

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

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

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* State of Montana, Department of Military Affairs
PO Box 4789
Helena, MT 59640
2. *Type of action:* Provisional Permit to Appropriate Water 76LJ 30017113
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater Well
4. *Location affected by action:* NE SW¹/₄ SW¹/₄, Section 19, Township 29N, Range 21W, Flathead Co.
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311, MCA are met. The applicant is seeking a water use permit to use a 554 foot deep well for Institutional and lawn and garden purposes. The armory is located in Section 19 in Township 29N, Range 21W, Flathead County. Water to supply the needs of the armory will come from between 327 feet and 370 feet. 576, 1/4" X 1" perforations allows water to enter the casing. The scope of this EA will focus on water use from the well to identify impacts, if any, from this requested action. The water use permit is a critical element to the success of the armory and is of great benefit to the appropriator.
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Historical Society
Montana Natural Heritage Program

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: Not Applicable to groundwater.

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: Not applicable to groundwater.

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: No surface water flows will be impacted from this appropriation from the deep aquifer. The wells were completed in accordance with the rules of the Board of Water Well Contractors and grouted to more than 18 feet below ground surface to maintain water quality. Pump testing the well found adequate water to supply the needs of the subdivision. The property has no surface water features and the site's topography is the valley floor with level elevation. The site is not an identified floodplain.

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: A 117-gallon per minute pump will be installed in the well. There will be no impact to the above-specified items. Well construction was completed in accordance with the Board of Water Well Contractors.

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: The majority of the site does not have any significant natural vegetation. There are no wildlife species of critical concern that inhabit the site. Deer, small mammals and migratory birds may utilize the site from time to time but actual impact is limited.

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: The subject property has no wetlands.

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

Determination: This project does not involve 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: Development of the site is complete and the well is in use.

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 lot owners are responsible for re-vegetation and the control and eradication of noxious weeds on their lots. Disturbed vegetation will be replaced with native grass seed mix and turf, which will help to displace noxious weeds.

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

Determination: The internal private roadways will be paved. There will be no impact to 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: There are none known to exist on the site. Had any archeological site been discovered during construction, work in that area would have been suspended until the site had been fully evaluated.

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: None

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 project is in compliance with Flathead County Regulations.

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: There will be no impact to the quality of recreation or wilderness activities nor will access be denied to any established recreation areas except by Forest Service road closures that occur throughout public domain in Flathead County.

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

Determination: This development does not 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: N/A

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
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No
- (c) Existing land uses? Yes
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No
- (f) Demands for government services? No
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No
- (h) Utilities? Yes
- (i) Transportation? No

(j) Safety? No

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No

2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:*** Human population for this area of the valley will increase and may at sometime in the future impact the groundwater supply but because of a continuous recharge to the source and the vastness of the deep artesian aquifer impacts are not anticipated anytime in the near future.
3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** The action requested under this permit does not require mitigation or stipulation measures. Water availability has been shown to be available without impact to surrounding water users.
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:*** There is no reasonable alternative to this proposed water supply and no action would disable the use of the armory.

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: No significant impacts have been identified, therefore no EIS is required.

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

Name: Rich Russell

Title: Water Resources Specialist

Date: January 16, 2006