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Department of Health and Environmental Sciences
STATE OF MONTANA HELENA, MONTANA 59601

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John S. Anderson M.D.
DIRECTOR

FEB 18 1975

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
COUNCIL

February 14, 1975

Honorable Thomas Judge, Governor, State of Montana, Helena
Montana Department of Fish and Game, Helena
Environmental Quality Council, Helena
Bill Schneider, Montana Outdoors, Department of Fish and
Game, Helena
Department of Natural Resources, Helena
Department of State Lands, Helena
Bureau of Land Management, Federal Building, Billings
Dan MacIntyre, Custer National Forest, Box 2556, Billings
Wayne Yost, Soil Conservation Service, 130 South Pratten,
Columbus
Rodney Fink, Sanitarian, Courthouse, Columbus
Environmental Information Center, Box 12, Helena
Tina Torgrimson, Environmental Information Center, Box 12,
Helena
Floyd Sharrock, Department of Anthropology, University of
Montana, Missoula
Trout Unlimited, Box 1534, Billings
The Billings Gazette, Billings
Berkley Dowd, Fishtail
Walter Keogh, Nye
Department of Intergovernmental Relations, Division of
Planning, Helena
Leslie Zuck, 1304 16th Street West, Billings
Rick Graetz, Box 894, Helena
Mary Lee Reese, 29 South Alta, Helena
Northern Rockies Action Group, #9 Placer, Helena
Student Environmental Research Center, Room 212 Venture
Center, University of Montana, Missoula
Montana State Library, Helena
Doris Milner, Montana Wilderness Association, Route 1,
Box 1410, Hamilton
Billings Public Library, Billings
Environmental Studies Department, University of Montana,
Missoula
Consumer Advocate, Governor's Office, Helena
Paul T. Richards, 902 North Park, Helena
Dan Smith, Citizens Alert for Guided Growth, 812 South
Eighth, Bozeman
C. W. Gonder, 823 East Call Street, Livingston

Mrs. Winifred Lucky, 420 South Sixth Street, Livingston
Mrs. Vel Jansen, 430 South Sixth, Livingston
Mr. Oscar Harmon, 1804 Lake Elmo Road, Billings
Mr. Alf Hulteng, Billings Branch Office, Box 20296, Billings
Board of County Commissioners, Courthouse, Columbus
City-County Planning Board, Courthouse, Columbus
Mr. John Schillinger, Microbiology Department, Montana State
University, Bozeman

Attached is a draft environmental impact statement for the
Buffalo Jump Ranch subdivision in Stillwater County.
Your comments should be received within 30 days of the above
date.

Sincerely,

Daniel Vichorek

Daniel Vichorek
Technical Writer
Environmental Sciences Division

DV:sh

Attachment

cc: Mr. Wake
Mr. Carmody

FEB 18 1975

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCESENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
CONTROL

February 14, 1975

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR
THE BUFFALO JUMP RANCH SUBDIVISION,
STILLWATER COUNTY, MONTANA

Pursuant to the Montana Environmental Policy Act, Section 69-6504(b)(3); the act controlling both public and private water supply and sewage disposal for subdivisions, Section 69-5001 through 69-5009; and the act controlling water pollution, Section 69-4801 through 69-4827, the following draft environmental impact statement was prepared by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, Environmental Sciences Division, concerning the proposed Buffalo Jump Ranch Subdivision in Stillwater County for which a request has been received to remove the sanitary restriction which has been imposed.

Location

As shown on the attached map, the subdivision is located approximately one mile south of Nye in the Stillwater drainage in Section 6 and 7, Township 5 South, Range 16 East and Section 1 and 2, Township 5 South, Range 15 East.

Description of the Proposed Project

This property consists of approximately 874 acres which have already been subdivided into 77 lots ranging from 10 to 80 acres. The lots average 11.28 acres. Under the new proposal, each of the lots would be divided into two or three smaller lots averaging 5.8 acres, thus doubling the potential population of the development.

