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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Revised 11-00

Note: Instructions to DNRC staff for preparing this EA can be found at: http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. Applicant/Contact name and address: Doug & Val Umsheid
Box 88
Milo, Alberta TOL 1LO

2. Type of action: Water Right Permit Application No. 76I-P113046-00

3. Water source name: Groundwater Well

4. Location affected by action: NWNENW, SECTION 21, T29N, R14W, Flathead County
Lot 7, Slippery Bill Mountain Unit 2.

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:
The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, MCA are met. This application is to obtain the legal right to use the water in a well for domestic purposes. This well was drilled on the owners property using standard well drilling practices with minimal disturbance to the area. Wells drilled in this manner have little to no environmental impact. This EA checklist will address the environmental impacts due to the location of the well. The applicant intends to divert water at a rate of 5 gpm not to exceed one acre-foot per year.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)
Montana 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: No impact; this is not a surface water source

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: No impact, this is not a surface water 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 proposed project will divert water from a well at 5 gpm up to one acre-foot per year. This is a small amount of water and should not noticeably affect groundwater or surface water quantity or quality. Diverting the water and using it for domestic purposes will not adversely impact water quality. The well will be constructed using standard practice. Water quality will not be affected due to the proposed use.

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 well was drilled on the owners property using standard well drilling practices with minimal disturbance to the area. A six inch diameter steel casing was driven to a depth of 30 feet. The static water level is 23 feet below the top of the casing. The casing is perforated from 27-30 feet below ground surface. A one-half horsepower pump was installed with a 5 gpm capacity.

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: A query with NHP resulted in several animal species of special concern near the project location. Among those listed were the grizzly bear and lynx, which both have free range of the land. The proposed diversion will not adversely impact adjacent surface water due to the low flow-rate and volume to be appropriated. Therefore, fisheries will not be adversely impacted by the proposed use.

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: Not Applicable

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

Determination: Not Applicable

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 well has already been constructed. Any impact to the soils would have occurred during the construction of the well. Neither the diversion of the water nor its use will create any adverse impacts to the surrounding soils.

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: The only impacts to the existing vegetation occurred during the construction of the well. There should be no further impact to the vegetative cover associated with the proposed use.

Air quality

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

Determination: The proposed use will not have any impact on air quality.

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 showed no known historical sites at the project location. Due to the absence of a resource survey, the proposed project has potential to impact cultural resources.

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: No impact

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

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

Determination: The property is private and is in compliance with local land planning

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 use is for a single domestic household on private property. Access and quality of recreational/wilderness activities will not be adversely affected by the proposed use.

Human health

Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: The proposed use will not adversely impact human health.

Private property

Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.
Yes___ No_X__. If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: Private property rights are not impacted or regulated by this proposed action. The right to use water belonging to the State of Montana will be become a property right if approved.

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 ? None

(b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues ? None

(c) Existing land uses ? None

(d) Quantity and distribution of employment ? None

(e) Distribution and density of population and housing ? None

(f) Demands for government services ? None

(g) Industrial and commercial activity ? None

(h) Utilities ? None

(i) Transportation ? None

(j) Safety ? None

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances ? None

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population: The applicant's property is located in a subdivision. There may be cumulative impacts on the source of supply.

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:
No mitigation measures are required or necessary for the proposed action.

4. 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: No reasonable alternatives to the proposed action are identified in this EA. The No Action alternative would deny the applicants from attaining a legal right to the water in their well. The water may then be illegally attained.

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. No significant impacts have 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: 12/7/00