

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:*  
TIMBERS AT WHITEFISH  
P.O.Box 2009 Whitefish, MT 59937
  
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76LJ 30051930
  
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater Well
  
4. *Location affected by project:* NW ¼ SE ¼ of Section 25, Township 30 N, Range 22 W, Flathead County
  
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 proposes to divert water from two wells, the first well (GWIC #227408 PWS #1) is completed to a depth of 354 feet and the second well (GWIC #227407 PWS #2) is 400 feet deep. Both wells are approximately 2 miles north-east of the Lower Stillwater River. The wells will alternate so that each pump runs every other pump cycle from January 1 through December 31 at a maximum diversion rate of 88 GPM up to 23.69 AF, from points in the NW¼SE¼ of Section 25 Township 30N, Range 22W, Flathead County, for year-round multiple domestic use which includes lawn and garden irrigation on 6.93 acres from May 15 through October 15 annually. The place of use is Timbers at Whitefish, a 21 lot subdivision that is generally located in the SW½SE¼ and NW¼ SE¼ Section 25, Township 30N, Range 22W, Flathead County, approximately 7 miles north of Kalispell.
  
6. *Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:*  
*(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)*  
  
Montana Natural Heritage Program  
United State Fish and Wildlife Wetland Mapper

## **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: N/A -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: N/A - 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.

Groundwater levels in the deep alluvial aquifer are effectively controlled by the Flathead River and Flathead Lake. A new groundwater user will not alter the regional gradient, and thus the aquifer flux. A new groundwater user will, however, reduce the discharge from the aquifer to the river and lake, generally in an amount equivalent to their consumptive use. Therefore, evaluation of legal availability was based on depletions to surface water of the Flathead River and Flathead Lake instead of legal demands in the aquifer flux for this application as required by ARM 36.12.1704. Data was assessed and the Department finds that senior ground water appropriators will not be adversely affected and that predicted depletions will not prevent surface water appropriators from reasonably exercising their water rights

Determination: No immediate impact

**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.

The proposed means of diversion are two wells constructed by Water Well Services (MT license #WWC-635) in the deep alluvial aquifer. PWS#1 is 354 feet deep and screened from 342 to 354 feet below ground surface (bgs) with a static level of 241.9 feet below top of casing (btoc). PWS#2 is 400 feet deep and screened from 374 to 393 (bgs) with static level of 242 feet btoc. The production wells are approximately 284 feet apart and both were completed in May 2006. By design, the two wells will be pumped alternately. A Goulds Model 95L, 15 hp submersible pump capable of producing 88 GPM at 470 ft of total dynamic head will be installed in PWS#1 well. A Goulds Model 65L, 10 hp submersible pump capable of producing 50 GPM at 470 ft of total dynamic head will be installed in PWS#2 well. The Applicant has a plan for the exercise of the permit that demonstrates that the Applicant's use of water can be controlled so the water

rights of a prior appropriator will be satisfied. The Applicant proposes to monitor usage with a totalizing flow meter at the pump house. The proposed use of groundwater will not impact any channels, cause adverse effect due to flow modifications, create any barriers or impact riparian areas, dams or other existing or future wells.

*Determination:* No impact.

#### **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.”

The Montana Natural Heritage Program was contacted to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants, or aquatic species or any “species of special concern” that could be impacted by the proposed project. In the vicinity of Section 25, T30N, R22W in Flathead County, the Program identified the Bald Eagle as a “species of concern”. Within the vicinity of T30N, R22W, Westslope, Cutthroat Trout, Bull Trout and Lake Trout were identified as species of concern.

*Determination:* No immediate impact.

***Wetlands*** - Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.

The proposed place of use is not within the boundaries of wetlands mapped by the National Wetlands Inventory program.

*Determination:* No impact

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

*Determination:* No ponds; no impacts.

**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.

The soils in this area are Whitefish silt loam; gravelly silt loam that is well drained with a moderately high to high transmittal capacity. None of these soil types are susceptible to saline seep. Water application to soils consists of lawn and garden irrigation.

*Determination:* No impact

**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.*

Lawn and garden areas are located on private lots and it is ultimately the landowner's responsibility to control the spread or establishment of noxious weeds. Timbers at Whitefish Homeowners Association has the responsibility of controlling for weeds in all of the common areas irrigated with this water right.

*Determination:* No impact

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

*Determination:* N/A

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES** - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.*

*Determination:* N/A – project not located on State or Federal Lands.

**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:* N/A

<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:* Developed / planned in accordance with Department of Environmental Quality standards.

**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 impact

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

*Determination:* No impact

**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 impact

**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? N/A
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Possible increase in local revenue for local services
- (c) Existing land uses? The proposed project will not alter or interfere with the productivity of the existing land use of the area.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? Possible increase in employment
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? Increased housing density and human population of the area.
- (f) Demands for government services? No impact
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No impact
- (h) Utilities? Expansion as needed
- (i) Transportation? Increased traffic to area
- (j) Safety? Safety concerns addressed in State EIS
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?

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

Secondary Impacts None

Cumulative Impacts None

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

None

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:**

*PART III. Conclusion*

1. **Preferred Alternative** As Proposed

2. **Comments and Responses** None

3. **Finding:**

Yes\_\_\_ No\_XX\_ 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:*

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

*Name:* Kathy Schubert

*Title:* Water Resource Specialist

*Date:* November 14, 2012