

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:

Power-Teton and Sewer District; Ross H. Fitzgerald, President
P.O. Box 176
Power, MT 59468

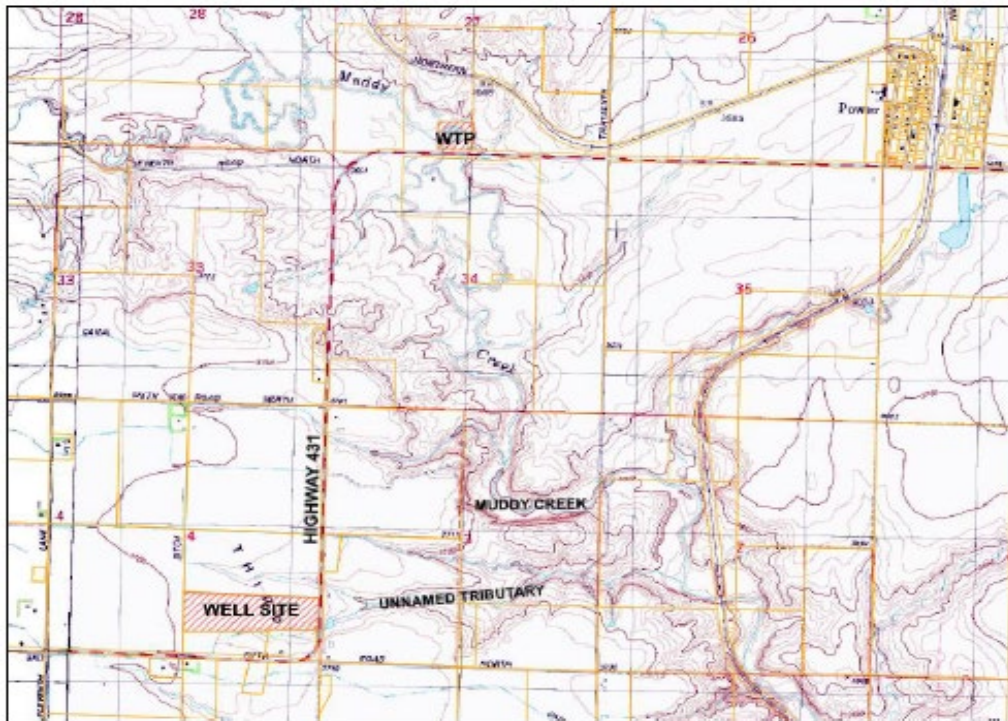
2. Type of action: Application for a Permit Water Right No. 41K-30150582

3. Water source name: Municipal Groundwater near Unnamed Tributary of Muddy Creek

4. Location affected by project: Place of Use: SW Qtr. of Section 25, Twp. 23N, Rge.1W, Teton County.

Point of Diversion is in Section 4, Township 22 North, Range 1 West. This application is in the Sun River Basin which is subject the Upper Missouri Bason Closure.

Figure 1: Proposed Project Vicinity Map Power-Teton 41K 30150582



5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:

The wellfield (GWIC ID 301863, 301853, 301855, 301856) is in Section 4, Township 22 North, Range 1 West, approximately 3.0 miles southwest of Power, Montana, Teton County. Four ground water monitoring wells were installed in the Greenfields Bench (Fairfield Bench) aquifer on property owned by the District. This application would replace the District's current water source; Muddy Creek would no longer be used for municipal purposes. A flow rate of 170 GPM and a volume of 91 AF is requested on this application.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:

Natural Heritage Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service Soils Data Website, Department of Environmental Quality, National Wetlands Inventory Website, and the Natural Resources Information System, the Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks.

Part II. Environmental Review
Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - The Unnamed Tributary of Muddy Creek has been identified as chronically or periodically dewatered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks.

Determination: Impact to water quantity is expected.

Water quality - The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) does list an Unnamed Tributary of Muddy Creek as water quality impaired or threatened. DEQ identifies the Unnamed Tributary of Muddy Creek as not support aquatic life, drinking water, agriculture, and recreation. The probable causes of the impaired listing are agriculture, infrastructure, and lack of riparian barriers. The proposed project will adversely affect water quality. This will cause adverse effect to the Unnamed Tributary of Muddy Creek.

Determination: Impact to Unnamed Tributary of Muddy River expected.

Groundwater -

The Applicant proposes to appropriate groundwater from a wellfield (GWIC ID 301863, 301853, 301855, 301856) located in Sec. 4, Twp. 22 North, Rge. 1 West, approximately 3.0 miles southwest of Power, Montana, Teton County. The proposed purpose is Municipal use. The proposed flow rate requested is 170 Gallons per Minute (GPM) up to a maximum diverted volume of 91 Acre Feet (AF). The Period of Diversion requested is January 1 to December 31.

The Place of Use is to be in the SW Qtr. of Section 25, Twp. 23N, Rge.1W, Teton County and commonly referred to as the Town of Power.

