

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: ONEOK Bakken Pipeline, LLC  
100 West 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Tulsa, OK 74103
2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit  
39E-30062789
3. Water source name: Boxelder Creek
4. Location affected by project: The place of use is a 30-mile natural gas pipeline running North to South, generally located between Sec. 27, T3N, R60E, Fallon County, and Sec. 14, T3S, R60 E, Carter County, Montana.
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:  

This application is for a temporary diversion of water to aide in the construction of the ONEOK Bakken natural gas pipeline project. The points of diversion are located in the the NENESE of Sec. 32, T1N, R60E, the SESWNE of Sec. 4, T1S, R60E, the SESWSW of Sec. 4, T1S, R60E, the NENESE of Sec. 8, T1S, R60E, the SWNESE of Sec. 17, T1S, R60E, and the NESWNE of Sec. 20, T1S, R60E, Carter County, MT. The place of use for this application is generally located in Carter County, Montana. Maps for pipeline locations are in the permit file located at the Billings Regional Water Resource office. The pipeline project will divert at a maximum flow rate of 1,700 GPM up to 18.27 acre-feet between May 1, 2012 to July 31, 2012 and April 1, 2013 to June 30, 2013. The water will be used for horizontal directional drilling, boring, pre-installation hydrostatic testing, hydrostatic testing and dust control along 30 miles of the pipeline route.

The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.
6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:  
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Department of Environmental Quality Website – TMDL 303d Listing  
Montana National Heritage Program Website – Species of Concern  
United States Fish and Wildlife Website – National Wetland Inventory  
Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks – Dewatering Concern Areas  
Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology – Geologic Map, Alzada 30’x60’ Quadrangle

## **Part II. Environmental Review**

### **1. Environmental Impact Checklist:**

<h2><b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b></h2>
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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 impact

The Boxelder Creek is not identified as chronically or periodically dewatered stream by 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:* No impact

Boxelder Creek (Corral Creek to South Dakota Border) is listed on the Montana DEQ website, Clean Water Act Information Center. This source has not been assessed. No changes to water quality or chemistry are anticipated due to the nature of the proposed change.

**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 impact

The application includes only surface water from the Boxelder Creek.

**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:* Minor impact

Water will be diverted from Boxelder Creek via an XH-150 8-inch x 6-inch end suction centrifugal pump for the HDD and hydrostatic testing portions of the project. Water diverted for hydrostatic testing will be returned to Boxelder Creek at the proposed point of diversion. No changes in stream channel or riparian area are anticipated.

### **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 impact

*Animals:*

Per the Montana Natural Heritage Program website, Hoary Bat, Golden Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Pinyon Jay, Greater Sage-Grouse, Clark's Nutcracker, Loggerhead Shrike, Western Hognosed Snake and Sauger are animal species of concern within the project area. Eastern Bluebird, Brassy Minnow and Creek Chub are potential species of concern within the project area. There are no special status species within the area.

*Plants:*

Per the Montana Natural Heritage Program website, there are no plant species of concern, potential species of concern or special status species within the project area.

**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 impact

The points of diversion for this project are located at existing water crossings, there should be no impact to wetlands due to this diversion of water.

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

*Determination:* No impact

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:* No impact

The points of diversion for this project are located at existing water crossings, there should be no impact to soils due to this diversion of water.

**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 impact

The points of diversion for this project are located at existing water crossings, there should be no impact to vegetative cover due to this diversion of water. The applicant is responsible for preventing or controlling the spread of 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:* No impact

The applicant intends to use a portion of the diverted water for dust suppression, the project will likely have no long term effects 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 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:* Low likelihood of Impact

This project not located on State or Federal Lands. Therefore this section is not applicable.

**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 assessed.

<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 impact

**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

The project will have little or no long term impacts on the access and quality of recreational and wilderness activities along the project route.

**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:* There are no additional government regulatory impacts on private property rights associated with this application.

**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) <u>Safety?</u>  | None |
| (k) <u>Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?</u> | 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:***

An alternative analysis of the project identified a no action alternative to the construction of the natural gas pipeline. This alternative would have no direct impacts associated with construction and operation of the pipeline and its facilities. The no-action alternative would not allow ONEOK to meet the purpose of and need for the project.

*PART III. Conclusion*

**1. Preferred Alternative**

None

**2 Comments and Responses**

None

**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:*

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:* Christine Smith

*Title:* Water Resources Specialist

*Date:* February 14, 2013