

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION
WATER RESOURCES DIVISION
WATER RIGHTS BUREAU
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of action:** Water use permit application no.
Water right change application no. 76LJ-G(W)147127-00
Petition or Other Action:
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:** Duane A. & Kathleen M. Carlson, 4405 Whitefish Stage Rd., Whitefish, MT 59937
3. **Water source name:** Whitefish Lake
4. **Location affected by action:** SW SW NW, Sec. 24, Twp. 31N, Rge. 22W, Flathead County
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** The DNRC shall issue an Authorization to Change Appropriation Water Right if the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-402, MCA are met. The applicant is seeking a change authorization to relocate the point of diversion from a point on the Whitefish River located in the NE SW NW of Section 16, TWP. 30N, Rge. 21W to a point located on Whitefish Lake in the SW SW NW of Section 24, Twp. 31N, Rge. 22W. The use proposed in this change of appropriation is to irrigate the new Iron Horse golf course. Water will be held temporarily in a new storage pond and will be applied to the golf course by a high efficiency irrigation system which employs computer controlled sprinklers.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:** Flathead Regional Development Office, City of Whitefish, Department of Environmental Quality, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Whitefish Water & Sewer District and Soil Conservation District.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Soils/Geologic Features:

Degradation of soil quality or alteration of soil stability, moisture content, geologic substructure, unique geologic features, archeological sites?

Substantial alteration of the terrain is anticipated for the construction of the golf course. The submitted statement of landscape philosophy proposes to disturb as little as possible, and where disturbance is necessary, to revegetate with similar native plant material.

Erosion:

Alteration of erosion or siltation patterns which modify stream beds or lake shores?

A drainage plan with catchment basins for all drainages and the use of straw bales to control erosion during construction are proposed.

Vegetation/Noxious weeds:

Change in or adverse affect on diversity and production of local plant species including any unique or endangered species (including trees, shrubs, grass, and aquatic plants)? Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?

No ornamental plant materials should be used, except for lawn in limited areas on flat or gently sloping terrain only where disturbance is necessary.

Air:

Deterioration of air quality, or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

NO

Water:

Alteration of surface water or groundwater quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity or quantity or distribution?

Several drainages exist on site which would be considered Class 3 streams under the Montana Streamside Management Zone Law. Potential for significant water quality degradation from this development exists. This development will have to meet the requirements for a nondegradation review (ARM 16.20.709).

Floodplain:

Changes in drainage patterns, course or magnitude of flood flows, or exposure of people/property to hazards (flood)?

NO

Wildlife Habitat/Migration:

Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat? Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife?

The site is not identified as critical habitat for any species but it does support resident and transient wildlife populations which may cause damage to the facility. An adequate perimeter fence will be necessary if the developer does not want the resident and transient wildlife populations to attract predators including mountain lion.

Wetlands should be avoided (protected) if possible and mitigated off site if they must be destroyed.

Endangered Species:

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

NO

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Existing Land Use:

Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?

The property has been predominantly timberland, with considerable logging taking place within the past few years. The golf driving range area includes a part of a borrow pit.

Historical Significance:

Destruction or alteration of a natural area of scientific or educational value or prehistoric or paleontological importance?

NO

Populace:

Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? Alteration of social structure of community?

The subdivision will be annexed to the city of Whitefish and shall be served by municipal water and sewer facilities.

Transportation:

Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?

Murdock Lane shall be designed by a licensed professional engineer and constructed to comply with ASSHTO standards, City of Whitefish standards and Whitefish Subdivision Regulations as a collector street.

Safety:

Creation of any health hazard or affect on existing emergency response or evacuation plans?

An emergency access plan to all parts of the golf course shall be approved by the city of Whitefish and implemented prior to course operation. The plan shall consist of either construction of carpaths suitable to accommodate an ambulance, or an alternative means of access approved by the City of Whitefish.

Public Services:

Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? Have an effect upon local or state tax base?

The subdivision will have mixed effects on local services. Being annexed to the City of Whitefish, fire and police protection, schools, parks and recreational facility expenses will be offset by a significantly increased property tax revenues.

Utilities:

Creates need for new or altered facilities for any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?

All new utilities shall be installed underground and in conformance with Whitefish Subdivision Regulations.

Aesthetics:

Alteration of any scenic vista or recreation opportunity or creation of an aesthetically offensive site to the public?

NO

Other:

NO

2. **Secondary and cumulative impacts:** None

3. **Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:** Locate a site that is more suitable for a development of this nature or do not develop a golf course and subdivision in the Whitefish area.

PART III. CONCLUSION

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?
NO

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: The concerns that have been identified have been mitigated by the Whitefish City Council subject to thirty two (32) conditions of approval.

PREPARED BY:

NAME: Rich Russell
TITLE: Water Resources Specialist
DATE: April 2, 1996