



## **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:* NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

TAMARACK LAKE IS A STORAGE RESERVOIR FOR LATE SEASON IRRIGATION NEAR THE HEADWATERS OF CHAFFIN CREEK. WATER IS RELEASED FROM TAMARACK LAKE IN LATE JULY TO MID AUGUST AND USES CHAFFIN CREEK AS A NATURAL CARRIER. CHAFFIN CREEK IS IDENTIFIED AS CHRONICALLY DEWATERED FROM RIVER MILE 0.0 TO RIVER MILE 2.0 BY THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF FISH WILDLIFE AND PARKS. ONE OR MORE OF THE EXISTING DIVERSION OF THE AFFECTED WATER RIGHT ARE LOCATED WITHIN THE IDENTIFIED SECTION. THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD NOT CAUSE ANY ADDITIONAL DIVERSIONS OF WATER FROM THE SOURCE, CHAFFIN CREEK AND WOULD NOT WORSEN THE IDENTIFIED CONDITION.

**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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

A SEARCH OF MONTANA'S 305(B)/303(D) WATER QUALITY ASSESSMENT DATABASE INDICATES THAT CHAFFIN CREEK, THE AFFECTED WATER SOURCE, IS NOT IDENTIFIED AS WATER QUALITY IMPAIRED OR THREATENED

**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.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT TO CHANGE A SURFACE WATER RIGHT PLACE OF USE IS NOT EXPECTED TO AFFECT ANY GROUNDWATER SOURCE.

**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.

EXISTING DIVERSION WORKS WOULD BE USED. NO MODIFICATIONS ARE EXPECTED.

**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 RESPONDED TO THE DEPARTMENT'S REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN WITH THE FOLLOWING:

THE USFWS AND USFS THREATENED AND USBLM SPECIAL STATUS *BULL TROUT* IS IDENTIFIED IN THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF CHAFFIN CREEK.

THE USFS AND USBLM SENSITIVE *WESTSLOPE CUTTHROAT TROUT* IS IDENTIFIED IN CHAFFIN CREEK.

THE USFWS AND USFS THREATENED AND USBLM SPECIAL STATUS CANADA *LYNX* HABITAT AREA OF CONCERN INCLUDES THE PROPOSED PROJECT AREA.

THE USFS AND USBLM SENSITIVE *WOLVERINE* IS IDENTIFIED IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

OTHER SPECIES IDENTIFIED IN THE GENERAL VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT ARE: OLIVE-SIDED FLY CATCHER, COVILLE'S RUSH, FISHER, GRAY WOLF, WESTERN SKINK, FLAMMULATED OWL, AND WESTERN TOAD,

***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 IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED.

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

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

THERE ARE NO PONDS IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT THAT WOULD BE AFFECTED.

**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.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS NOT EXPECTED TO ALTER SOIL QUALITY, 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: NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS NOT EXPECTED TO CAUSE IMPACTS TO EXISTING VEGETATIVE COVER.

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

Determination: NO IMPACTS.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO CAUSE AIR POLLUTION.

**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.

SHPO RESPONSE TO DEPARTMENT REQUEST FOR CULTURAL RESOURCE SEARCH IS TO ADVISE THAT DUE TO PROJECT BEING COMPLETED, NO CULTURAL RESOURCE SEARCH REQUEST IS NECESSARY. ANY CULTURAL RESOURCE PROPERTIES THAT MAY HAVE BEEN IN THE AREA ARE LIKELY ALREADY 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: NO IMPACTS.

<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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THERE ARE NO LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS OR GOALS THAT WOULD PROHIBIT THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

**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 SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS.

THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD NOT RESTRICT ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL OR WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES.

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

*Determination:* NO IMPACTS.

NO HUMAN HEALTH ISSUES ARE IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT.

**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) <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) <u>Industrial and commercial activity?</u>                 | NONE |
| (h) <u>Utilities?</u>  | NONE |
| (i) <u>Transportation?</u>                                     | 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:** NONE 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:** OTHER THAN THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE THERE ARE NO REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT. THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE WOULD DISALLOW THE APPLICANT FROM CHANGING THE PLACE OF USE OF AN EXISTING IRRIGATION WATER RIGHT.

**PART III. Conclusion**

**1. Preferred Alternative**

**2. Comments and Responses**

**3. 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:*

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Date: JULY 16, 2008