

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: Galata Water Users Association
301 1st Street S.
Shelby, MT 59474
2. Type of action: Application to Change a Water Right No. 41N 30105071
3. Water source name: Groundwater
4. Location affected by project: The Galata Water Users Association (GWUA) operates a large rural water system which provides service to places of use including townships 34N 3E, 33N 2W, 33N 1W, 33N 1E, 33N 2E, 33N 3E, 33N 4E, 32N 1W, 32N 1E, 32N 2E, 32N 3E, 32N 4E, 31N 3E, and 31N 4E in Toole and Liberty Counties. The original well was replaced by a second well (east well) in 2002. A second point of diversion was added in 1976 (west well), and this point of diversion must be added to Water Right 41N 3082. Both points of diversion are located in the Southwest quarter of the Southeast quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 21, Township 35 North, Range 3East, Toole County. Buried PVC pipe of varying diameters conveys water from the points of diversion to the GWUA service area. The places of use are located mostly in basin 41N, with small portions extending into basin 41P. Both points of diversion are located within basin 41N. Basins 41N and 41P are not affected by Montana basin closures or controlled groundwater areas. See Figure 1 on the following page for a project location map.
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits: The applicant has requested authorization to add a second point of diversion to the water right (located about 70.0 feet west of the historical point of diversion) and repurpose 11.3 AF of the historical volume for the new purpose of agricultural spraying. The perfected change would consist of retiring a total volume of 11.3 AF from the historical stock volume so that consumptive use will not increase. The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in §85-2-402 MCA are met.
6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment: Montana Natural Heritage Program, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soils Data Website, Department of Environmental Quality, National Wetlands Inventory Website, and the Natural Resources Information System, and the Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks.

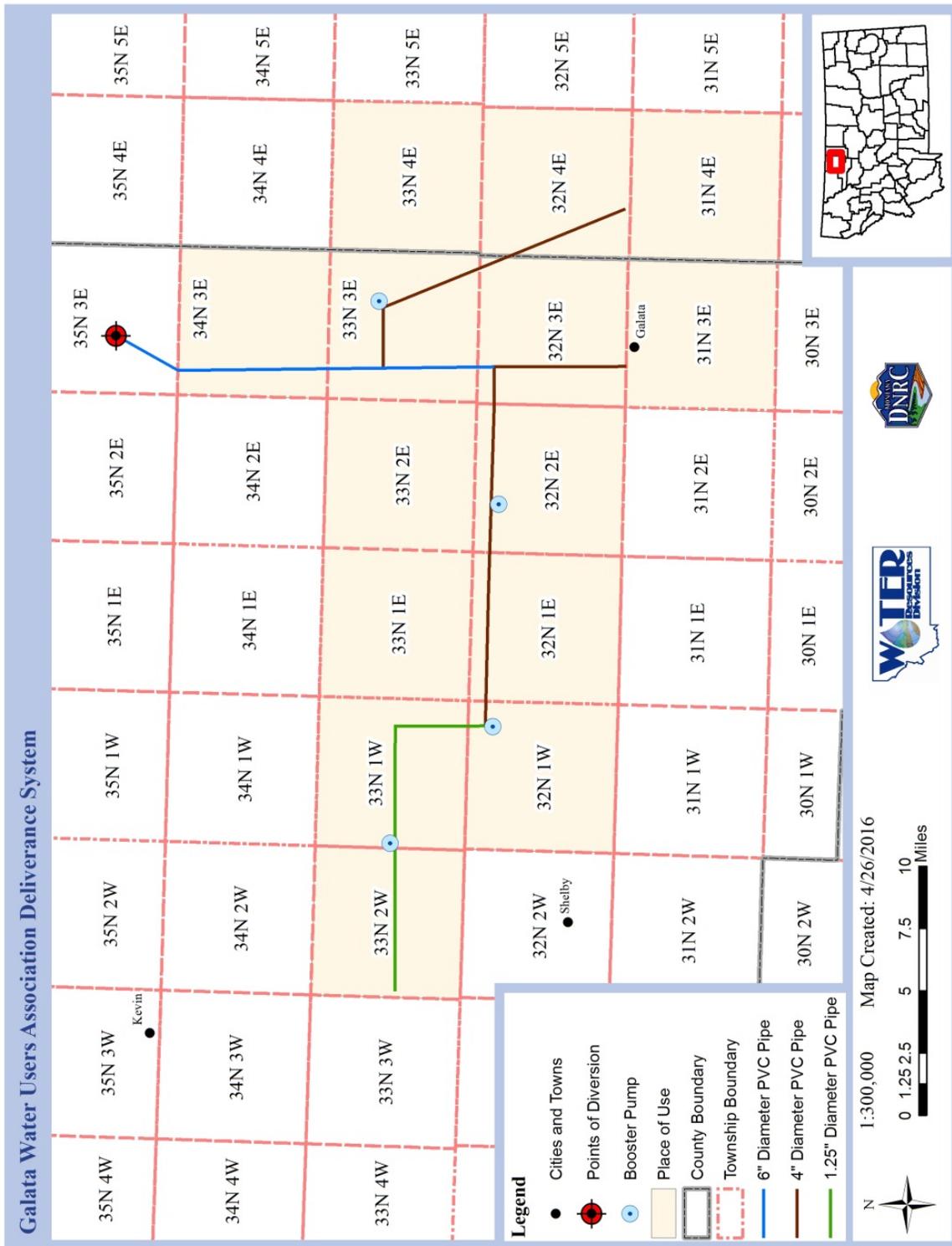


Figure 1-An overview of the Galata Water Users Association deliverance system, place of use, and points of diversion.