The developer has asked specifically for permission to divide one lot, lot 42 of the existing subdivision, into four lots, but legal counsel for this department advises that the impacts of the entire development should be considered in this impact statement.

It appears that this area is generally unsuitable for subdivision, although it was subdivided earlier into lots large enough to escape the authority of this department.

Problems with the area include the following:

1. High groundwater. Data submitted by the developer showed "moisture" above four feet in each of four test holes sunk on lot 42. Whether this condition is general throughout the property is currently unknown and extensive testing would be required to find out.
2. Soils with moderate to severe limitations for sub-surface drainfields. Septic tank limitations on the property include high bedrock, steep slopes, flood hazard, and poor permeability. Extensive on-site testing would be required to determine if suitable sites for sewage disposal do exist.
3. No potable water supply. Water would have to be hauled from approved supplies by truck and placed in cisterns. No arrangements for this have been submitted to the department.

The development also would have a serious impact on wildlife, according to the State Department of Fish and Game. A spokesman for that department said that the subdivision would eliminate an important piece of mule deer habitat and eventually the deer themselves. "Unfortunately for wildlife, this tract of land is located in a key wintering area for the Stillwater mule deer herd," according to the Fish and Game Department. The department's wildlife biologists did not agree with the developer's statement that the winter range on the property would not be destroyed because only summer homes would be built there.

Power would be supplied to the development through overhead lines that supply the nearby Mouat Mine.

The Department of Anthropology of the University of Montana in Missoula offers the following comments with respect to the buffalo jump situated just west of the subdivision:

The site is the Kenough Buffalo Jump (24 ST 401). There is suggestive evidence that the site is attributable to the Crow Indians (ms. on file UM Statewide Archaeological Survey files).

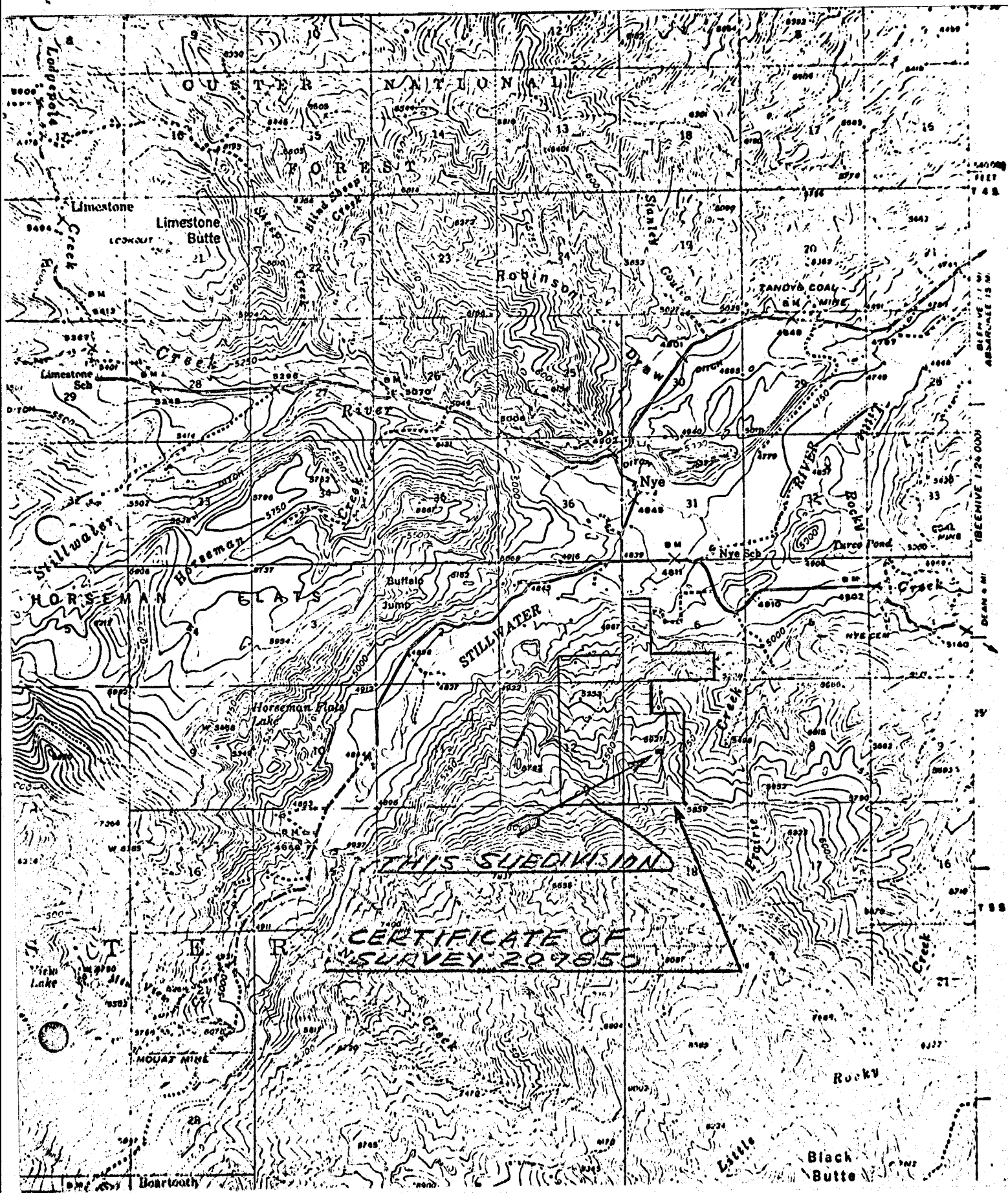
It is my opinion that the subdivision (an additional 154 families) that close to the bison jump is apt to have adverse impact on the site because of the greater numbers of people and increased accessibility to the site.

