

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: **RON & MARILYN ALLEN
PO BOX 42
COLUMBIA FALLS, MT 59912**
2. Type of action: **Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76N 30064208**
3. Water source name: **Thompson River (Middle Thompson Lake)**
4. Location affected by project: **Section 4, Township 26N Range 27W, Lincoln County, Montana**
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:

The Applicant proposes to divert water from the Thompson River (Middle Thompson Lake), by means of a pump, from January 1 through December 31 inclusive each year at 37 GPM up to 1.12 AF, from a point in the SW¹/₄SW¹/₄NE¹/₄ of Section 4, Township 26N Range 27W, for domestic use from January 1 through December 31 and domestic lawn and garden use on .5 acres from April 25 through October 5. The place of use is generally located SW¹/₄NE¹/₄ (Govt. Lot 6) of Section 4, Township 26N, and Range 27W, Lincoln County, Montana. Middle Thompson Lake is in the Thompson River drainage which flows into the Clark Fork River just east of Thompson Falls.

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)

**Dept. of Environmental Quality Website - TMDL 303d listing
MT. National Heritage Program Website - Species of Concern
USDI Fish & Wildlife Service Website - Endangered and Threatened Species
MT State Historic Preservation Office - Archeological/Historical Sites
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service – Web Soil Survey
USDI Fish & Wildlife Service – Wetlands Online Mapper
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks – MFISH Website**

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: **No Significant Impact**

The source is not identified as chronically or periodically dewatered 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 Significant Impact**

The source is not listed as impaired or threatened by DEQ. All beneficial uses are assessed and fully supported.

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 Impact**

The proposed project is for a small appropriation that will be used adjacent to Middle Thompson Lake; no impacts to groundwater are expected from this project.

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 Impact**

The diversion works will consist of a centrifugal pump with an intake installed at a depth of 31.5 feet, held in place by a tripod 3.5 feet off the bottom of Middle Thompson Lake. All non-consumed water will return to the source via a drain field. No impacts from the diversion works are anticipated because of the proposed project.

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 Impact

The Montana National Heritage Program lists one mammal and eight bird species as Animal Species of Concern within Township 26 North Range 27 West. There are also one mammal, one bird and three fish species listed as Potential Species of Concern in this township and range designation. One Potential Plant Species of Concern is also listed in the area of interest. The USDI Fish & Wildlife Service Website shows that Lincoln County has two species listed as proposed species or candidates for the Endangered Species Act; the proposed species is the Wolverine, while the candidate species is the Whitebark Pine. This project has been previously operated as requested in the application materials and is not expected to significantly affect any species listed above.

***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 Significant Impact

The National Wetlands inventory does not have data available for the area of interest. No wetlands will be impacted, this project is limited to use on a small residential parcel adjacent to Middle Thompson Lake that has been developed for many years.

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

Determination: No Significant Impact

There are no known ponds associated with this application.

***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 Impact

Soils in this area are predominately Tallcreek ashy silt loam that is moderately well drained with a high available water capacity. No impact to soil quality or alteration of soil stability is expected.

***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 Impact

No impacts to vegetative cover are expected, this project has been operated in the past. It is the responsibility of the property owner to control noxious weeds on their property.

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 Impact**

No impacts to air quality have been identified. The centrifugal pump will be powered by a single-phase electric motor.

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: **No Significant Impact**

Not Applicable – 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: **No Significant Impact**

No other impacts were identified during this EA.

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 Significant Impact**

No locally adopted environmental plans and goals have been identified.

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 Impact**

The pump intake is located and anchored at 31.5 feet below the water surface of the lake and should not affect recreational activities.

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

Determination: **No Significant Impact**

No impacts to human health have been identified.

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

Yes___ No___ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: **No Significant 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? **No Significant Impact**
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? **No Significant Impact**
- (c) Existing land uses? **No Significant Impact**
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? **No Significant Impact**
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? **No Significant Impact**
- (f) Demands for government services? **No Significant Impact**
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? **No Significant Impact**
- (h) Utilities? **No Significant Impact**
- (i) Transportation? **No Significant Impact**
- (j) Safety? **No Significant Impact**
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?

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

Secondary Impacts: **No Secondary Impacts have been identified.**

Cumulative Impacts: **No Cumulative Impacts have been identified.**

3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*

No mitigation or stipulation measures have been 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:*

No other reasonable alternatives have been identified. No action alternative: Deny the permit application - This alternative would result in no beneficial use to the Applicant.

PART III. Conclusion

1. *Preferred Alternative:*

The preferred alternative is the proposed action.

2. *Comments and Responses:*

None Received.

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:

None of the identified impacts for any of the alternatives are significant as defined in ARM 36.2.524.

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

Name: **Douglas Mann**

Title: **Water Resources Specialist**

Date: **8/23/2013**