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

<h2>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</h2>

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY, AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity—The proposed change affects a groundwater source. No analysis pertaining to the hydraulic connectivity of groundwater and surface water was completed.

Determination: Assessment is not applicable.

Water quality—The proposed change affects a groundwater source. However, the proposed change also includes repurposing 11.3 AF of the historic stock volume to the new purpose of agricultural spraying. This will allow members of the GWUA to spray fertilizers and chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, insecticides, etc.) to their fields. Responsible agricultural spraying practices will minimize the amount of chemicals received by surface water sources in the area.

Determination: Minimal impacts to water quality are expected through the addition of 11.3 AF of agricultural spraying.

Groundwater—The replacement well was drilled in 2002 and has been in operation since that time. There is no increase in consumptive use proposed. No additional analysis of the aquifer was completed by a Department Hydrologist.

Determination: Impacts to groundwater quality/supply will be equal to the impacts that have been occurring since 1974, when the historical water right was put to use.

Diversion Works—The wells have been operated and constructed according to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality public water supply redundant well requirement. Installed in the west well is a Grundfos 75S75-12 7.5 HP pump, while the east well has a Grundfos 150S100-5 10.0 HP pump. Near the supply wells is a 10,000.0 gallon cistern, which begins to fill automatically by one pump once water reaches a predetermined level in the cistern. Pumping is alternated between the two wells, and typically results in a two-hour on, two-hour off pumping schedule. There are four booster pumps included in the system to help deliver water through approximately 62.0 miles of buried PVC pipe. The water mains include 15.3 miles of 6” diameter, 32.5 miles of 4” diameter, and 14.2 miles of 1.25” diameter PVC piping. See Figure 1 on the following page for a layout of the deliverance system and the various water main sizes.

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE, OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species—According to the information provided by the Montana Natural Heritage Program, there are eight bird (Aves) species of concern, two mammal (Mammalia) species of concern, and one reptile (Reptilia) located within the GWUA service area. The species of concern which are located within the GWUA service area are displayed in Table 1 below. Data for Township 33 North, Range 1 East and Township 33 North, Range 2 East were unavailable at the time of data retrieval. This project is not affected by the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.

Table 1-Within the GWUA service area, the species below are listed as species of concern.

Birds (Aves)		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Occurrence
Buteo regalis	Ferruginous Hawk	T34N R3E; T33N R2W; T32N R1E; T32N R2E; T31N R3E; T31N R4E
Calcarius ornatus	Chestnut-collared longspur	T33N R2W; T33N R1W; T33N R3E; T33N R4E; T32N R1W; T32N R1E; T32N R3E; T32N R4E; T31N R3E
Lanius ludov	Loggerhead Shrike	T33N R2W; T33N R1W; T32N R1W; T32N R3E; T32N R4E; T31N R3E; T31N R4E
Rhynchophanes mccownii	McCown’s Longspur	T33N R3E; T33N R4E; T32N R3E; T32N R4E; T31N R3E
Athene cunicularia	Burrowing Owl	T32N R2E; T32N R3E; T31N R3E
Ammodramus bairdii	Baird’s Sparrow	T32N R4E
Spizella breweri	Brewer’s Sparrow	T31N R3E; T31N R4E
Charadrius montanus	Mountain Plover	T31N R3E
Mammals (Mammalia)		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Occurrence
Myotis lucifugus	Little Brown Myotis	T33N R2W; T32N R3E; T31N R3E
Lasiurus cinereus	Hoary Bat	T32N R3E; T31N R3E
Reptiles (Reptilia)		
Scientific Name	Common Name	Occurrence
Phrynosoma hernandesi	Greater Short-horned Lizard	T31N R3E

Wetlands –According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetlands Inventory, the GWUA service area does not contain any wetlands within its border.

Determination: Because no wetlands are contained within the boundary of the GWUA service area, no impacts are anticipated.

Ponds –No ponds or reservoirs are associated with the project.

Determination: Because no ponds or reservoirs are associated with the project, assessment is not applicable.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY, AND MOISTURE –It is unlikely that the proposed changes will increase saline seep or increase surface water salinity in the area.

Determination: No impacts to saline seep or soil quality are expected.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY, AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS—No impacts are expected because the fields already exist and no land cover changes are proposed.

Determination: It is the responsibility of each individual serviced by the GWUA to ensure noxious weeds do not become out of control on their property.

HISTORICAL AND ARHEOLOGICAL SITES —N/A: The proposed project does lie within State or Federal land boundaries.

Determination: No assessment of unique archeological or historic sites has been performed.

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY —No additional impacts on other environmental resources were identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS —Currently, no environmental plans or goals have been identified in the area.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES —No wildlife areas or recreational land are situated adjacent to the proposed project area. Recreational and wilderness activities will not be affected by the project.

HUMAN HEALTH —Human health will not be affected by the project.

PRIVATE PROPERTY —No adverse effect on private property rights is anticipated from this development.

Yes ___ No x

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES —

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. Proposed project is consistent with other land uses in the region.
- (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? No significant impact.

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:* 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:*

No action alternative: The applicant would not be able to develop the project as proposed.

Alternative one: Approve the application if the applicant proves the statutory criterion has been met.

Part III. Conclusion

1. *Preferred alternative:* Alternative one.

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

3. *Finding:*

Yes ___ No x Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this Environmental Assessment, is an EIS required?

An Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of assessment for the proposed action because no significant impacts have been identified.

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Date: May 17, 2016