

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION**

- Type of action:** Water right change application no. 76G-G(W)090560-01
- Applicant/Contact name and address:**  
James A and Patricia L Becker  
381 Blacktail Canyon Rd  
Butte, MT 59701-7507
- Water source name:** Little Blacktail Creek
- Location affected by action:** SWSESE, Sec 23, Twp 02N, Rge 07W, Silver Bow County
- Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** The applicant proposes to change an existing point of diversion on Little Blacktail Creek. The new point of diversion will be a headgate located on Little Blacktail Creek in the SWSESE, Sec 23, Twp 02N, Rge 07W, Silver Bow County. The water is used for the irrigation of 2 acres located in the NWSESE, Sec 23, Twp 02N, Rge 07W, Silver Bow County.  
The DNRC shall issue an authorization to change to the applicant if the criteria in 85-2-402, MCA are met.
- Agencies consulted during preparation of the environmental assessment:**  
SHPO (State Historical Preservation Office)  
MTNHP (Montana Natural Heritage Program)  
DNRC - Karl Christians, Floodplain Manager

**PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

- 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?

There may be an increase to the soil stability and a decrease in waste water contribution to groundwater due to the applicant changing his method of irrigation from flood to sprinkler. There should not be any degradation of geologic substructure, unique geologic features or archeological sites.

**Erosion:**

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

The streambank and bed may be temporarily impacted during the installation of the weir, but one of the reasons for changing the point of diversion is to prevent further erosion damage done to the road and streambank at the old point of diversion.

**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. Per a query with MTNHP there are no listed species of special concern within the Homestake quad map area.

**Air:**

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

No. This project should not cause a deterioration of air quality or have an adverse effect on vegetation.

**Water:**

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

No. Since the flow and volume for this project remains as historically used, there should be no alteration of surface water quality, quantity or distribution.

**Floodplain:**

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

No. This project is not within a regulatory floodplain area.

**Wildlife Habitat/Migration:**

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

No. Since this project is only moving the point of diversion across the road and the place of use remains the same, no deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat or creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife is likely to occur.

**Endangered Species:**

Adverse effects on any unique or endangered species?

No. Per a query with MTNHP, there are no animal species of special concern within the vicinity of the legal land description.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Existing Land Use:**

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

No. The land use will not change. This project will irrigate the same 2 acres historically irrigated.

**Historical Significance:**

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

No. Per a query with SHPO, there are no known sites of historical significance within the legal land description.

**Populace:**

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

No. This project should not affect the alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of the area or the community social structure.

**Transportation:**

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

No. There should not be any increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods.

**Safety:**

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

No. This project should not create any health hazard or affect existing emergency response or evacuation plans.

**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. This project should not create or alter the need of additional public services.

**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. This project should not create the need for new or altered power or communication utilities.

**Aesthetics:**

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

No. This project should not alter any scenic vista or recreation opportunity or create an aesthetically offensive site to the public.

**Other:**

None identified.

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

**3. Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative:**

A reasonable alternative to the proposed action would be to possibly drill a well for the irrigation. The no action alternative would result in the applicant not being able to water his historically irrigated field using a more efficient method of irrigation and would perpetuate the erosion of the road and streambank.

### **PART III. CONCLUSION**

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this action. There are no significant impacts identified, therefore an EIS is not required.

PREPARED BY:

NAME: Terry Scow  
TITLE: Water Resources Specialist  
DATE: [Automatic date code removed]