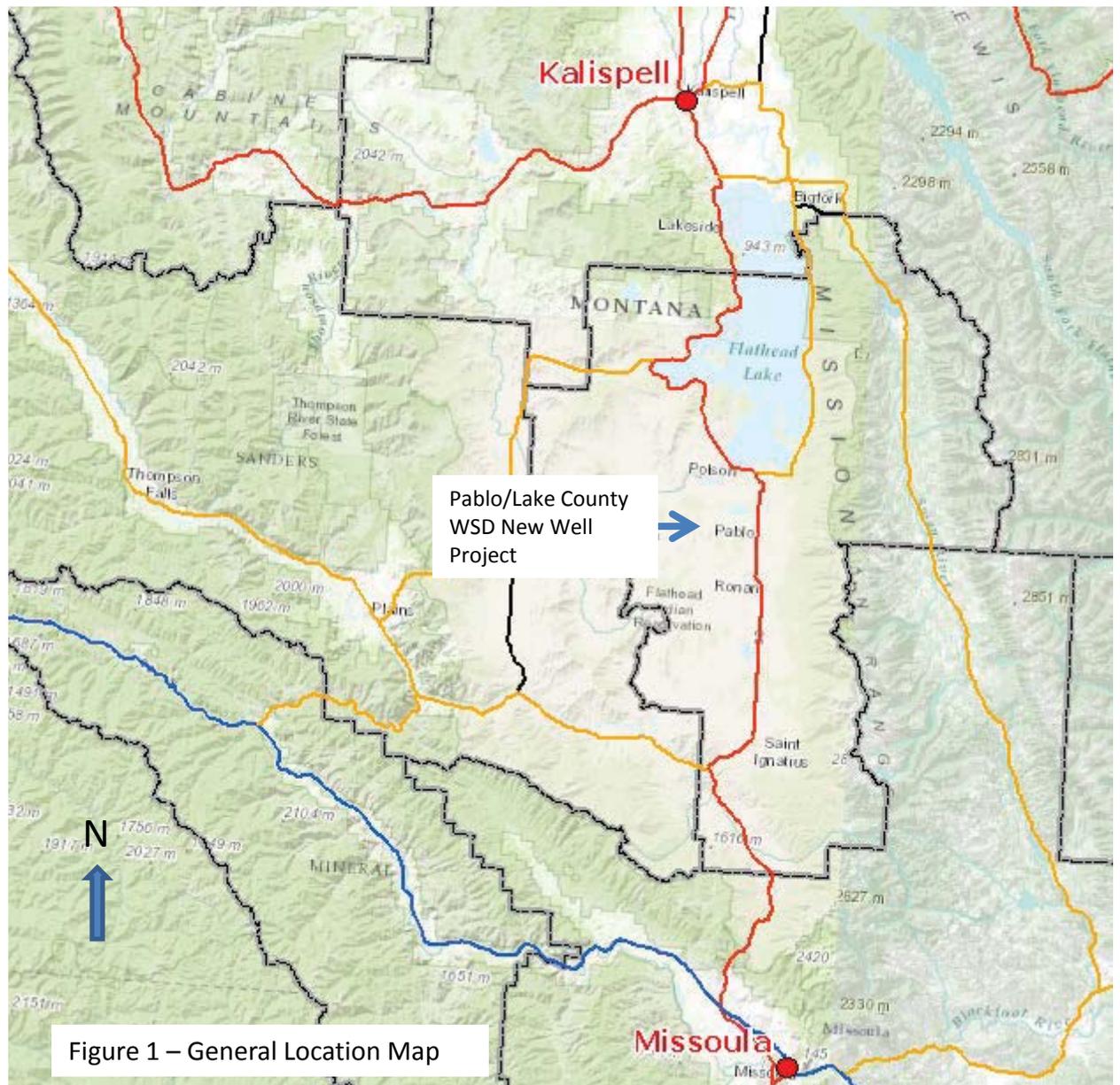


Figure 1 – General Location Map



	PROJ NO: 525-12	DRAWN: BJB	Pablo PWS 6	FIGURE <b>2</b>
	LOCATION: PABLO, MT	PROJ MGR: R. NOBLE		
	1 inch = 100 feet	CHECKED:		
	FILE NAME: PABLO	DATE: Oct/30/2012		