

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.  
76LJ-G(P)099791-00
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
City of Polson  
P.O. Box 238  
Polson, MT 59860
3. **Water source name:** THREE GROUNDWATER WELLS
4. **Location affected by action:**  
TWO WELLS: NENWNE, SECTION 10, T22N, R20W, LAKE COUNTY  
THIRD WELL: NENESW, SECTION 10, T22N, R20W, LAKE COUNTY
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 TO CHANGE THE POINT OF DIVERSION OF A MUNICIPAL GROUNDWATER SOURCE. THE WELLS ARE BEING DRILLED WITHIN THE LIMITS OF THE CITY OF POLSON. THERE WILL BE MINIMAL DISTURBANCE TO THE AREA BY USING STANDARD WELL DRILLING PRACTICES. THIS EA CHECKLIST WILL ADDRESS THE IMPACTS TO THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE POINTS OF DIVERSION. THE CITY OF POLSON PROPOSES TO DIVERT THEIR PERMITTED USE OF 1000 GPM NOT TO EXCEED 712 ACRE-FEET PER YEAR FROM THREE NEW WELLS IN LIEU OF THE EXISTING WELL.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (DEQ)  
NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM (NHP)

**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?

A QUERY WITH SHPO RESULTED IN NO KNOWN SITES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE FOR THIS APPLICATION.

**Erosion:**

Alteration of erosion or siltation patterns that modify streambeds or lake shores?

DEPENDING ON THE EXTENT OF POPULATION GROWTH, THERE COULD BE AN INCREASE OF EROSION DUE TO AN INCREASE IN IMPERVIOUS SURFACES. THIS WOULD BE A SECONDARY CUMULATIVE IMPACT.

**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?

A QUERY WITH THE NHP RESULTED IN TWO PLANT SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN NEAR THE PROPOSED USE. THE YELLOW-STAINING COLLOMIA AND SCRIBNER'S PANIC GRASS WERE LOCATED TWO PLUS MILES FROM THE PROPOSED SITE. THE PROPOSED USE WILL NOT ADVERSELY EFFECT VEGETATION.

WHERE SOME NEW BUILDINGS ARE ERECTING, GRASS LAWNS WILL REPLACE NATIVE VEGETATION. THIS SECONDARY AFFECT WOULD COMBAT THE SPREAD OF NOXIOUS WEEDS.

**Air:**

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

THERE MAY BE A SECONDARY IMPACT ON AIR QUALITY DUE TO AN INCREASE IN POPULATION.

**Water:**

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

YES. GROUNDWATER WILL BE PUMPED AT A HIGH RATE FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD. THIS WILL CAUSE AN ALTERATION OF GROUNDWATER QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION.

**Floodplain:**

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

THE WATER WILL BE TIED IN WITH THE EXISTING CITY LINES. MORE WATER WILL NOW FLOW THROUGH THE PIPES. IF A PIPE BREAKS, THE PROPERTY DAMAGE IN THAT AREA COULD BE GREATER.

**Wildlife Habitat/Migration:**

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

AS POPULATION INCREASES IN ANY AREA, FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITATS BECOME MORE THREATENED. THIS WOULD BE A SECONDARY IMPACT IF THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF POLSON INCREASES.

**Endangered Species:**

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

A QUERY WITH THE NHP RESULTED IN TWO ANIMAL SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN. THE COMMON LOON AND THE FLATHEAD POND SNAIL WERE OBSERVED OVER ONE MILE FROM

THE PROPOSED POINTS OF DIVERSION. THE PROPOSED CHANGE WILL NOT ADVERSELY EFFECT ENDANGERED SPECIES.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

### **Existing Land Use:**

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

PRESENTLY, THE CITY OF POLSON DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH WATER TO SUSTAIN ITS POPULATION OR TO ALLOW ANY GROWTH. THE ADDITIONAL WATER WILL ALLOW THE CITY OF POLSON TO SUSTAIN MINIMAL GROWTH. THIS PROJECT WILL PRODUCE A NET LONG TERM BENEFICIAL IMPACT TO THE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT.

### **Historical Significance:**

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

A QUERY WITH SHPO RESULTED IN NO KNOWN SITES OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE RELATED TO THE PROJECT SITE.

### **Populace:**

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

THE ADDED WATER WILL ALLOW THE CITY OF POLSON TO EXPAND.

### **Transportation:**

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

WITH AN INCREASE OF POPULATION WILL COME AN INCREASE IN TRAFFIC HAZARDS AND MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND GOODS. THIS IS A SECONDARY IMPACT.

### **Safety:**

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

THE CITY OF POLSON WILL NEED TO INCREASE THEIR EMERGENCY RESPONSE SUPPORT IF THERE IS AN INCREASE IN POPULATION. THIS IS A SECONDARY 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?

IF THE POPULATION OF THE CITY OF POLSON INCREASES, THEN IT WILL HAVE AN EFFECT UPON THE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES LISTED ABOVE. THE AGENCIES WILL NEED TO INCREASE THEIR SUPPORT DEPENDING ON THE EXTENT OF GROWTH. THIS SECONDARY IMPACT MAY ALSO INCREASE THE TAX BASE.

**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?

IF THE CITY OF POLSON EXPANDS BEYOND ITS EXISTING CITY LIMITS THEN THE UTILITIES WILL NEED TO BE INCREASED.

**Aesthetics:**

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

THE WELLS WILL NOT CREATE AN AESTHETICALLY OFFENSIVE SITE. ANY DEVELOPMENT THAT IS CARRIED OUT BECAUSE OF THE INCREASED WATER SUPPLY THAT IS AESTHETICALLY OFFENSIVE IS A SECONDARY IMPACT.

**Other:**

THE APPLICANT WILL BE INFORMED OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY NHP. SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE VICINITY OF THIS PROJECT BUT WERE NOT IN THE DIRECT LOCATION.

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2. **Secondary and cumulative impacts:** SECONDARY IMPACTS ARE INCLUDED IN THE ABOVE EXPLANATIONS.
3. **Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:**
- 1) ISSUE THE PERMIT, THERE IS A NET LONG TERM POSITIVE IMPACT TO THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT AND LITTLE TO NOT IMPACT TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.
  - 2) REJECT THE APPLICATION DUE TO UNKNOWN LONG TERM CUMULATIVE IMPACTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT. THE CITY OS POLSON WILL NOT HAVE THE WATER NEEDED TO ALLOW ANY GROWTH.

**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. THE FLOW RATE AND VOLUME HAVE BEEN PERMITTED; ONLY THE POINT OF DIVERSION HAS CHANGED.

PREPARED BY:

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TITLE: WATER RESOURCES SPECIALIST  
DATE: [Automatic date code removed]