

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE DIVISION
WATER PROTECTION BUREAU/SUBDIVISIONS**

Name of Project: Blue Creek Views Major **Type of Project:** Subdivision E.Q. #99-1150

Location of Project: SE¼ of Section 33 and the SW¼ of Section 34, T1S, R26E (near Billings) **County:** Yellowstone

Description of Project: 34-Lot Subdivision. Served by onsite water supply and onsite sewage disposal.

Summary of Issues: *Include issues and concerns / resource conflicts identified by staff and the public.*

Affected Environment & Impacts of the Proposed Project:

Key: Summarize impacts as follows: NA - Not applicable, N - No impact, B - potentially beneficial impact, A - potentially adverse impact, M mitigation required, P - additional permits required (when additional DEQ permits are required, this review must be coordinated between bureaus)

Under Comment below include frequency, duration (long or short term) magnitude (quantify or qualify) and context for any impacts identified (Each category includes a tickler list of items to consider - this does not mean each one needs to be addressed. Rather, if an issue related to that topic has been raised then provide some additional information. Address impacts related to issues and concerns. Identify reasonable feasible mitigation measures where significant impacts could be avoided and note impacts which are irreversible, irretrievable. Relate discussion to issues. Include background information on affected environment if necessary to discussion. Utilize negative declarations where appropriate (wetlands, T&E, Cultural Resources)

Key	PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT
N	<p>1. SOIL SUITABILITY, TOPOGRAPHIC AND/OR GEOLOGIC CONSTRAINTS (soil moisture, unstable soils or geologic conditions, steep slopes, erosion potential, subsidence potential, seismic activity)</p> <p>COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Steep cliffs of shale bedrock with nearly vertical faces occur along the entry road which provides access into this property from Basin Creek Road. With guidance from the County Public Works Department, the access road was improved and widened to alleviate concerns about falling rocks. No evidence of unstable or expansive soil conditions were identified in the application. No evidence of land, mud or snow slides have been observed within this property or the surrounding area.</p>
NA	<p>2. HAZARDOUS FACILITIES (power lines, hazardous waste sites, distances from explosive and flammable hazards including chemical/petrochemical storage tanks, underground fuel storage tanks and related facilities such as natural gas storage facilities and propane tanks)</p> <p>COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION:</p>
A	<p>3. AIR QUALITY (effects to and from project, dust, odors, emissions)</p> <p>COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: There will be some minor negative impact on air quality due to the increased traffic after development of the subdivision and fireplace smoke from the 34 proposed homes.</p>
A	<p>4. GROUNDWATER RESOURCES & AQUIFERS (quality/nondegradation, quantity/reliability, distribution, uses/rights, # of aquifers, mixing zones)</p> <p>COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: A- MEETS NONSIGNIFICANT CRITERIA AND WATER SOURCE (IF ONSITE WATER & SEWER) DEMONSTRATED TO HAVE ADEQUATE QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND DEPENDABILITY, N - IF PUBLIC WATER & SEWER Since cisterns are proposed for the individual water supplies due to poor water quality, there will be no depletion of the underlying aquifer.</p>
N	<p>5. SURFACE WATER RESOURCES (quality/nondegradation, quantity/reliability, distribution, uses/rights, stormwater controls, source of community supply, community treatment, mixing zones)</p> <p>COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The subdivision is located over 800 feet from and a vertical distance of over 100 feet above the closest point on Blue Creek. The minimum distance to the closest point on Basin Creek is over 500 feet horizontally and 100 feet vertically. The stormwater plan is designed so that runoff after development does not reach these creeks until settleable and floatable solids are removed. The Department's non-degradation analysis for this subdivision concluded that this project, with its individual drainfield systems, will not cause degradation of state waters.</p>
A	<p>6. VEGETATION AND WILDLIFE SPECIES AND HABITATS, INCLUDING FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES (threatened, endangered, sensitive species, prime habitat, population stability, potential for human wildlife conflicts, effectiveness of postdisturbance plans)</p> <p>COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: N-URBANIZED AREA, A -RURAL AREA Agricultural activity, including livestock grazing, has seemed to discourage the presence of wildlife at the subdivision site. There is no aquatic life within the subdivision boundaries. The stormwater plan was designed to ensure that settleable and</p>