DIVERSION WORKS

The Applicant proposes to appropriate groundwater from a wellfield (GWIC ID 301863, 301853, 301855, 301856) located in Sec. 4, Twp. 22 North, Rge. 1 West, approximately 3.0 miles southwest of Power, Montana, Teton County.

Determination: No significant impact.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species

Below is a list of animal species of concern found in 23N 1W and 22N 1W Teton County. There were no plant species of concern identified. The project is not located in Sage Grouse habitat. All species found in the area of interest are listed as G4 and G5. The following definitions are taken from the Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP). The G4 category defines a species as “Apparently secure, though it may be quite rare in parts of its range, and/or suspected to be declining.” The G5 category defines a species as “Common, widespread, and abundant (although it may be rare in parts of its range). Not vulnerable in most of its range.” The grizzly bear, black-neck stilt, white-faced ibis, horned grebe, and the thick-billed longspur would not be affected by this project. This project will not affect any of these species.

Figure 2: Animal Species of Concern Located in 23N 1W, Teton County

MAMMALS (MAMMALIA)							
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	
<i>Ursus arctos</i> Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursidae</i> Bears	G4	S2S3	LT			THREATENED
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Broadwater, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Deer Lodge, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Glacier, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Wheatland, Yellowstone							
BIRDS (AVES)							
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	
<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i> Black-necked Stilt	<i>Recurvirostridae</i> Avocets	G5	S3B	MBTA			
<i>Plegadis chihi</i> White-faced Ibis	<i>Threskiornithidae</i> Ibises	G5	S3B	MBTA			SENSITIVE
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Cascade, Chouteau, Phillips, Roosevelt, Sheridan, Teton							
State Rank Reason: Due to limited distribution of breeding sites, the species is potentially at risk of declines.							
<i>Podiceps auritus</i> Horned Grebe	<i>Podicipedidae</i> Grebes	G5	S3B	MBTA			SENSITIVE
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Cascade, Chouteau, Flathead, Glacier, Lake, Phillips, Powell, Sheridan, Teton, Toole							

Figure 3: Animal Species of Concern Located in 22N 1W, Teton County

MAMMALS (MAMMALIA)							
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	
<i>Ursus arctos</i> Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursidae</i> Bears	G4	S2S3	LT			THREATENED
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Broadwater, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Deer Lodge, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Glacier, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Wheatland, Yellowstone							
BIRDS (AVES)							
SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	
<i>Rhynchophanes mccownii</i> Thick-billed Longspur	<i>Calcariidae</i> Longspurs and Snow Buntings	G4	S3B	MBTA: BCC10; BCC11; BCC17			SENSITIVE
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Blaine, Broadwater, Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Wheatland, Yellowstone							
State Rank Reason: Species faces threats from cover type conversion and altered grazing and fire regimes, and although populations in the core of their breeding range in northeast Montana							

Determination: No significant impact.

Wetlands – The project does not involve wetlands.

Determination: Assessment is not applicable.

Ponds - The project does not involve ponds.

Determination: Assessment is not applicable.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey was utilized to assess the project area’s soils. The soil map below depicts the general project area, and the table provides soil unit information.

Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, Montana (MT657)			
Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, Montana (MT657)			
Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
39B	Ethridge silty clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	81.3	12.6%
41B	Richey silty clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	28.3	4.4%
70B	Megonot silty clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	42.0	6.5%
80B	Pylon silty clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	0.0	0.0%
82B	Tanna clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	6.5	1.0%
114A	Gerdrum-Absher clay loams, 0 to 2 percent slopes	38.2	5.9%
148C	Megonot-Richey-Tanna clay loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	42.4	6.6%
150B	Marias-Linnet silty clays, 0 to 4 percent slopes	99.9	15.5%

164B	Scobey-Kevin clay loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes	71.2	11.0%
169C	Bascovy- Neldore clays, 2 to 8 percent slopes	73.1	11.3%
170C	Abor-Yawdim silty clay loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes	42.3	6.5%
241A	Marcott silty clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	0.2	0.0%
286F	Neldore- Bascovy clays, 8 to 25 percent slopes	37.6	5.8%
368A	Saypo clay loam, saline, 0 to 2 percent slopes, rarely flooded	12.2	1.9%
400	Havre-Fairway loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes, rarely flooded	23.2	3.6%
403	Haploborolls- Argiborolls complex, 0 to 4 percent slopes, rarely flooded	31.4	4.9%
540B	Marvan silty clay, wet, 0 to 4 percent slopes	2.6	0.4%
M-W	Miscellaneous water	13.3	2.1%
Totals for Area of Interest		645.6	100.0%

Figure 4: Web Soil Survey of Soil Types in Section 25, 23N 1W, Teton County

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
15B	Crago gravelly loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	9.9	1.5%
23B	Rothiemay clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	153.8	23.8%
123B	Rothiemay-Niart clay loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes	89.6	13.9%
124B	Varney-Rothiemay clay loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes	352.6	54.6%
286F	Neldore-Bascovy clays, 8 to 25 percent slopes	0.1	0.0%
330B	Niart gravelly loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	22.5	3.5%
367F	Megonot-Yawdim-Crago complex, 15 to 60 percent slopes	16.8	2.6%
Totals for Area of Interest		645.2	100.0%

