

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**  
**Environmental Assessment**

**Permitting and Compliance Division**  
**Water Protection Bureau**

**Name of Project:** Town of Alberton, Wastewater Treatment Facility

**Location of Project:** 117 Parkway Drive, Alberton

**City/Town:** Alberton

**County:** Mineral

**Description of Project:** This is a reissuance of an MPDES permit MT0021555 for the Town of Alberton Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) which discharges treated domestic wastewater to the Clark Fork River. The WWTF is a three-cell aerated lagoon system, without effluent disinfection.

**Agency Action and Applicable Regulations:** The proposed action of the Department is to reissue the MPDES permit for another five-year cycle.

Applicable rules and statute:

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 2 – Water Quality Permit Application and Annual Fees.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 5 – Mixing Zones in Surface and Ground Water.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 6 – Surface Water Quality Standards.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 7 – Nondegradation of Water Quality.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapters 12 and 13 – Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Standards.

MCA 75-5-101 *et. seq.*, Montana Water Quality Act.

**Summary of Issues:** The national secondary treatment standards on biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>5</sub>) and pH, and treatment equivalent to secondary (TES) for suspended solids (TSS), are continued in the draft renewed permit. Effluent limits of the previous permit on *E. coli* and revised limits on total residual chlorine (TRC) have also been applied.

**Affected Environment & Impacts of the Proposed Project:**

*Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts). Include frequency, duration (long or short term), magnitude, and context for any significant impacts identified. Reference other permit analyses when appropriate (ex: statement of basis). Address significant impacts related to substantive issues and concerns. Identify reasonable feasible mitigation measures (before and after) where significant impacts cannot be avoided and note any irreversible or irretrievable impacts. Include background information on affected environment if necessary to discussion.*

*N = Not present or No Impact will likely occur. Use negative declarations where appropriate (wetlands, T&E, Cultural Resources).*

## IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N] The wastewater treatment plant has been located at this site for more than 40 years. Renewal of the permit will not impact geology, soil quality, stability and moisture.
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[N] The wastewater treatment plant has discharged to this same receiving water for more than 40 years. The effluent limits in the renewed permit will protect water quality.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] Renewal of the permit will not add pollutants or degrade area air quality.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N]
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] The wastewater treatment plant has been at this same location for more than 40 years. Effluent limits will assure discharge quality.
6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	[N] Species of special concern in the general vicinity of Alberton are bald eagle, bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and canada lynx. The wastewater treatment plant has been at this same location for more than 40 years and renewal of the permit will not adversely impact threatened or endangered species, species of special concern or wetlands. Point of discharge is to the main stream of the receiving water approximately 40 feet from the river bank. Effluent limits will assure discharge quality.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] The wastewater treatment plant has been at this same location for more than 40 years and no historical, archaeological or paleontological resources will be impacted.
8. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	[N] The wastewater treatment plant has been at this same location for more than 40 years and permit renewal will have no impact on aesthetics. The plant location is not on a prominent topographic feature, will not be visible from nearby I-90, and there will not be excessive noise or light.
9. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N]

### IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Will new or upgraded powerline or other energy source be needed)	
10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N]

### IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N] Permit renewal and effluent limit enforcement will protect human health and safety.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	[N]
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] No impacts expected. The wastewater treatment plant has been at this same location for more than 40 years.
17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N]
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND	[N]

<b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>	
DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	
21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]
22(a). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category.) If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
22(b). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Is the agency proposing to deny the application or condition the approval in a way that restricts the use of the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
22(c). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: If the answer to 21(b) is affirmative, does the agency have legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternatives. The agency must disclose the potential costs of identified restrictions.	[ ]

- 23. Description of and Impacts of other Alternatives Considered: None
- 24. Summary of Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts: None
- 25. Cumulative Effects: None
- 26. Preferred Action Alternative and Rationale: The preferred action is to reissue the MPDES permit. This action is preferred because the permit program provides the regulatory mechanism for protecting water quality by enforcement of the terms of the MPDES permit.

**Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**

EIS     More Detailed EA     No Further Analysis

Rationale for Recommendation:

- 27. Public Involvement: A 30-day public comment period will be held.
- 28. Persons and agencies consulted in the preparation of this analysis: None

**EA Checklist Prepared By:** James F. Brown      **Date:** April, 2013

**Approved By:**

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Paul Skubinna, Chief  
Water Protection Bureau

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Date