

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](http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/eis_ea.html)

**Part I. Proposed Action Description**

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* Bostwick Properties Inc.  
1045 Reeves Rd East, Suite C  
Bozeman, Mt. 59718
2. *Type of action:* Application For Beneficial Water Use Permit # 30025398-41H
3. *Water source name:* 3 Wells
4. *Location affected by project:* Section 5 T7S R4E, Gallatin County
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*  
Three new wells, 1278 feet deep, will be used to supply Lazy J South subdivision. A total of 99 homes/residents, 27.32 acres of irrigation, and 40 businesses will be supplied using 182 GPM, up to 79.43 acre feet. The DNRC shall issue a permit if the applicant proves that the criteria, # 85-2-311, MCA, are met.
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*  
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction) Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana Natural Heritage Program, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, Gallatin County Planning Office.

**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 well, which is not listed as chronically or periodically dewatered by the DFWP.

**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:* This well is not listed on the DEQ, 303(d) list.

**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:* Groundwater quality should not be impacted when 182 GPM up to 79.43 acre feet are removed from the source. The supply may be reduced by the amount being withdrawn. It is unknown when and how this deep aquifer is recharged.

**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:* Water will be diverted from three wells, one 1278 feet, drilled by a licensed well driller. Each well will be outfitted with a 25HP pump capable of diverting 182 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:* The Montana Natural Heritage Program was contacted. They identified the brown bear, lynx and olive-sided flycatcher as possibly being found in this area. It is unknown if this development of this 99 unit subdivision may create a barrier to migration of these animals.

**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:* It is unknown if these wells were drilled in existing wetlands.

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

*Determination:* These wells do not involve a pond. Therefore there will be no impact to wildlife or fisheries.

**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:* It is unlikely that saline seep would be found in this area. The drilling of these wells will not degrade soil quality, alter soil stability, or moisture content.

**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:* A small area will be disturbed as a result of well drilling. All disturbed areas will need to be reseeded by the applicant. Existing vegetative cover may be altered by this subdivision, when houses, roads and lawns are constructed.

**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 may be altered if any of the 81 homes have woodstoves, or fireplaces. Additional vehicles will create additional auto 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:* SHPO was contacted. Their records indicate Site 24GA1143, located within Section 5 T7S R4E, is a lithic scatter. They feel that this project has the potential to impact cultural properties, and recommend that a cultural resource inventory be conducted in order to determine whether or not sites exist and if they will be impacted.

**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:* There will be additional demand for energy to supply the 99 new homes, and 40 new businesses.

## **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

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

*Determination:* I talked with Gallatin County Planning office. Lazy J South was approved for 15 lots on February 1, 2005.

**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:* This project is located on private land, with no access to recreational or wilderness activities. No impact is expected.

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

*Determination:* No impact on human health is expected.

**PRIVATE PROPERTY** - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*

Yes\_\_\_ NoX\_\_\_ *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 by this proposed action.

**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 significant impact
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? It is unknown what additional taxes will be collected.
- (c) Existing land uses? The existing land use will be changed. Open space will be transformed into a subdivision. New roads and development will change the nature of the area as it now exists.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? New construction will bring additional workers to the area.
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? The population in the Big Sky area will be increased.
- (f) Demands for government services? The demand for government services will be increased. The Gallatin County Sheriff, James R. Cashell wrote that demand for their services has increased 300%, with no increased staff since 1983. The Sheriff's ability to respond to emergencies is at a very dubious level right now and will only deteriorate further with the addition of another subdivision.
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? With 40 new businesses, commercial activity will be increased.
- (h) Utilities? There will be additional demand for utilities.
- (i) Transportation? Traffic on Hwy #191 will be made more congested by this development. This is currently a dangerous road, that will only get worse as more people move to the area.

- (j) *Safety?* The safety of people driving Hwy # 191 will be exacerbated with additional vehicles driving the road.
- (k) *Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?* The building economy will benefit from this development. More people being relocated to the area usually brings with it more social problems.

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

Secondary Impacts Secondary impacts to the physical environment, or human population have not been identified.

Cumulative Impacts Cumulative impacts to the physical environment, or human population have not been identified.

**3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** Mitigation or stipulations or augmentation are not planned at this time.

**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:*** If this ground is to be subdivided, lots could be sold without water where it would be the lot owners responsibility to drill their own wells. The no action alternative would be to not subdivide the ground. It would not be prudent to have lots drilling 1278 foot deep for water.

**PART III. Conclusion**

**1. *Preferred Alternative*** The preferred alternative would be to use the two community wells to supply this subdivision.

**2. *Comments and Responses*** No comments have been received at this time.

**3. *Finding:***

Yes\_\_\_ No\_X\_\_ 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:* Significant impacts have not been identified. The EA is the appropriate level of action for this project.

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

*Name:* Jan R Mack

*Title:* Water Resources Specialist

*Date:* February 12, 2007