

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

1. *Applicant/Contact name and address:* SUNNY MEADOWS MISSOULA
COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
PO BOX 9125
MISSOULA, MT 59807

2. *Type of action:* APPLICATION TO CHANGE A WATER RIGHT
(REPLACEMENT WELL) 76M-30031322

3. *Water source name:* GROUNDWATER

4. *Location affected by project:* SUNNY MEADOWS SUBDIVISION IN SECTION 13,
T 13 N, R19 W AND SECTION 18, T 13 N, R18 W
MISSOULA COUNTY

5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS TO REPLACE TWO POINTS OF DIVERSION
(WELLS) OF AN EXISTING WATER RIGHT PERMIT. THE REPLACEMENT
WELLS ARE NECESSARY BECAUSE THE TWO ORIGINAL WELLS HAVE BEEN
AFFECTED BY THE NEARBY MILLTOWN DAM RESERVOIR DRAWDOWN
PROJECT. THE TWO NEW WELLS ARE TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN THE SAME
AQUIFER AS THE ORIGINAL AFFECTED WELLS. THE NEW WELLS WILL BE
MANIFOLD INTO A SINGLE DELIVERY SYSTEM FOR USE IN THE SUNNY
MEADOWS SUBDIVISION FOR DOMESTIC AND LAWN WATER USES. THE
REPLACEMENT WELLS WOULD DIVERT NO MORE WATER THAN
ORIGINALLY PERMITTED.

THE DNRC SHALL ISSUE AN AUTHORIZATION TO CHANGE A WATER RIGHT
IF THE APPLICANT PROVES THE CRITERIA IN §85-2-402, MCA ARE MET.

6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)
MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM
MONTANA STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION 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: SEE GROUNDWATER SECTION BELOW.

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: SEE GROUNDWATER SECTION BELOW.

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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

ONE OF THE PROPOSED TWO NEW WELLS IS CONSTRUCTED. REVIEW OF THE WELL LOGS OF THE EXISTING PERMITTED WELLS AND OF THE NEW WELL LOG INDICATES THE NEW WELL IS CONSTRUCTED IN THE SAME SOURCE AQUIFER AS THE EXISTING WELLS. THE EXISTING WELLS ARE 47 AND 48 FEET BELOW GROUND SURFACE. THE NEWLY CONSTRUCTED WELL IS AT 80 FEET BELOW GROUND SURFACE. THE NEW WELL WAS PUMPED FOR TEN HOURS AT 145 GPM AND DRAWDOWN OF 0.17 FEET MEASURED. NEARBY WELLS WERE MONITORED WITH A MAXIMUM OF 0.5 FEET DRAWDOWN INDICATED. RECOVERY FROM DRAWDOWN OF THE PUMPED WELL AND OBSERVATION WELLS WAS MONITORED FOR 13 HOURS AFTER PUMPING CEASED.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

A LICENSED WELL DRILLER CONSTRUCTED THE FIRST OF TWO REPLACEMENT WELLS. REVIEW OF THE DRILLER'S WELL LOG INDICATES THE NEW WELL IS DEVELOPED IN THE SAME SOURCE AQUIFER AS THE WELLS BEING REPLACED.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM WAS CONTACTED FOR INFORMATION ABOUT ANY THREATENED OR ENDANGERED FISH, WILDLIFE, PLANTS OR AQUATIC SPECIES OR ANY "SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN", THAT COULD BE IMPACTED BY THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

THE MONTANA NATURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM IDENTIFIED THE FOLLOWING ANIMAL AND PLANT SPECIES THAT ARE THREATENED, OR HAVE SPECIAL STATUS, THAT ARE FOUND IN THE GENERAL VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT:

GRAY WOLF, BALD EAGLE, WESTERN SKINK, FLAMMULATED OWL, PEREGRINE FALCON, CANADA LYNX, WOLVERINE, FISHER, BULL TROUT, WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT.

THE SUNNY MEADOWS SUBDIVISION IS AN ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT THAT IS REPLACING THE TWO WELLS THAT SERVE AS ITS PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY. NO NEW DEVELOPMENT IS EXPECTED AND NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS TO ANY PLANT OR ANIMAL SPECIES IDENTIFIED ABOVE IS EXPECTED.

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 IMPACTS.

THERE ARE NO WETLANDS IDENTIFIED IN THE PROJECT AREA.

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

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

THERE ARE NO PONDS IDENTIFIED IN THE PROJECT AREA.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE REPLACEMENT WELLS WOULD CAUSE MINIMAL GROUND DISTURBANCE.

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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE REPLACEMENT WELLS ARE CONSTRUCTED OR WILL BE CONSTRUCTED CLOSE TO THE FAILING WELLS. DRILLING THESE WELLS WOULD CAUSE MINIMAL GROUND DISTURBANCE.

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

Determination: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

NO CHANGES TO AIR QUALITY ARE EXPECTED IF THE REPLACEMENT WELLS ARE BROUGHT ON-LINE TO SUPPLY WATER TO THE SUNNY MEADOWS COMMUNITY WATER SYSTEM.

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

Determination: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

ACCORDING TO STATE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION OFFICE FILES, THERE ARE NO PREVIOUSLY RECORDED SITES IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT. SHPO RECOMMENDS THAT NO CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY IS WARRANTED AT THIS TIME.

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 IMPACTS NOT ALREADY DISCUSSED.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS CONSISTENT WITH LOCALLY APPROVED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS.

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: NO IMPACTS.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD NOT IMPACT ACCESS TO OR QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES.

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

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

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: NO IMPACTS.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- | | |
|--|------|
| (a) <u>Cultural uniqueness and diversity?</u> | NONE |
| (b) <u>Local and state tax base and tax revenues?</u> | NONE |
| (c) <u>Existing land uses?</u> | NONE |
| (d) <u>Quantity and distribution of employment?</u> | NONE |
| (e) <u>Distribution and density of population and housing?</u> | NONE |
| (f) <u>Demands for government services?</u> | NONE |

- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? NONE
- (g) 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:

Secondary Impacts NONE IDENTIFIED.

Cumulative Impacts NONE IDENTIFIED.

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures: THERE ARE NO MITIGATION MEASURES OR STIPULATIONS INDICATED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

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 WERE IDENTIFIED IN THIS ANALYSIS. THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE WOULD RESULT IN THE DENIAL OF THE APPLICATION TO CHANGE A WATER RIGHT AND DISALLOW THE LEGAL APPROPRIATION OF WATER FROM TWO REPLACEMENT WELLS FOR USE IN THE SUNNY MEADOWS RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative

2. Comments and Responses

Finding:

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?
 Yes___ No X

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 BECAUSE NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION.

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

Name: PATRICK RYAN
 Title: WATER RESOURCE SPECIALIST
 Date: MAY 30, 2008