

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
Water Resources Division  
Water Rights Bureau

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact**

Revised 10-00

Note: Instructions to DNRC staff for preparing this EA can be found at:  
[http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis\\_ea.html](http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html)

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. **Applicant/Contact name and address:** Terry & Lynda Nelson  
790 Monegan Road  
Whitefish, MT 59937
2. **Type of action:** Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76I-P113070-00.
3. **Water source name:** Developed Spring
4. **Location affected by action:** NW¼, SE¼, SW¼ Section 3, Township 29N, Range 16W,  
Flathead County
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project and action to be taken:** This application is to obtain the legal right to use the water from a developed spring. This environmental assessment will focus on the diversion and water usage portions of the project. It will address the impacts to the physical and human environments. The applicants propose to divert water from an unnamed developed spring located on their property. The purpose is for domestic use and a quarter acre of lawn & garden. Water will be diverted by means of a 3/4 horsepower pump. The flow rate will be 10 gpm through a two-inch line and 15 feet vertical lift to the house.
6. **Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:**  
Natural Heritage Program (NHP)  
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Part II. Environmental Review

1. **Environmental Impact Checklist:**

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

**Water quantity, quality and distribution**

Water quantity: Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: The source of water is a developed spring located on the applicant's property. The applicants propose to divert 1.63 acre-feet of water at a rate of 10 gpm for domestic purposes. It will not adversely impact groundwater or surface water quantities.

Water quality: Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: The source of water is groundwater. There is no information available that discusses the quality of the source.

Groundwater: Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

Determination: The source is a developed well on the applicant's property. The flow in the spring may be related to snow run-off. The project area is located in an area of high snowfall and precipitation. The population density near the project area is low. The diversion of 10 gpm up to 1.63 acre-feet per year will not affect the water quality or quantity of other water users.

### **Diversion works**

Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

Determination: The means of diversion consists of a three quarter horsepower pump set in a developed spring. Water is pumped at a rate of 10 gpm.

### **Unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources**

Endangered and threatened species: Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."

Determination: Several species of special concern are located in the entire region where the proposed project is located. However, diverting only 1.63 acre-feet of water from a developed spring will not adversely impact endangered and threatened species.

Wetlands: Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.

Determination: No impact; wetlands are not involved with this application.

Ponds: For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.

Determination: No impact; ponds are not involved with this application.

**Geology/Soil quality, stability and moisture**

Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.

Determination: The surrounding soils and geology will not be impacted due to the proposed project.

**Vegetation cover, quantity and quality/Noxious weeds**

Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.

Determination: Vegetation will be disturbed only where the water line will be dug. It will be REVEGETATED with native plants. The surrounding vegetation will not be impacted by the proposed project.

**Air quality**

Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

Determination: Air quality will not be impacted due to the proposed use.

**Historical and archeological sites**

Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

Determination: A query with SHPO resulted in no known sites of historical significance near the proposed site. The proposed diversion will not impact historical or archeological sites.

**Demands on environmental resources of land, water, and energy**

Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.

Determination: The only demands on the environmental resources will be 1.63 acre-feet of water per year from the developed spring. This small amount of water will not be noticed by the environment.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Locally adopted environmental plans and goals**

Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

Determination: Using water for domestic use is consistent with local land use plans. The means of diversion are standard practice for domestic uses.

### **Access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities**

Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.

Determination: The proposed project will not impact public access to recreational or wilderness activities because it is on private property.

### **Human health**

Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: There will be a positive impact to human health by allowing water for domestic use.

### **Other human environmental issues**

For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? No impact
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No impact
- (c) Existing land uses? The existing land use is private property zoned for homes.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No impact.
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? This will increase the population of the area by one household.
- (f) Demands for government services? No impact other than filing for water rights.
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No impact
- (h) Utilities? The applicants have utilities at the site.
- (i) Transportation? No impact
- (j) Safety? No impact
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?

2. **Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:** The project is already complete. By issuing this permit, the applicants will be in compliance with the law. There will not be any secondary impacts to the environment by permitting the domestic use.
3. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:** The only alternative to the spring source is to drill a well. This would put a greater cost burden on the applicant. The "no action" alternative could force the applicants to be in violation of the law if they continue to use the source.

### **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 the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action. Significant impacts have not been identified as a result of the proposed action.

**Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:**

Name: Cristy Carter

Title: Water Resource Specialist

Date: 11/30/00