

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)007482-00
2. **Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
Duane & Kathleen Carlson  
4405 Whitefish Stage  
Whitefish, MT 59937
3. **Water source name:** WHITEFISH RIVER
4. **Location affected by action:** SWNE, SECTION 21, T30N, R21W, FLATHEAD 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 EA CHECKLIST WILL ADDRESS THE IMPACTS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT DUE TO THE LOCATION OF THE DIVERSION AND WILL ADDRESS THE CULTURAL IMPACTS TO THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT. THE APPLICANT PROPOSES TO CHANGE A PORTION OF HIS IRRIGATION WATER RIGHT TO AN INDUSTRIAL-GRAVEL WASHING OPERATION. THE CHANGED PORTION IS FOR 700 GPM UP TO 135 ACRE- FEET PER YEAR. SEVENTY TWO AND ONE HALF ACRES WILL BE TAKEN OUT OF IRRIGATION TO ACCOUNT FOR THE 135 ACRE- FEET VOLUME CHANGE.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM (NHP)  
STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICE (SHPO)

**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?

THE PROPOSED USE WILL ALTER SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE CONTENT. THE PREVIOUS USE OF THE LAND WOULD HAVE ELIMINATED ANY ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES. THEREFORE, THE PROPOSED USE WILL NOT HAVE AN IMPACT.

**Erosion:**

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

NO, THE DIVERSION WORKS WILL NOT BE CHANGED OR ALTERED. THE PROPOSED USE WILL NOT IMPACT THE RIVERBANK.

**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?

THE PROPOSED USE WILL CHANGE 72.5 ACRES FROM IRRIGATED LAND TO A GRAVEL WASHING OPERATION. THIS NEW USE WILL ELIMINATE THE EXISTENCE OF VEGETATION AT THE PROJECT LOCATION. A QUERY WITH NHP RESULTED IN NO KNOWN SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN IN SECTION 21.

**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, turbidity, quantity, or distribution?

NO, THERE WILL BE SETTLING PONDS FOR THE WATER AFTER THE GRAVEL IS WASHED. THIS WILL KEEP THE GROUNDWATER FROM BECOMING CONTAMINATED.

**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?

NO, THE PREVIOUS LAND USE WAS NOT WILDLIFE OR FISH HABITAT.

**Endangered Species:**

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

NO, THE PROJECT LOCATION IS NOT HOME FOR ENDANGERED PLANT OR ANIMAL SPECIES ACCORDING TO NHP.

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

### **Existing Land Use:**

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

THE PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFITABILITY OF THE EXISTING LAND USE WILL BE ENHANCED WITH THE PROPOSED USE.

### **Historical Significance:**

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

NO, THE EXISTING LAND USE WAS NOT AN AREA OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

### **Populace:**

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

NO, THE PROPOSED USE WILL NOT AFFECT THE HUMAN POPULATION IN THE AREA.

### **Transportation:**

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

THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE IN TRAFFIC ON THE APPLICANT'S PROPERTY RELATED TO THE EXPORTING OF WASHED GRAVEL.

### **Safety:**

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

NO

### **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

### **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

**Aesthetics:**

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

THE AESTHETICS OF THE APPLICANT'S PROPERTY WILL BE ALTERED. HOWEVER, THIS WILL NOT AFFECT THE PUBLIC.

**Other:**

THE POINT OF DIVERSION, PLACE OF USE AND AMOUNT OF WATER USED WILL NOT BE CHANGED. THIS EA WAS EVALUATED WITH RESPECT TO THE PURPOSE OF USE ONLY.

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2.           **Secondary and cumulative impacts:** NONE
  
3.           **Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:** 1) ISSUE THE PERMIT DUE TO MINIMAL ADVERSE AFFECTS TO THE PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.  
2) DENY THE PERMIT DUE TO UNKNOWN ADVERSE IMPACTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

**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 IMPACTS ARE NOT SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH TO REQUIRE AN EIS.

PREPARED BY:

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DATE:       [Automatic date code removed]