

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:

Dick Walker Fieldstone Subdivision Water User's Assoc. Inc. P.O. Box 29 Kalispell, MT 59904	Brad Bennett C/o Applied Water Consulting P.O. Box 7667 Kalispell, MT 59904
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2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76LJ-30070134

3. Water source name: Groundwater from two wells

4. Location affected by project: NENW and NWNE Section 26, T28N, R20W, 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.

6. Fieldstone Subdivision Water User's Association Inc. applied for a Beneficial Use Permit to withdraw water from two wells drilled to depths of 260 and 283 feet for domestic use on 24 lots and up to 8.26 acres of lawn and garden irrigation. The Applicant requests a flow rate of 44 GPM and volume of 17.77 AF from January 1 through December 31, annually. The wells are both located in the NWNE of Section 26, T28N, R20W, Flathead County. The place of use is in the NENW and NWNE Section 26, T28N, R20W, Flathead County.

7. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:

Montana Natural Heritage Program	Species of Concern
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	2005 Dewatered Stream List
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	303(d) list of impaired streams

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: N/A, the appropriation is for groundwater. Immediate dewatering is not a concern.

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, the appropriation is for groundwater with no impact to water quality.

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.

The zone of influence from groundwater withdrawals was assessed to substantiate water availability and no adverse impact to prior groundwater appropriators was identified. The potential for adverse effects to senior surface water users was then assessed by evaluating consumptive use from this appropriation. The annual consumptive use of 11.72 AF annually was shown to cause long-term depletions to surface water sources at a rate of 7.40 GPM and 0.91-1.04 AF per month. Physical and legal availability of this flow rate and volume were assessed and it was determined that water is physically and legally available throughout the period of appropriation and that no adverse effect will result from the proposed groundwater withdrawals. The Applicant will be required to measure and report water usage annually to the Department. No degradation of water quality resulting from this appropriation was identified.

Determination: No 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.

Applicant proposes to add two points of diversion: two wells located in the SENWNE of Section 26, T28N, R20W, Flathead County. Each well is fitted with a Sta-Right 3 hp submersible pump capable of producing 22 GPM for a combined maximum output of 44 GPM. The pumps will cycle on an alternate lead-lag schedule based on reservoir levels in the 33,000 storage facility. The wells are currently in place and pumping rates can be modified if adverse effects to other water users are identified. After modeling groundwater flux throughout the zone of influence, it

was determined that the projected drawdown of less than 1-foot would not cause adverse effect to existing groundwater users.

Determination: No significant 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 (MNHP) 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.

The MNHP identified the following animal species: Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Great Gray Owl, and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. In addition, the following sensitive plant species were also identified: Scorpidium moss, Flatleaf Bladderwort, Tufted Club-rush, and Small Yellow Lady’s Slipper.

The location of the proposed groundwater appropriation is less than 2 miles east of the Flathead River and approximately 7 miles north of the inlet to Flathead Lake. This area is a mix of agriculture and development and any impacts to the above listed species has likely already occurred as a result of past activities.

Determination: No significant 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 project does not create or impact any wetlands.

Determination: No impact.

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

The proposed project does not create or impact any ponds.

Determination: No impact.

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.*

Use of water from the Flathead Valley Aquifer for domestic and lawn and garden use will not cause degradation of soil quality or stability. The gravelly loam soils within the Fieldstone Subdivision are nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm) and thus, not susceptible to saline seep.

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.*

Existing vegetative cover currently consists of forested area, irrigated pasture, and lawn and garden. The discontinuation of irrigation and development of residential properties may lead to noxious weed invasion. Property owners are responsible for controlling noxious weeds.

Determination: No significant impact.

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

Deterioration of air quality and/or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants is not expected. The water will be diverted using an electric motor; therefore, there will be no emissions and/or increased noise levels associated with the proposed appropriation of groundwater.

Determination: No impact.

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, the project is 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.*

All impacts to land, water, and energy have been identified and no further impacts are anticipated.

Determination: No Impact.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: The project is consistent with planned land use.

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.*

This wells are drilled on private property; it will not impact recreation or effect 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? No
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No
- (c) Existing land uses? No
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No
- (f) Demands for government services? No
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No
- (h) Utilities? No
- (i) Transportation? No

(j) Safety? No

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No

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

Secondary Impacts: None

Cumulative Impacts: None

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:

No mitigation/stipulation measures were 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 reasonable alternatives were identified in the EA.

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative As proposed

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:

No significant impacts have been identified; therefore, no EIS is necessary.

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

Name: Amy H. Groen

Title: Hydrologist/Specialist

Date: November 10, 2015