Because of the probable adverse impact, I recommend, at minimum photographing and mapping the site, and test excavation as precautionary measures.

Conclusion

In view of the apparent limitation of this site for subdivision, this department cannot look favorably upon such development, unless further testing removes concern over the sanitary problems that appear inevitable if development were to proceed.

This draft environmental impact statement has been prepared by Daniel Vichorek, Technical Writer for the Environmental Sciences Division, Montana Department of Health and Environmental Sciences, utilizing information presented by the developer, Department of Fish and Game, U. S. Soil Conservation Service and the Department of Anthropology of the University of Montana.



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STATE OF MONTANA

**DEPARTMENT OF
FISH AND GAME**

Helena, Montana 59601
March 3, 1975

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MAR 4 1975

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
COUNCIL

Mr. Dan Vichorek
Department of Health
and Environmental Sciences
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Dan:

Enclosed for your information and use are comments prepared by the Billings regional office regarding Buffalo Jump Ranch subdivision.

Sincerely,

James A. Posewitz, Administrator
Environment & Information Division

JAP/sd

Enc

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
HELENA, MONTANA

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FEB 26 1975
ENVIRON. RESOURCES

Office Memorandum

TO : Wes Woodgerd Attention Jim Posewitz **DATE:** February 25, 1975
FROM : Roger Fliger by Bill Pryor
SUBJECT: Comment on Buffalo Jump Ranch Subdivision - Environmental Impact Statement

It sounds as if our concerns for mule deer winter range in this area have been taken into consideration by the Department of Health and Environmental Sciences in this impact statement.

We are now concerned about the high ground water table in the area and the fact that soil type and high bed rock may limit the effectiveness of septic tank drain-fields. It seems that the shallow layer of soil would allow pollutants a lateral movement into the streams of the drainage.

For the third time, this regional office concludes that it is against the subdividing of the Buffalo Jump Ranch area.

Thank you for allowing us to comment.

WEP/kj

cc: Floyd Gordon
Ron Stoneberg
Phil Stewart