Figure 5: Web Soil Survey of Soil Types in Section 4, 22N 1W, Teton County



Figure 6: Map of Web Soil Survey Soil Types in Section 25, 23N 1W, Teton County

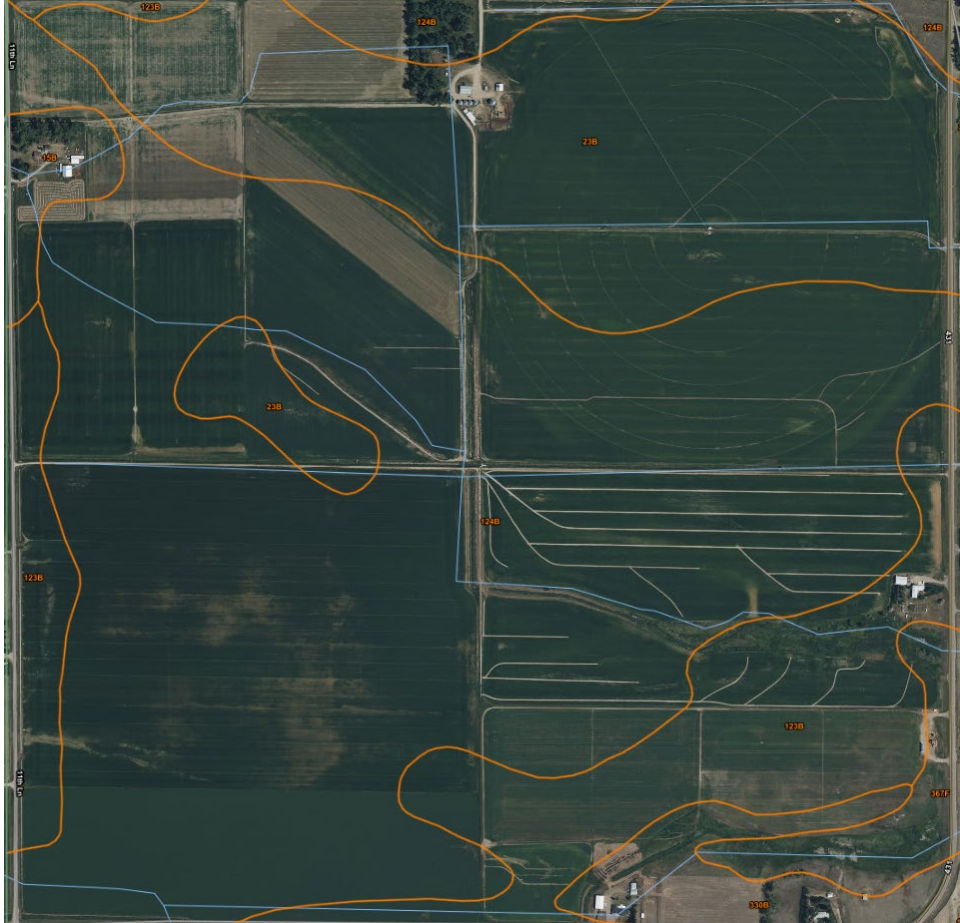


Figure 7: Map of Web Soil Survey Soil Types in Section 4, 22N 1W, Teton County

Determination: No significant impact.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS –

Noxious weeds are not expected to be established or spread due to the proposed project.

Determination: No significant impact.

AIR QUALITY - The project does not involve air quality.

Determination: Assessment is not applicable.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - The project does not involve historical and archeological sites.

Determination: Assessment is not applicable.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY – There are no other environmental issues that need to be addressed.

Determination: No additional environmental impacts were identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - No local environmental plans and goals were identified.

Determination: No impact to local environmental plans and goals is expected.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - No recreational or wilderness activities were identified.

Determination: No impact to recreational and wilderness activities is expected.

HUMAN HEALTH - No human health issues were identified.

Determination: No impact to human health is expected.

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 to private property rights.

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 impact.
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? No impact.
- (c) Existing land uses? No impact.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No impact.
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? No impact.
- (f) Demands for government services? No impact.
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No impact.
- (h) Utilities? No impact.
- (i) Transportation? No impact.

(j) Safety? No impact.

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No impact.

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

Secondary Impacts No secondary impacts were identified.

Cumulative Impacts No cumulative impacts were identified.

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** No mitigation or stipulation measures exist at this moment

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 action alternative: The Applicant would not be able to develop the project as proposed.

4.

PART III. Conclusion

1. ***Preferred Alternative*** Proposed action.

2. ***Comments and Responses*** None to date.

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 assessment for the proposed action because no impacts have been identified in the EA.

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

Name: Megan Blauwkamp

Title: Water Resources Specialist

Date: 9/06/2022