

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 RIGHT PERMIT APPLICATION NO.  
40C-P111478-00
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
USA (DEPT OF INTERIOR BUREA OF LAND MANAGEMENT)  
AIRPORT RD  
LEWISTOWN, MT 59457
3. **Water source name:** Unnamed Tributary of Crooked Creek
4. **Location affected by action:** SE NW NW SEC. 14, T19N, R27E, PETROLEUM COUNTY  
approximately 30 miles north of Winnett, MT
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, MCA are met. This application is for a reservoir with a capacity of 23.5 acre-feet for use of up to 0.5 acre-feet for livestock and 6.9 acre-feet for fish and wildlife.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
Bureau of Land Management (Environmental Assessment # MT-068-00-01)

**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?

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Petroleum County Soil Survey identifies the soil as **Bascover-Neldore-Neldore, moist**. The BLM Environmental Assessment confirms the soil type. This soil is not well suited for reservoir construction as severe limitations exist because of slope, slippage, and seepage. The soil stability will be negatively impacted and the soil moisture content in the area surrounding and particularly below the reservoir will be increased. The BLM EA identified no unique geologic features or archeological sites.

**Erosion:**

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

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The impoundment of high flows by the reservoir will likely change erosion and siltation patterns downstream of the reservoir due to decreased occurrence of high flows.

**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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The BLM EA identifies Western wheatgrass, green needlegrass, and Sandburg bluegrass as the vegetation present. The construction of the dam will disturb these species. The BLM EA calls for the reseeding of the disturbed areas. No noxious weeds were identifies as being present.

**Air:**

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

NO IMPACT

**Water:**

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

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Water quantity downstream of the reservoir will decrease as the reservoir can impound up to 2.5 acre-feet. Because water will rarely leave the reservoir, the affect on water quality in the source below the reservoir will not be significantly impacted.

**Floodplain:**

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

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The reservoir will decrease the magnitude of flood flows in the source. Given the size of the drainage below the reservoir, this impact will not be significant.

**Wildlife Habitat/Migration:**

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

NO IMPACT

The source is a non-perennial stream. Therefore, it does not support fish.

**Endangered Species:**

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

NO IMPACT

The BLM EA identified no endangered species that would be impacted by this project.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Existing Land Use:**

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

NO IMPACT / POSSIBLE BENEFICAL IMPACT

The productivity of the land may increase as livestock are better distributed.

**Historical Significance:**

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

NO IMPACT

The BLM EA found no cultural sites. It referenced Cultural Inventory Report #99-MT-068-010.

**Populace:**

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

NO IMPACT

**Transportation:**

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

NO IMPACT

**Safety:**

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

NO IMPACT

**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?

NO IMPACT

**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?

NO IMPACT

**Aesthetics:**

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

NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Some citizens may consider the reservoir an aesthetically offensive site on public lands.

**Other:**

NO

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

3. **Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:** The no action alternative would result in poorer livestock distribution, possibly resulting damage to the native range. Drilling a well would be another alternative, but this is costly and may not produce a viable source of water.

**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:

An EA is adequate for this action. There will be no significant impacts, therefore, and EIS is not required.

PREPARED BY:

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DATE: [Automatic date code removed]