	floatable materials are removed before stormwater reaches state waters, where aquatic life and habitats might be affected.
N	7. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES (biologic, topographic, wetlands (within 1 mile), floodplains (within 1 mile), scenic rivers, natural resource areas, etc) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The subdivision site does not provide refuge for any critical or key wildlife species, or any rare, endangered or unique plant species.
N	8. LAND USE (Waste disposal, Agricultural Lands (grazing, cropland, forest lands, prime farmland), Recreational Lands (waterways, parks, playgrounds, open space, federal lands), Access, Commercial and Industrial Facilities (production & activity, growth or decline), Growth, land use change, development activity) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: ON AGRICULTURAL LANDS This area has been largely used for agricultural purposes as a dry land pasture for many years. Substantial cover in the form of dry land pasture conditions have been cultivated along with natural plant species. Along the south perimeter of the site, there is a variety of natural shrubs and bushes, junipers, grasses and other low cover.
NA	9. HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, & ARCHEOLOGICAL (sites, facilities, uniqueness, diversity) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: Due to the disturbed nature of the area from past agricultural and livestock practices, there is no evidence of historical sites or structures.
NA	10. AESTHETICS (visual quality, nuisances, odors, noise) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The proposed lots are at least 3 acres in size and the house sites would be at least 250 feet apart. Land uses to the north and west are agricultural and subdivided lots are found to the south and east. For the most part, the proposed development will not be visible from nearby Blue Creek Highway and Basin Creek Road.
A	11. DEMANDS ON/ CHANGES IN ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES INCLUDING LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY USE (need for new or upgraded energy sources, potential for recycling, etc) (See #8, #4, #5) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The use of cisterns eliminates the demand on the underlying aquifer for domestic water supplies. Some energy demands will result from heating and maintaining 34 new homes and transportation for the homeowners; however, these demands would occur anyway by these homeowners if they lived elsewhere.

Key	IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
N	12. CHANGES IN DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (population quantity, distribution and density, rate of change) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: This proposed subdivision is similar in nature to other local developments. The City of Billings has been growing in all directions on its outskirts and this development is consistent with that trend. The proposed area for the subdivision is now 120 acres of dry land pasture. The productivity of the site is marginal because of the absence of irrigation water. Adjacent land is zoned as either agricultural or residential.
B	13. GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS (quality, quantity and affordability) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION:
N	14. POTENTIAL FOR DISPLACEMENT OR RELOCATION OF BUSINESS OR RESIDENTS COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION
N	15. PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY (Medical services and facilities, Police, Fire Protection & Hazards (see #2), Emergency Medical Services, (see land use for waste disposal)) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: No significant impacts on human health were found in the department's review and none were indicated in the environmental assessment prepared by the developer's consultant for Yellowstone County.

B	16. LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME PATTERNS (quantity and distribution of employment, economic impact) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The proposed developm ent will not ha ve any significant im pact on the quantity and distribution of employment since it is resid ential in nature and consists of only 34 lots located outside the relatively large City of Billings.
N	17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND REVENUES COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: The proposed 120-acre subdi vision site is current ly zone d as resi dential and generat es less than \$1.00 per year in tax revenue. After development, each of the 34 lots will generate approximately \$1,100 per year in tax revenue.
N	18. EFFECTS ON SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES (standards of Social Conduct/Social Conventions) DEMAND ON SOCIAL SERVICES (law enforcement, Educational Facilities (libraries, schools colleges, universities) welfare, etc) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: This proposed subdivision is similar in nature to other local developments.
N	19. TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS (condition and use of roads, traffic flow conflicts, rail, airport compatibility etc) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION:
N	20. CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS, OR PLANS (conformance with local comprehensive plans, zoning or capital improvement plans) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION: This area is covered by the Yellowstone County Comprehensive Plan and has been reviewed by the County in accordance with their locally adopted plans and goals.
NA	21. REGULATORY RESTRICTIONS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS (Are we regulating pursuant to a police power? Does the Agency action restrict the use of the property beyond the minimum necessary to achieve compliance with the Act? What are the costs of such additional restrictions resulting from proposed permit conditions? Are other less restrictive ways of achieving the same goal? See your assigned legal counsel for assistance preparing this section.) COMMENTS AND SOURCE OF INFORMATION:

22. Description of and Impacts of Other Alternatives Considered:

- A. IF SUBDIVISION NOT APPROVED, NO IMPACT WOULD OCCUR
- B. IF APPROVED, PROPOSAL COMPLIES WITH ALL APPLICABLE LAWS AND RULES

23. Public Involvement: *Identify dates of meetings, comment periods, numbers of comments, etc and reference any attached responses, if any were appropriate to this project.*

24. Other Bureaus and Governmental Agencies with Jurisdiction: County Commissioners & County Health Department

25. Summary of Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:

26. Cumulative Effects: No significant long term impacts with conditions (complies with all applicable laws and rules)

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

Rationale for Recommendation: No significant long term impacts.

EA Checklist Prepared By:

Michele Marsh _____ 1/3/00 _____

(Name) (Date)

Bureaus consulted in the preparation of this checklist: (Identify each Bureau and get an initialed and dated sign-off -+)

*963.488/ from bureaus cooperating in preparation of EA).

AWMB _____ CSB _____ EMB _____

IEMB _____ WPB _____ Other _____

Signature

Date