

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

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:* Town of Hobson  
PO Box 318  
Hobson MT 59452
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 41S 30009655
3. *Water source name:* Ground Water - Kootenai Formation
4. *Location of project:* Sections 1 & 12, T14N, R14E, Judith Basin County  
Sections 6 & 7, T14N, R15E
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*

The Applicant proposes to divert water from the Kootenai Formation at a rate of 45 GPM up to 64.4 acre-feet per year for municipal use by the Town of Hobson. Diversion would occur year around. The means of diversion is a 20 HP electric pump in a well completed in the Kootenai Formation. The well is completed to a depth of 1225 ft. and cased to a depth of 1225 ft. with an 5½-in. steel casing and is screened in four intervals between 1090 ft. and 1225 ft.

In the future the well may supply a municipal water system. This system is yet to be designed and has not been approved by the citizens of Hobson. However, Montana statute requires that a professional engineer design the project and that the Department of Environmental Quality approve the design. Evaluation of this aspect of the project in compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act would occur at that time under the direction of the Department of Environmental Quality and will not be evaluated in this document.

Until such time that a municipal water system is functioning water would be supplied to residents at the well for hauling to cisterns. Water would also be available for people outside of Hobson for uses such as domestic, stock and agricultural spraying. This water would be hauled to the place of need.

The benefits to the applicant would include a reliable source of water for municipal purposes including fire protection.

The DNRC will issue a Provisional Permit to Appropriate Water if the applicant proves the criteria in MCA 85-2-311.

6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:  
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)*  
none

## **Part II. Environmental Review**

### **1. Environmental Impact Checklist:**

<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>
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#### **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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

No measurable impacts to surface water quantity are expected.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

No impacts to surface water quality are expected.

**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:* Moderate Impact

Ground water in the Kootenai Formation would be decreased by the amount of the additional withdrawal. Drawdown would likely occurring in nearby wells and could be moderate.

Ground-water quality is not expected to be impacted.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

The diversion works are already in place and have been operated for at least one year. No additional impacts would likely occur due to this project.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

As the project is already in place it is unlikely that any impacts to endangered species would occur.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

Because of the project location, it is unlikely that any wetlands would be impacted.

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

*Determination:* No Impact

The project does not involve nor impact any ponds.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

No impacts are expected.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

No impacts are expected as the project is already complete.

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

*Determination:* Low Likelihood of Impact

It is unlikely air quality would be impacted, as the system has no emissions.

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES** - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.*

*Determination:* Low Likelihood of Impact

Because the construction and excavation has occurred, it is unlikely that any cultural resources would be further impacted by this project.

**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 other demands have been identified.

<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>
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**LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS** - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

*Determination:* No such plans have been identified.

**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:* Low Likelihood of Impact

No impacts are expected.

**HUMAN HEALTH** - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

*Determination:* Low Likelihood of Impact

No impacts to human health have been identified.

**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:

**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? MINOR

Some increased power consumption may result.

- (i) Transportation? MINOR

Some increase in traffic would be expected due to the hauling of water. This would likely be minor in terms of the normal traffic count.

- (j) Safety? NONE
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? NONE

**2. *Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:***

Secondary Impacts – No secondary impacts have been identified other than those already addressed.

Cumulative Impacts – The cumulative impacts due to continued development of the Kootenai aquifer are not known.

**3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:**

No such measures have been identified.

**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 ACTION ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would result in none of the benefits being realized by the applicant.

*PART III. Conclusion*

**1. Preferred Alternative**

The preferred alternative is the no action alternative as the Applicant has failed to prove the statutory criteria in MCA 85-2-311.

**2. Comments and Responses**

None Received

**3. Finding**

*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:*

None of the identified impacts for any of the alternative are significant as defined in ARM 36.2.524.

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

*Name:* Andy Brummond

*Title:* Water Resources Specialist

*Date:* 7/1/2004